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Curfew relaxed in 3 districts, broadband internet restored with conditions in Manipur

IMPHAL, Nov 19: Curfew was relaxed in three Imphal Valley districts on Tuesday and the suspension on broadband internet lifted with conditions, even as Chief Minister N Biren Singh blamed the Congress for the present crisis in Manipur and NDA MLAs called for a "mass operation" against militants responsible for the killing of six women and children.

Peaceful rallies were also staged across the state, with hundreds taking to the streets with empty coffins in Churachandpur district, demanding justice for those killed in a gunfight with the security forces in Jiribam, and members of various civil so-

ciety organisations bringing out a procession in Imphal West district to protest the reimposition of AFSPA in parts of the state.

Prohibitory orders were relaxed in Imphal East and West, and Kakching districts from 5 am to 10 am to facilitate the purchase of essential items "in view of improvement in law and order", separate notifications issued by district administrations said. However, restrictions on large scale gatherings or movement of persons or sit-ins continued to remain imposed.

The Manipur government also conditionally lifted the suspension on broadband services three

days after imposing it, considering the hardships faced by common people, healthcare facilities, educational institutions and other offices. Mobile internet services, however, remained suspended, according to an order issued by Home Commissioner N Ashok Kumar.

Meanwhile, the chief minister attacked Congress leader P Chidambaram over his X post "calling for division of the state".

Blaming the chief minister for the current crisis in the state, Chidambaram called for his removal, and claimed that "Meiteis, Kuki-Zo and Nagas can live together in one state only if they have genuine

regional autonomy".

Speaking to reporters, Singh said, "I am surprised to see his post mentioning the division of Manipur and accusing the chief minister for the present crisis. Chidambaram is the root cause of the present crisis. When he was the Union home minister and O Ibovi Singh the CM, they brought a Myanmarese named T Guite, a person who contested elections in Myanmar and is the chairman of Zomi Revolutionary Army."

Showing a purported photograph of Chidambaram and Guite, he said, "The present crisis is created by the Congress. They cannot wash off their

hands easily. Propaganda and allegations by national leaders should stop. Chidambaram was responsible for bringing in illegal immigrants to Manipur."

"What happened during Congress rule? How many were killed in fake encounters? There are 1,500 cases related to fake encounters in Supreme Court. I want to appeal to him (Chidambaram) not to play destructive games and destabilise Manipur. Peace was already established three-four months back but a few people with vested interests who want to destabilise the state derailed our efforts to establish peace," he said. (PTI)

HT BRIEFS

B'deshis held

GUWAHATI: Nine people from Bangladesh were apprehended by Assam Police in Karimganj district on Tuesday for illegally entering India and handed over to authorities of the neighbouring country, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The apprehended persons have been identified as Md Mamun, Abbu Naim, Rashed Islam, Morad Ali Mandal, Md Asrafal Haque, Md Basir Hawladar, Md Robiul Hawladar, Md Mahabat Ali, Md Mohim Hossain. "Today, in an alert move, @assampolice identified and apprehended 9 Bangladeshi infiltrators in Karimganj and sent them across the border," Sarma posted on X. BSF has intensified vigil along the 1,885-km-long border with Bangladesh in the Northeast since disturbances began in the neighbouring country. Assam Police are also maintaining a high alert along the India-Bangladesh border to ensure that no person enters the state illegally, Director General of Police G P Singh had earlier said.

Heroin seized

BOKAJAN: Dillai police in a routine check on Tuesday morning recovered heroin from a dumper truck with registration number NL 07 AA 3778 that was coming from Dimapur, Nagaland. The recovered heroin was packed in three plastic cases which together weighed 35.95 gms with a price of ₹ 3 lakhs in the market, said the Dillai police station OC Akash Gogoi. In this connection, three have been apprehended identified as Jakir Hussain, Khairul Islam, and Faruq Ahmad. Significantly, a separate successful raid by Dillai police in Karbi Anglong witnessed the recovery of illegal Burmese Supari worth ₹ 11 lakhs from a Bolero pick-up truck with registration number AS 31 C 1077. The Supari was packed in 24 gunny bags that weighed 23.96 kg. The driver of the vehicle Nazir Hussain was detained in connection with the crime.

Govt to rename Karimganj district as Sribhumi: Himanta

'Rabindranath Tagore labelled the district 100 years ago'

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: The Assam government on Tuesday decided to change the name of Karimganj district in the Barak Valley to Sribhumi, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the state cabinet, Sarma said at a press conference here.

"Over 100 years ago, Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore had described modern-day Karimganj district as Sribhumi - the land of Maa Lakshmi. Today, the Assam cabinet has fulfilled this long-standing demand of our people," he said.

The move to rename the district will reflect the expectations and aspirations of the people of the district, Sarma said.

"We will continue to change names that do not have any dictionary reference or any other historical evidence. We have been doing this for a long time and it is a continuous process," the CM



said. Renaming the district to Sribhumi will also give it a distinct identity, justifying its rich cultural heritage, he said.

Besides, the state cabinet also decided to publish the voter list for the panchayat polls by December so that the election process is over by February 10 next year, Sarma said. "We also approved an amendment to the Assam Panchayat (Constitution) Rules, 1995 to facilitate preparation of electoral roll for the panchayat polls on the basis of the electoral roll of the assembly election," he said.

Talking about another decision, he said, "The cabinet approved holding an investment and infrastructure summit in Assam on February 24, 2025. We have invited (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Kharge writes to Prez on Manipur situation seeking intervention

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday wrote to President Droupadi Murmu over the deteriorating situation in Manipur and sought her immediate intervention to ensure that people of the state live peacefully in their homes with dignity.

In his two-page letter to the President, Kharge alleged that both the Union and state governments of Manipur have "completely failed" in restoring peace and normalcy in the state during the last 18 months and the people have lost confidence in them.

Kharge said that the violence has claimed more than 300 human lives, including women, children and babies. "The deteriorating law and order in Manipur has internally



displaced nearly a lakh of human population rendering them homeless and forcing them to live in different relief camps," he said, adding the agony continues unabated. He said the "refusal" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Manipur is beyond anybody's

understanding.

"I consider that it has become constitutionally imperative on the part of yourself, Hon'ble Madam, as the President of the Republic of India and the custodian of our Constitution to uphold the constitutional propriety and immediately intervene to ensure the protection of lives and properties of our own citizens in Manipur, as enshrined in the Constitution."

"I am confident that, through your intervention of your esteemed Office, the people of Manipur will again live peacefully in their homes in security with dignity," Kharge wrote to the President.

Earlier in the day, Congress general secretary in charge communications (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India, China to focus on stabilising ties

NEW DELHI/RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 19: India and China decided to soon convene a meeting of their Special Representatives on the boundary question after a gap of nearly five years and inched closer to the resumption of direct flights as well as Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage, weeks after pulling back their troops from two face-off points in eastern Ladakh.

The next steps in India-China ties with a broader objective to stabilise the relationship figured prominently in talks between external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi that took place on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro late Monday.

The two ministers felt that it was imperative that the focus should be on stabilising ties, managing differences and taking the next steps, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

It was the first high-level engagement between the two sides after the completion of the disengagement process in Depsang and Demchok along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

The MEA said the two ministers recognised that the disengagement in the border areas had contributed to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity.

"The discussions focused on the next steps in India-China relations. It was agreed that a meeting of the Special Representatives and of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Minister mechanism will take place soon," it said. "Among the steps discussed were the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra pilgrimage, data sharing on trans-border rivers, direct flights between India and China and media exchanges," the MEA said.

The 22nd round of Special Representatives (SR) talks were held in New Delhi on December 21, 2019. India's SR for the dialogue is NSA Ajit Doval while the Chinese side is headed by Foreign minister Wang.

The direct flights between India and China and the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage were suspended in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the meeting, Jaishankar conveyed to Wang that India is against unilateral approaches to establish dominance and it does not view (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NDA call for 'mass operation' against Kuki militants

IMPHAL, Nov 19: A meeting of MLAs of the ruling BJP-led NDA in Manipur adopted a resolution calling for a "mass operation" against the Kuki militants responsible for killing three women and three children in Jiribam district within seven days, a statement said.

The meeting, held on Monday night, was attended by 27 MLAs.

"To start Mass Operations against the Kuki militants responsible for the killing of the 6 (six) innocent women and children within 7 (seven) days," the statement said.

"Declare the Kuki Militants responsible for the killing of the 6 (six) innocent women and children as an 'unlawful organisation' within 7 (seven) days," it added. It was resolved that the case be handed over to the NIA immediately.

"The Centre will review the imposition of AFSPA as per the order

dated November 14 with immediate effect," the statement said.

If the resolutions taken are not implemented within the specified period, all the NDA legislators will decide the further course of action in consultation with the people of Manipur, it said.

The Centre and the state government will take all necessary steps at the earliest to ensure peace and normalcy in Manipur, it said.

The MLAs also condemned the attack on the properties of ministers and MLAs. Legal actions will be initiated against the miscreants based on the findings of the High Powered Committee, the statement issued by the chief minister's secretary said.

Seven MLAs were absent from the meeting with formal information on medical grounds, while notice was received from 11 MLAs for their absence without reasons, it said. (PTI)

Tusker radio-collared in Assam's Baksa

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: A tusker was radio-collared in Assam's Baksa district as part of an initiative led by the state forest department with support from the district administration and police, officials said.

The elephant was tranquillised by a team of veterinarians with the help of forest officials and biologists under the leadership of Field Director of Manas Tiger Reserve Dr C Ramesh and supervision of Baksa Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Golap Baniya at Jartalluk area of the district on Monday, they said. The elephant later joined its herd, according to a release issued on Tuesday.

"I had led a team of veterinarians from Assam State Zoo who supported the team with necessary veterinary support to capture and radio collar the elephant. We have supported the team with required medicines, tranquillizing guns and related items to make the radio collaring successful which will help in tracking elephant movement to better manage human-elephant conflict in the region", said Assam State Zoo's DFP Ashwini Kumar.

The basic objective of radio collaring of wild elephants is to determine the elephant occupancy within an area or range. It helps in better management of human-elephant conflict and facilitate elephant conservation.

The team for capturing and radio-collaring of the elephant also consisted of wildlife biologists, researchers, Green Globe, WWF India and local stakeholders.

GPS-based satellite-radio telemetry collar which was fitted to the elephant will help to assess the migratory pattern and vegetative preferences of the wild elephant and the herd it belongs to. The locations provided by the collar will also act as an early alert system to help in better management of human-elephant (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Manipur violence: Rally in protest of reimposition of AFSPA stopped



IMPHAL, Nov 19: Defying curfew, members of various civil society organisations on Tuesday held a rally in Manipur's Imphal

West district to protest against the reimposition of AFSPA in parts of the northeastern state.

The procession was, however,

stopped by the police at Keisampat junction as it defied curfew orders clamped in view of recent violence in the northeastern state.

Members of All Manipur United Clubs Organisation (AMUCO), Poirei Leimarol Meira Paibi Apunba Manipur and other local bodies took out the rally from the Kwaekithel area in the district and covered around 3.5 km before being stopped, a protester said.

"We strongly condemn the reimposition of AFSPA in areas under six police stations. A firing incident occurred in (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Irom Sharmila demands Manipur CM's resignation

KOLKATA, Nov 19: Rights activist Irom Sharmila believes that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's direct intervention is essential to resolving the crisis in violence-hit Manipur, warning that the reimposition of the "draconian" Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in six police station areas in the northeastern state could escalate the unrest further.

Sharmila appealed to Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh to take moral responsibility for the unrest and step down while urging the Centre to hold a referendum to



understand the people's aspirations and determine a path to resolve the crisis. In a telephonic interview with PTI, Sharmila, known as the 'Iron Lady of Manipur,' stressed the importance of the Centre re-

specting the diversity, values, and practices of the northeast's ethnic groups. She emphasised that sensitivity and understanding are vital for restoring peace in the region.

"The approach of the Centre is not right. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting every state, but he has not gone to Manipur. He is the democratically elected leader of the country. It has been nearly eighteen months since the violence started, yet he has not visited. Only direct intervention by Prime Minister Modi can help resolve the crisis," Sharmila (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Pollution cripples Delhi every year, but govt creates more hurdles'

Anti-pollution measures in Delhi push daily wage workers into livelihood crisis

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: As authorities in the Delhi-NCR impose restrictions to combat the worsening air quality in the region, the brunt of the anti-pollution measures is being faced by daily wage workers involved in construction activities whose lives have to a standstill.

Workers who depend on daily earnings to survive said they are worried their children will starve to death.

Construction and demolition activities (C&D) are banned under the current GRAP-IV measures that came into effect after many parts of Delhi reported "severe-plus" air quality (Air Quality Index above 450).

Suman, a 45-year-old mother of two, says "If we sit at home, what will we eat? What will we feed our children?"



She recently renewed her labour card with the hope of receiving government aid but she says it has been a futile exercise. "We don't have

government jobs where salaries come automatically. We survive on daily earnings, and without work, we have nothing," she adds.

A thick grey haze engulfed the national capital on Tuesday, with AQI soaring to 488. Delhi's air quality plummeted to the 'severe plus' category on Sunday, prompting authorities to impose Stage IV measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) on Monday.

These measures include a ban on construction and demolition activities, restrictions on truck entries except for those carrying essential items or using clean fuel, and the closure of schools. Offices have also been directed to effect changes for their employees. For Babu Ram, a 63-year-old construction worker, the ban on C&D activities has (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam oppn demands Shah's resignation for 'failure' in Manipur

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: The Congress on Tuesday accused the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in Manipur of failing to curb the ongoing violence in that state and demanded the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Led by the leader of the opposition in the Assam assembly Debabrata Saikia, the grand old party held a candle-light march in Dighalipukhuri here to protest the violence that left over 220 people dead in the neighbouring state since May last year.

"The central and Manipur governments are of the BJP but no concrete steps have been taken to solve the escalating violence. The state has been burning since last year but

Prime Minister Narendra Modi does not seem to be concerned. He is currently on a foreign trip," Saikia said.

Senior Congress leader Abdul Khaleque, who was also at the forefront of the procession, said that the N Biren Singh-led BJP government in Manipur must be dismissed immediately as he has failed to control the violence and end the crisis.

The former MP also demanded the resignation of Union home minister Amit Shah for failing to check the violence in Manipur which has turned into a "killing field". Assam unit president of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Manoj Dhaowar also expressed concern over the ongoing violent situation

in the neighbouring state which has been 'burning for over one and a half years'.

"The central government has not given the matter the attention it deserves. Despite the fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's own party is in power, there has been no sincere effort from him to put out the flames in Manipur," he said.

The Prime Minister is busy with foreign trips and it appears that he failed to recognise that Manipur is an integral part of India. Dhaowar lamented. Union home minister Amit Shah visited the state only once during the violence but no effective measures were taken to curb the unrest, the AAP leader alleged. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

UK PM Starmer announces relaunch of FTA talks after Modi meet

LONDON, Nov 19: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has announced that trade talks with India will relaunch in the new year, following his bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit in Brazil.

Starmer and Modi met on the sidelines of the summit in Rio de Janeiro on Monday after which Downing Street said the UK will seek a new strategic partnership with India, including a trade agreement as well as deepening cooperation in areas like security, education, technology, and climate change.

Starmer's spokesperson said the UK is committed to negotiating a trade deal with India, one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

"A new trade deal with India will support jobs and prosperity in the UK – and represent a step forward in our mission to deliver growth and opportunity across our country," Starmer said in a statement released by 10 Downing Street after the bilateral meeting.

A readout of the Starmer-Modi talks released in London on Tuesday stated that both leaders agreed to take forward an ambitious UK-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to take the relationship to new heights in trade and investment, security and defence, technology, climate, health and education.

"As part of this they agreed to relaunch UK-India trade talks early next year. They also welcomed the recent launch of the

'Nations' security and prosperity intimately connected to oceans'

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the security and prosperity of nations is intimately connected to oceans and the gov't has taken several transformative steps to bolster India's maritime capabilities.

In his message sent from Camp Office in Nigeria, Modi called for success of 'Sagarmanthan, The Ocean's Dialogue', being held at the national capital to build consensus for partnerships of a prosperous future of humanity. "Today, the security and prosperity of nations is intimately connected to oceans. "Recognising the potential of oceans, several transformative steps have been taken to bolster India's maritime capabilities," he said. Sagarmanthan, South Asia's largest maritime thought leadership forum, began on Monday.

"Over the last decade, guided by the vision of 'Ports of Prosperity', 'Ports for Progress' and 'Ports for Productivity', we have doubled the capacity of our ports," he said.

"By enhancing port efficiency, reducing turnaround times and strengthening last-mile connectivity through expressways, railways and riverine networks, we have transformed India's shoreline," the prime minister added. Highlighting India's rich maritime legacy and steps to build the sector, Modi said India's maritime tradition goes back several millennia and is among the richest in the world. While noting that the thriving port cities of Lothal and Dholavira, fleets of the Chola dynasty, exploits of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj are great inspirations, he said, oceans are a shared heritage for nations and societies, as well as the lifeline for international trade. (PTI)

We disagree with decision, plan to appeal: Meta on CCI imposing ₹ 213-cr penalty

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: After the Competition Commission imposed a ₹ 213-crore penalty on Meta in relation to WhatsApp privacy policy, the company said it disagrees with the watchdog's decision and plans to appeal.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Monday asked WhatsApp to refrain from sharing user data with other applications, owned by Meta, for advertising purposes for a period of five years.

India's competition watchdog imposed a penalty of ₹ 213.14 crore on the social media giant for unfair business ways with respect to WhatsApp privacy policy update done in 2021.

Besides, the competition watchdog has directed Meta to cease and desist from anti-competitive practices.

Meta and WhatsApp have also been asked to implement certain behavioural remedies within a defined timeline to address the anti-competitive issues, according to a CCI order.

A Meta spokesperson said that the company disagrees with the CCI's decision and plans to appeal. "As a reminder, the 2021 update



Technology Security Initiative, and discussed the opportunities for further cooperation on defence and security," a Downing Street spokesperson said.

"Finally both leaders agreed on the strength of cultural ties between the two countries, providing a strong foundation for further ongoing cooperation," the spokesperson added. Starmer then took to X to term his meeting with Modi as "a very productive."

Earlier, Prime Minister Modi described the exchange as "extremely productive" on his post on X.

He said: "For India, the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with the UK is of immense priority. In the coming years, we are eager to work closely in areas such as technology, green energy, security, innovation and technology.

"We also want to add strength to trade as well as cultural linkages."

Meanwhile, Downing Street highlighted that Starmer is using

Sensex rebounds 239 pts, Nifty ends 7-day decline on bottom fishing by investors

MUMBAI, Nov 19: Benchmark Sensex rebounded 239 points while Nifty ended its seven-day losing streak on Tuesday following value-buying in banking, IT and auto shares amid mixed global trends.

Snapping its four days of decline, the 30-share Sensex climbed 239.37 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 77,578.38. The index opened with gains and spurted further 1,112.64 points or 1.43 per cent to hit the day's high of 78,451.65. However, flag-end decline in Reliance Industries restricted the market rally.

The NSE Nifty also bounced back after seven straight sessions of losses. The broader 50-issue barometer gained 64.70 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at 23,518.50. The index jumped over 300 points to hit 23,780 level in the day.

Stock markets were on a decline in the past seven sessions with Nifty tanking 1,030 points or over 4.3 per cent due to FIIL selling, weaker-than-expected quarterly results and strengthening US bond yields. Sensex plunged more than 3,000 points to 77,300 levels during the period.

"A strong bounce back due to bottom fishing was short-lived as caution prevails in the market. Investors tend to use every opportunity to book profit amidst consistent FIIL selling and weak Q2 earnings. Profit-booking was also seen ahead of the upcoming Maharashtra state election," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The recent correction in valuation suggests a potential pause in further price erosion. However, the

"Whether it's lowering Indian tariffs to help British firms export to this dynamic market or boosting investment which already supports over 600,000 jobs across both countries, striking a deal is important to deliver this government's core mission of driving economic growth," he said.

India and the UK have been negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) since January 2022, with talks paused during general elections in both countries earlier this year. According to latest statistics, the bilateral trading relationship was worth GBP 42 billion in the 12 months to June 2024, expected to be significantly boosted by an FTA. The Labour Party government in the UK is keen to highlight a trade friendly message as a means to deliver a strong economy at home. DBT had announced the Starmer-led government's commitment to relaunching talks with all FTA partners soon after winning the general election in July.

Since then, negotiations have been kickstarted with the Gulf Cooperation Council, Switzerland and South Korea, with the UK also set to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) on December 15.

While officials on the Indian side had expressed their readiness to resume FTA negotiations from the stalled fourteenth round, this announcement of a new year start for the talks is the first clear signal of a timeframe from the British side. (PTI)



recovery will depend on an uptick in earnings which is likely to rebound due to the likely spurt in central and state expenditure in H2, Nair added.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Titan, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid and Infosys were the biggest gainers.

In contrast, Reliance Industries, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Maruti, Tata Steel and Bharti Airtel were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 1,403.40 crore on Monday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought shares worth ₹ 2,330.56 crore, according to exchange data.

The BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.94 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.90 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, realty surged 1.45 per cent, auto (1.41 per cent), services (1.24 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.21 per

cent), consumer durables (1.01 per cent) and healthcare (0.67 per cent). Metal, oil & gas and energy were the laggards.

As many as 2,362 stocks advanced while 1,601 declined and 96 remained unchanged on the BSE.

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

European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended mostly higher on Monday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.25 per cent to USD 73.12 a barrel.

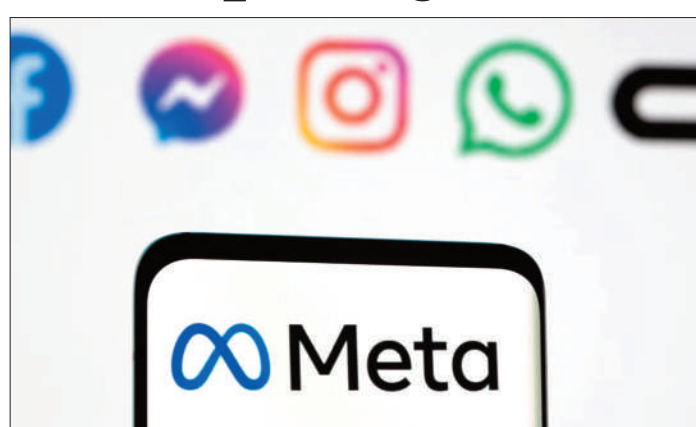
The 30-share BSE benchmark dropped 241.30 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 77,339.01, registering its fourth day of decline on Monday. Falling for the seventh day in a row, the Nifty dipped 78.90 points or 0.34 per cent to 23,453.80. Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE have declared a trading holiday on November 20 for assembly elections in Maharashtra. (PTI)

On sharing of WhatsApp user data for purposes other than advertising, the regulator said WhatsApp's policy should include a detailed explanation of the user data shared with other Meta companies or Meta company products.

"This explanation should specify the purpose of data sharing, linking each type of data to its corresponding purpose," it said.

The watchdog also said that sharing of user data collected on WhatsApp with other Meta companies or Meta company products for purposes other than for providing WhatsApp services shall not be made a condition for users to access WhatsApp Service in India.

On sharing of WhatsApp user data for purposes other than for providing WhatsApp services, CCI said all users in India (including users who have accepted 2021 update) will be provided with the choice to manage such data sharing by way of an opt-out notification prominently through an in-app notification. (PTI)



did not change the privacy of people's personal messages and was offered as a choice for users at the time. We also ensured no one would have their accounts deleted or lose functionality of the WhatsApp service because of this update," the Meta spokesperson said.

Meta further said the update was about introducing optional business features on WhatsApp, and provided further transparency about data collection and usage.

The Meta spokesperson added since that time, WhatsApp has been incredibly valuable to people

and businesses, enabling organisations and government institutions to deliver citizen services through COVID and beyond, and as well as supporting small businesses in furtherance of the India economy.

"WhatsApp is able to do all of this because it offers services supported by Meta. We are committed to finding a path forward that allows us to continue providing the experiences that people and businesses have come to expect from us," the Meta spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, CCI has barred WhatsApp from sharing data col-

Contd. from Page 1.

Kharge writes to Prez on Manipur

Jairam Ramesh along with Manipur Congress chief K. Meghachandra Singh, AICC in-charge of state Girish Chodankar, inner Manipur MP A. Bimol Akoiyam and former Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Nabam Tuki met Kharge, apprising him of the situation in the violence-hit state and deliberated on ways to bring peace in the state.

The Congress chief blamed the "deliberate acts of omission and commission" and "inordinate inaction" by the Centre and the state government for the present situation.

"With every passing day, the people of Manipur are becoming insecure on their own soil - their home turf having witnessed their infants, babies, children and women getting mercilessly killed," he said.

"With no succour coming from the governments involved, they are finding themselves completely isolated and helpless for more than 540 days now. Indeed, they have lost their faith in the Prime Minister of India and the chief minister of the state to protect their lives and properties," the Congress chief said in his letter.

Kharge said that since May 2023 despite the demand of the people of Manipur, the Prime Minister has not visited the state. "On the other hand, the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha has been in Manipur thrice in the last 18 months and I, myself, have visited the state in this period," he noted. "The refusal of the Prime Minister to visit Manipur is beyond anybody's understanding."

"I and my party strongly believe that the deliberate acts of omission and commission, as indeed inordinate inaction on the part of both the central and state governments, have resulted in complete lawlessness, absence of rule of law, violations of human rights, compromise of national security and suppression of fundamental rights of citizens of our country." "It also amounts to destruction of the Right to Life with dignity under Article 19 of the Constitution," Kharge said in his letter to President Murmu. (PTI)

India, China to focus on

its relationships through the prism of other nations, according to the MEA. "On the global situation and international issues, the external affairs minister noted that India and China have both differences and convergences. We have worked constructively in the BRICS and the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) framework," the MEA said in a statement. It said Jaishankar said that India is strongly committed to a multipolar world, including a multipolar Asia.

"Where India is concerned, its foreign policy has been principled and consistent, marked by independent thought and action."

"We are against unilateral approaches to establish dominance. India does not view its relationships through the prism of other nations," it said. Foreign minister Wang concurred with Jaishankar that India-China relations have particular salience in world politics, it added. "He noted that our leaders had agreed in Kazan on the way forward. The two ministers felt that it was imperative that the focus should be on stabilising ties, managing differences and taking the next steps," the MEA said.

In a post on 'X', the external affairs minister said: "We noted the progress in the recent disengagement in the India-China border areas. And exchanged views on the next steps in our bilateral ties. Also discussed the global situation."

The move to revive various dialogue mechanisms including the special representatives talks was broadly decided at a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in the Russian city of Kazan on October 23. Days after the two sides reached an agreement on October 21 on disengagement in Demchok and Depsang, Indian and Chinese militaries completed the process marking a virtual end to over four-year standoff in the two friction points. The two sides also resumed patrolling activities in the two areas after a gap of almost four-and-a-half years. (PTI)

Govt to rename Karimganj

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has accepted our request." Focusing further on investment in infrastructure development, the Assam government will organise roadshows at various places abroad and other cities of India in the coming months to attract participants for the global summit, Sarma said.

Later, a cabinet communique, shared by Sarma on X, stated that an ordinance on the state GST act has been approved to maintain parity with the central law on the same. To achieve the state's plan to increase forest cover and accelerate the adoption of agroforestry as a significant component of the agricultural ecosystem, the cabinet also approved the Assam Agroforestry Policy, 2024. "This decision will ensure a dedicated state policy on agriculture, mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, increase the area under Trees Outside Forest (TOF), boost rural economy and farmers income," the communique said.

Besides, the cabinet also gave its nod for 94 projects worth over Rs 70 crore in the soil conservation and agriculture sector.

The government decided to designate the Assam State Space Application Centre (ASSAC) as the nodal agency for policy support pertaining to remote sensing, GPS and drone surveys among others.

Accordingly, ASSAC will be included under the PM Gati Shakti-driven programme for data-sharing, standards for data quality and police framework of geospatial data in the state. "With this new setup as state nodal agency, ASSAC will be in a better position to liaise with stakeholders of state government, ISRO, DOS NESAC in the area of scientific and techno-managerial activities," it said. In the meeting, the cabinet also approved several amendments in the Assam Unified Building Construction (Regulation) Byelaws, 2022 in order to carry out urban reforms and achieve planned development.

"The amendment will bring about a transformation in the land use, transportation and land value capturing mechanism of urban areas to develop sustainable, healthy, liveable and efficient cities," it added. (PTI)

Manipur violence: Rally in protest

Jiribam district just a few days after AFSPA was reimposed in Jiribam," he said. He referred to the Jiribam firing incident which left one person dead and another injured on Sunday night. The incident occurred during a clash between security forces and a mob that was vandalising properties in the Babupara area of Jiribam.

The AFSPA gives armed forces operating in disturbed areas sweeping powers to search, arrest and open fire if they deem it necessary for the "maintenance of public order". The Centre has recently reimposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Manipur's six police station areas, including the violence-hit Jiribam.

In a notification, the Union home ministry said the decision was taken given the continuous volatile situation there due to the ongoing ethnic violence. The police station areas where AFSPA has been reimposed are Sekmai and Lamsang in Imphal West, Lamlai in Imphal East, Jiribam in Jiribam district, Leimakhong in Kangpokpi and Moirang in Bishnupur. (PTI)

Irom Sharmila demands Manipur

claimed. Alleging that CM N. Biren Singh has failed to restore peace, Sharmila stressed that immediate and decisive action is needed to stop the ongoing ethnic violence, which has claimed over 200 lives and displaced thousands since May last year. She claimed, "The wrong policies of the state government have pushed Manipur into this unprecedented crisis. The chief minister must immediately step down for failing to restore peace since May last year. The BJP must ask him to resign. He has failed the people of Manipur." The Centre first needs to understand the problem and what the people of Manipur want, she said.

"The Centre must conduct a referendum among the communities to determine how to resolve the crisis. The government needs to understand what the people of Manipur want before taking corrective steps," she said.

The Centre last week reimposed AFSPA in six police station areas of Manipur, including the violence-hit Jiribam, citing the "continuous volatile situation" due to ongoing ethnic violence. This came on the same day the Manipur Police announced the seizure of a cache of arms and ammunition from the Jiribam and Churachandpur districts.

Criticising the Centre's decision to reimpose AFSPA in some areas following the recent spate of violence, the rights activist reiterated her long-standing opposition to the Act, describing it as a "colonial-era law that cannot address Manipur's problems".

"AFSPA can never be a solution. It is a draconian law. It has been in Manipur for so long, yet it hasn't stopped the violence. The Centre must recognise that the northeast is part of India not just in words but in practice. The reimposition of AFSPA would further aggravate the situation," Sharmila, who conducted a 16-year-old fast demanding withdrawal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, said. Reflecting on her activism, she said, "AFSPA has brought nothing but suffering to the people of Manipur. It's time we moved beyond such colonial laws to find real solutions."

Sharmila questioned the "double standards" in addressing law and order issues in different parts of the country. "Can you impose AFSPA or suspend internet services for months in cities like Mumbai or Delhi or any big states like Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh during a crisis? India is a democratic country, and such measures should not be carried forward from the colonial era. In the name of fighting insurgency, crores of rupees are wasted, which could have been used for the development of the northeast," she stated. (PTI)

Tusker radio-collared in Assam's

conflict in the landscape, said DFO Baksa Forest Division Golap Baniya. "The radio collaring of wild elephant will help understand ecology, habitat utilisation pattern, movement and occupancy in a more scientific way and help come out with better elephant conservation strategy in the landscape", Aaranyak's head of Elephant Research and Conservation Division (ERCD) Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar said. (PTI)

Anti-pollution measures in Delhi

exacerbated an already dire financial situation. He has a wife, son, daughter-in-law and grandchild to support, besides having to deal with a debt of ₹ 3 lakh. "There's no pension for people like me. Schemes like Ladli Behna are riddled with corruption, middlemen take everything and we get nothing," he says. "If I can't work, my family won't survive."

Similarly, Rajesh Kumar, a 42-year-old labourer, says his family in his village in Bihar depends on the money he sends home. "I have not married yet because I have several responsibilities, including my sister's wedding, which has left me with a debt of ₹ 6 lakh," he says. "This happens every year, pollution cripples Delhi, but instead of solving the problem, the government creates more hurdles for people like us," he adds. (PTI)

Assam oppn demands Shah's

Recently, mobs have attacked the residences of several ministers, legislators, and even the chief minister's house. Innocent lives have been lost, and militant groups have been torturing women and children, he said.

"In this situation, we demand that the PM visit Manipur to oversee the efforts to restore peace and order," Dhanowar said. Over the past year and a half, the Prime Minister has travelled to many foreign countries and even advocated for an end to the Russia-Ukraine war, "but he has shown no concern for the war-like conditions prevailing in Manipur," he added.

Ethnic violence between Imphal valley-based and the Kuki-Zo tribal groups in the hills have claimed the lives of over 220 people and rendered thousands homeless since May last year. In recent weeks, violence escalated in Jiribam, bordering Assam's Cachar district. (PTI)

OBITUARY



Retired employee of Sivasagar Municipality Board and a popular lady of the town, Minu Barua, passed away at her Sankar Mandir Road residence on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday. She was suffering from cancer. She was 71. She leaves behind three sons, including popular youth leader Pranob Barua, and a daughter. BJP leader Kushal Duwory, BJP Nagar Mandal, District Committee, New Look Academy Institution, Hari Kirtan Namghar, Sankar Samaj Namghar, Brihatar Sivasagar Press Club, Municipality Employees' Association, Sivasagar Municipality Taxpayers' Association, and several other organisations have condoled her death.



Dipankar Borah (25), the only son of Joon Borah, a school teacher, and Mamoni Borah, permanent residents of Nagsankar Center, breathed his last at a private hospital in Guwahati on Monday night. Dipankar, who sustained serious injuries in a motorcycle accident in front of Sootea PS on November 2, was immediately taken to Tezpur and later to Guwahati for further treatment. However, he succumbed to his injuries on Monday night. The untimely death of the youth has cast a pall of gloom over the entire Nagsankar area. He leaves behind his parents and a host of relatives.

BTC chief Pramod Boro reviews vision document for BTR's development

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 19: The Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Pramod Boro, conducted a detailed review of the progress in preparing vision documents for the communities of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

The review meeting, held on Tuesday evening at the BTC Secretariat Conference Hall in Kokrajhar, focused on evaluating insights gathered through extensive community-specific Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

These FGDs engaged leaders, scholars, student organisations, civil societies, and literary groups from each community across BTR to ensure that the vision documents comprehensively reflect their distinct needs, traditions, and aspirations.

CEM Pramod Boro highlighted the vision document's pivotal role in shaping a strategic roadmap to ensure a prosperous, peaceful, and inclusive future for all communities within the region.

He underscored that the document would form the foundation for actionable plans aimed at fostering sustainable growth while addressing the unique aspirations of the diverse communities in BTR.

Speaking on the occasion, BTC CEM Boro reaffirmed the BTR government's unwavering commitment to building a region characterised by peace, justice, and collective happiness.

He emphasised the importance of inclusivity, ensuring that developmental initiatives are designed to cater to the varied needs of all communities.

Participating in the review meeting, the Speaker of the BTCLA, Katiram Boro, and the principal secretary of BTC, Akash Deep, stressed the importance of collaborative efforts.

They noted that the vision document must reflect the collective aspirations of the people, serving as a guiding framework to transform BTR into a progressive and developed region.

Minister Nandita Gorlosa visits Rabindranath Tagore University

HT Correspondent
HOJAI, Nov 19: Nandita Gorlosa, Cabinet minister of Assam for Power, Sports & Youth Welfare, Cooperation, Indigenous and Tribal Faith, and Cultural Department, graced Rabindranath Tagore University, Hojai, on Monday.

She held an engaging interactive session with the students and faculty. The meeting was chaired by the vice-chancellor of RTU, Prof Manabendra Dutta Choudhury, with Tilak Ch Kalita, the registrar (in-charge), serving as the convener. The session commenced with the recital of the University anthem. The welcome speech was delivered by Prof Rezina Ahmed of the department of Zoology.

Addressing the audience, Gorlosa inspired the students by highlighting various pathways for personal and professional growth. She emphasised the expanding opportunities in diverse fields and urged students to explore these promising avenues.

Accompanying her were three officials, namely, Bishwajit Chakraborty, jr. registrar, Cooperative Department; Antara Gogoi, jr. director, Sports & Youth Welfare; and Rumi Sarma, research assistant, Directorate of Archaeology. The officials addressed the audience, sharing insights about their respective departments and discussing potential opportunities for job creation and higher education.

CDAA meeting adopts key resolutions for pharmaceutical sector

Key resolutions include addressing NSQ medicines, enhancing cold chain logistics & establishing district-level testing labs

HT Correspondent

HAF LONG, Nov 19: The Chemists and Druggists Association of Assam (CDAA) held its Executive Committee Meeting at Hotel Borail View, Silchar, attended by delegates from across the state. The event, chaired by CDAA president Dr NL Agarwala, was graced by Assam state general secretary Jitu Barman, state treasurer Koustav Kr Guha, and leaders of the Cachar Medicine Retail and Wholesalers Association, including president Karuna Sindhu Dey, secretary Montosh Paul, and organising Secretary Shibaji Bhattacharjee.

The meeting began with a formal felicitation and condolence session, setting a respectful tone before diving into a packed agenda. A highlight of the event was the unveiling of the 'Medishine Bulletin', a publication offering pharmaceutical updates and insights from district-level associations within Assam and beyond.

Key resolutions were adopted during the meeting, addressing challenges faced by the pharmaceutical sector: Social Media and Website Cell formation of a dedicated cell to enhance communication and utilise



WhatsApp for efficient information dissemination; GST mismatch notices discussion on resolving discrepancies and current status of notices impacting members; cold chain logistics proposals to introduce specialised containers for better pharmaceutical transshipment; discount awareness programs to educate members about ongoing discount policies and their implications; licensing issues (U/S 32(b) deliberations on challenges related to pharmacists' licenses.

A significant focus was on the alarming rise in Not of Standard

Quality (NSQ) medicines. Over fifty such medicines were recently flagged by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), raising concerns about substandard and potentially harmful drugs in circulation.

The CDAA resolved to appeal to the state government for the establishment of district-level testing laboratories to regularly evaluate pharmaceutical products and identify NSQ medicines. Delegates emphasised that such measures are critical for ensuring public safety and maintaining the quality of medicines. Con-

cerns were also raised about how aggressive discount policies might contribute to the prevalence of substandard drugs.

At a joint press briefing, CDAA president Dr NL Agarwala, general secretary Jitu Barman, and spokesperson Debashish Swami reiterated the urgency of addressing the NSQ medicine issue. They announced plans for a new test laboratory under the Department of AYUSH in Assam and called on the government to expedite the establishment of district-level facilities.

Currently, the region has only one functional test laboratory, underscoring the pressing need for more infrastructure. The leaders stressed the responsibilities of the CDSCO under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, including drug approval, clinical trial oversight, and collaboration with state drug regulators to uphold stringent quality standards.

The meeting reflected the association's proactive approach to tackling challenges in the pharmaceutical trade, highlighting its commitment to public health, professional ethics, and the welfare of the community.

DC Mridul Yadav launches road safety & healthcare initiatives in Cachar

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 19: In a landmark move that promises to reshape the future of public safety and healthcare in Cachar, district commissioner Mridul Yadav has led two groundbreaking initiatives aimed at enhancing the lives of local residents.

On Monday, DC Yadav unveiled a comprehensive plan to address road safety concerns and healthcare accessibility, setting the stage for a safer and healthier district.

During a high-level meeting of the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC), DC Yadav presented an action-packed roadmap designed to curb road accidents, which will be driven by a dynamic Four Es Strategy: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Emergency.

Response. This strategy includes a thorough audit of accident-prone areas, which will guide infrastructure development and improvements.

In a significant step, high-risk zones will see the installation of surveillance cameras for real-time monitoring, and stricter traffic regulations will be enforced to ensure safety.

As part of the road safety initiative, a rapid-response team will be

formed to ensure faster emergency handling, and an immediate inspection and repair of the heavily damaged Srikona-Badarpur stretch will prevent further accidents. "These measures are designed not only to reduce accidents but also to save lives across Cachar," stated DC Yadav, outlining his vision for a safer district.

In the afternoon, DC Yadav visited the Udharbond Block Primary Health Centre (PHC) to assess its facilities and engaged with the medical officer to identify gaps in the district's healthcare services. His visit highlighted the administration's ongoing efforts to improve healthcare infrastructure and ensure timely medical care for all residents.

"We are committed to strengthening the healthcare system in Cachar, providing high-quality services and emergency care to every citizen," remarked DC Yadav.

With these forward-thinking initiatives, Cachar is poised to become a model district for public safety and healthcare. DC Yadav urged all stakeholders to collaborate in building a safer, healthier future for the community: "Together, let's pave the way for safer roads and better healthcare for all."

Nowgong Girls' College hosts All-Assam Binoy Chandra Bora Memorial Debate Competition

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Nov 19: The 'All-Assam Binoy Chandra Bora Memorial Inter-College/University Debate Competition, 2024' was organised at Nowgong Girls' College on the theme 'One Nation, One Election - A Positive Step Towards India's Economic and Political Outlook' on Tuesday.

The event commenced with an inaugural speech delivered by the teacher-in-charge, Dr Mitali Goswami, followed by the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and a welcome address by the principal of the college, Dr Kulen Chandra Das. He welcomed the participants from different institutions and reminisced about the contributions of Binoy Chandra Bora and his family to the institution.

Girindra Kumar Baruah chaired the event as the speaker, while Sapanti Bordoloi and Mohini Mohan Deka served as judges.

Participants from various educational institutions, including Nowgong Girls' College, JB Law College, BKB College, Darrang College, and Gauhati University, took part in the competition. Treasury bench members persuasively elucidated the advantages of 'one nation, one election' on the floor of the house. They cited the Manipur insurgency to support their argument, asserting that a unified election process could help resolve such issues and emphasised the high costs of conducting elections at different times of the year. These points sparked numerous counter-arguments from the opposition bench, which argued that while the concept may be feasible for a small country like Belgium, it could be overly idealistic for a vast and diverse nation like India.

Gaurav Kashyap from JB Law College was adjudged the best debater, followed by Sunit Sarma, also from JB Law College, as the second-best debater. The best team award went to JB Law College, while Gauhati University bagged the runners-up position. The winners were presented with trophies, cash prizes, and certificates.

The program concluded with valuable remarks from the speaker and the judges. Ashish Sakia from the department of Geography delivered the vote of thanks.

TU hosts workshop on women empowerment & career opportunities

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, Nov 19: The department of Physics, Tezpur University, in association with the Gender in Physics Working Group (GIPWG) of the Indian Physics Association, has organised a two-day workshop, 'Women Empowerment - Career Opportunities in Science (WE-COS)', starting from Tuesday.

Noted physicist Prof Srubabati Goswami from the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, graced the occasion. Other distinguished guests included Prof V Madhurima, former director of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell, Central University of Tamil Nadu, and Dr Bulumoni Kalita from Dibrugarh University.

In his inaugural address, Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, vice-chancellor of Tezpur University, emphasised the crucial role of women in science.

He stated, "Science is not just about understanding the world around us; it's about shaping the future.

Therefore, without the contribution of women in science, many of the challenges we face cannot be addressed."

Prof Srubabati Goswami highlighted the significant gender gap in scientific professions, particularly in physics. She stressed the need to address the complex root causes of this gap both locally and globally.

The workshop featured interactive sessions and panel discussions. Dr Moon Moon Devi, the local convener, discussed career opportunities in science. Prof V Madhurima, Prof Nidhi S Bhattacharyya, and Dr Rupjyoti Gogoi from the department of Physics, along with other faculty members, explored strategies for promoting inclusivity in science. Students and faculty members from various institutions, including Biswanath College, Tezpur College, Darrang College, and different departments of Tezpur University, participated in the event.

Chutia Yuba Sanmilon stages protest in Jorhat for ST status

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, Nov 19: Chutia Yuba Sanmilon, Jorhat unit, in association with the Titabor unit, staged a protest in front of the Jorhat District Commissioner's office on Wednesday, demanding ST status. Hundreds of protesters shouted slogans and displayed placards and banners for two hours.

"We are demanding justice. The government has assured us many times to solve our demand, but it is still in vain," said Shyamol Jyoti Bora, president of the Chutia Yuba Sanmilon Central Committee. "We have planned a series of protests across the state to push for our demand. Protests will continue until we reach our goal," Bora added.

He asserted that they are also demanding an autonomous council for the Chutias, who are original and indigenous people.

Manoj Chutia, working president of Chutia Yuba Sanmilon; Pranjal Hazarika and Mridupabon Saikia, joint secretaries; and Raj Barhoi Bora, sports secretary of the Central Committee, attended the program.

Second RRR Centre opens in Margherita

HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, Nov 19: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (RRR) Centre opened on Tuesday at the Margherita Municipal Board office premises, marking a significant step in waste management under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan initiative.

The facility aims to streamline the collection of household items such as old clothes, books, toys, and shoes, promoting sustainable waste practices in the region. Anand Kumar Sharma, chairman of the Margherita Mu-

nicipal Board, inaugurated the centre. During the event, he urged residents to donate unused items to the RRR Centre instead of discarding them improperly, emphasising community responsibility in reducing waste. This marks the second RRR Centre established in Margherita, following the success of the first, which was opened last year.

The initiative highlights the Municipal Board's commitment to fostering environmental awareness and a recycling cul-

ture within the town.

The inauguration ceremony saw participation from key officials, including engineer Jitil Nath, executive officer Dheeraj Bhattacharjee, Denis L Gangte, urban technical officer, Sanjeev Das, finance management officer, and Arunima Barman, city project officer of the Swachh Bharat Mission of the Margherita Municipal Board, along with all ward commissioners and staff, showcasing collective support for the project.

ATTSA demands urgent construction of Thomson Tinali-Selaiguri Road

HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, Nov 19: On Tuesday, the Moranhat Assam Tea Tribe Students Association (ATTSA) carried out a three-hour protest demonstration against the non-implementation of the Thomson Tinali-Hingrijan-Selaiguri Road construction project under Moran Revenue Circle, the foundation stone for which was laid by the then Jorhat MP Topon Kumar Gogoi in the presence of Revenue and Disaster Management minister Jogen Mohan on March 9, 2023.

The ATTSA activists raised slogans against the Lok Nirman Department and the local MLA for their indifference to commuters facing hardship due to the dilapidated road. Numerous accidents have occurred on this stretch of the road in the last six months, and the student body demanded the immediate resumption of construction within three days. Residents of the Ranagali Reserve area are currently forced to travel to Moran town via Kachumari due to the terrible condition of the road.

to foster cleaner and greener ecosystems within railway premises, contributing to the overall well-being of railway communities. Together, these MoUs reflect a forward-thinking collaboration designed to enhance the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of railway operations in the region.

The significant collaboration between NFR and IITG symbolises a strong commitment to innovation and technological advancements, which will play an important role in overcoming challenges unique to the NE region's geographical and operational conditions. These projects are expected to significantly benefit both passengers and railway staff. This move, in fact, will be a major leap forward in NFR's efforts to modernise and optimise railway operations in the region. The signing ceremony also included a series of presentations by IIT Guwahati professors, showcasing their research and innovative solutions tailored for NFR's requirements. This partnership highlights the shared vision of both institutions in creating impactful technological solutions for the benefit of society.

NFR signs MoUs with IIT Guwahati

Agreements focus on improving safety, efficiency & sustainability in NFR operations

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: In a landmark collaboration aimed at enhancing safety, operational efficiency, and sustainability, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has signed four significant Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati (IITG). The signing ceremony took place at the premises of IIT Guwahati, in the presence of Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, general manager of NF Railway, along with other senior officials. The director of IITG, Prof Devendra Jalihal, along with other esteemed professors and delegates from IITG, were also present, representing the esteemed institution at the signing ceremony.

This collaboration will mark a pivotal step toward leveraging cutting-edge research and innovations to address critical challenges faced by the railways within the region and beyond. Among the areas of development covered under the MoUs, the first one will focus on the detection of broken and unbroken seals in cargo trains using stand-alone high-speed cameras. This system, designed with IIT



Guwahati's expertise, aims to strengthen security and operational efficiency by preventing pilferage and ensuring the safe transportation of freight. Enhancing passenger safety is the second MoU, which focuses on the development of a face recognition and alert system to detect and notify authorities about potential criminal activities. By employing advanced machine learning and AI technologies, this initiative will help create a safer travel environment for passengers. The third MoU addresses a long-standing operational challenge

through the introduction of a real-time alert system for the alarm chain pulling mechanism in trains. This system will mitigate issues such as pressure drops and emergency recreations during train operations, ensuring smoother journeys and improved operational management. Furthering its commitment to environmental sustainability, the fourth MoU targets the development of Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs) and Solid Waste Management Systems for railway colonies, premises, and coaching depots. This initiative is expected

QUOTE OF THE DAY

To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace. - George Washington

Cop29: Commitments backtracked

The Draft Communique of G20, the countries which are responsible for 80 per cent of global emissions, circulated on November 19, 2024, doesn't mention "transitioning away from the fossil fuels" the phrase already agreed upon at COP28. G20 summit (November 18-19) at Brazil thus displays a stark failure, as far as climate action is concerned, on the one hand, while COP29 in midway at Azerbaijan has turned into a stage for theatrics, and time is running out for an effective agreement on key issue of considerably scaling up necessary funding the climate action to save the planet Earth. Despite an early breakthrough in COP29 (November 11-22) on standards that is likely to pave the way for a UN-governed carbon market, the talks on climate finance have been slow and contentious, with delegates digging in their heels rather than looking for common ground. It is frustrating before COP29 closes on November 22. As COP29 climate talks in Baku entered their final week, the UN climate chief Simon Stiell had to tell negotiators on Monday to "cut the theatrics," get down to business and hammer out a new finance deal to compensate countries for climate-driven damages and pay for a clean-energy transition.

"Bluffing, brinkmanship, and pre-mediated playbooks" are burning up precious time and running down the goodwill needed for an ambitious package, emphasized Mr. Stiell, the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Mr. Stiell's plea comes after the concern expressed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in Rio de Janeiro, where G20 summit is being held, over the state of negotiations at COP29. The Draft G20 leaders' communique focuses on the 2 degree Celsius, which was upper limit of the Paris Agreement of 2015 but the countries had agreed to keep warming below 1.5 degree Celsius by 2030, that is clearly a back-tracking. Far worse, not mentioning "transition away from fossil fuels" agreed upon at COP28, while mentioning the need for scaling up public and private climate finance and investment for developing countries and a successful New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) outcome in Baku, is clearly hypocritical. "We reaffirm the Paris Agreement temperature goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. We underscore that the impacts of climate change will be much lower at the temperature increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius compared with 2 degrees Celsius and reiterate our resolve to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius." "Silence on a new climate finance goal and refusal to address a fossil fuel phase-out are unacceptable from the world's largest economies and highest emitters. As uncertainty grows at COP29, the moment demands political leadership - not passive repetition of past agreements," said the Climate Action Network in a statement.

Negotiation in Baku is primarily focused on how to pay for transition away from burning fossil fuels and how to equitably support climate adaptation. For this a considerably increased financing in necessary, since estimated adaptation finance gap is in the range of USD 187-359 billion per year as per Adaptation Gap Report 2024. The annual financing pledge was of on \$100 billion set in 2009 which is to expire this year. However, it was for the first time in 2022, the annual target was achieved in 2022 when it reached USD 115.9 billion. Based on modelled projections using the United Nations Global Policy Model, developing countries would need about \$1.1 trillion in climate finance from 2025 and some \$1.8 trillion by 2030. UNCTAD says that the new climate financing contribution target for developed economies would be \$0.89 trillion from 2025 and \$1.46 trillion by 2030.

Trump's win ignites Bitcoin boom, India watches from the sidelines

By: Arun Kumar Shrivastav

Bitcoin has been rising over the past few weeks and it is currently trading at above \$90,000. With the \$92,000 level breached, Bitcoin seems headed for the \$100K mark. Bitcoin has surged 36.33% in 1 month, over 20% in 7-day and 3.45% in 24 hours. In a year-long period, BTC has surged a whopping 147%. For the critics of Bitcoin, it's a challenging moment. However, this is historic for those who see BTC as the currency of the future. BTC is within striking distance of the \$100K mark. The good news is that even other coins and tokens have seen a strong price rally.

Earlier, when BTC surged to \$72,000 levels in mid-September, many altcoins saw their prices decline. It meant that investors pulled out their investments from other coins and reinvested the funds in BTC. But this time, altcoins are also seeing an increase in their prices, meaning the entire cryptocurrency market is riding a bullish trend. The overall market capitalization of the crypto industry has soared well past \$3 trillion, with BTC contributing \$1.78 trillion.

What's making BTC rise like this? There are several factors. The most recent and potent factor is the victory of Republican candidate Donald Trump in the US Presidential election. Over \$20 billion of donations flowed into the 2024 presidential campaign, with a major part of this going to Trump. With Trump winning the race, the donors have hit the jackpot.

Crypto billionaires and organizations donated handsomely to Trump's campaign as he promised to support the cryptocurrency industry. He also promised he would remove SEC chairperson Gary Gensler. Now that Trump has won the election and is slated to take over as the US President in January 2025, Bitcoin's value is skyrocketing. Elon Musk, with all his technology companies and crypto assets, supported Trump. Time for all these geeks to cheer!

However, a recent Bitcoin halving that reduces the pace at which new coins are minted is believed to be the fundamental force behind the surge.

The Bitcoin halving event took place on April 19, 2024, and it reduced miners' benefits by half. Earlier, miners were rewarded \$6,250 for creating a block. Now, they get \$3,125 BTC for the same job. Every four years, this event creates a scarcity of Bitcoin, pushing the price up. This is part of the Bitcoin founders' vision as a deflationary strategy.

Geopolitical tensions have also contributed significantly to the recent surge of BTC. With wars raging in many parts, investors are parking their money in inflation-resistant assets such as gold, whose price has increased to record levels, and bitcoin, which has proved to keep the value intact and give the investors a solid return. As mentioned earlier, BTC has gained nearly 150% in a year.

However, India is officially not a part of the Bitcoin saga. We don't have a policy vis a vis Bitcoin. Many governments, including Bhutan, have invested in Bitcoin, but India's status on this count is unknown. Indians are officially discouraged from investing in Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.

India is losing the natural advantages it has in the form of a suitably qualified and skilled talent pool. It has even led to the migration of a skilled workforce, startups and funds. As bitcoin keeps surging to new heights, even now, there is still time for the government to work out a fair policy for the cryptocurrency industry. Not having a policy only indicates our policymakers are in a dilemma. The government has been indecisive on this issue for far too long.

With Donald Trump becoming the US President, the regulatory environment for cryptocurrencies is expected to become clearer and more pro-business and pro-innovation. India will be left out if it doesn't put its act together and respond to emerging opportunities and challenges. (IPA Service)

The unrelenting strife in Manipur: A state on the brink of collapse

Manipur, a state in India's Northeast with a population of 3.2 million, has been engulfed in a relentless cycle of violence, ethnic strife, and political paralysis since May 2023. The divide between the majority Hindu Meiteis, who control the Imphal Valley, and the Kuki-Zomi tribes, dominating the surrounding hills, has erupted into full-scale hostilities, exposing deep-seated tensions and systemic governance failures.

The state, marked by an ethnically charged no-man's-land patrolled by Central paramilitary forces, has witnessed atrocities ranging from murder and rape to arson and abduction. The violence, claiming nearly 250 lives and displacing 60,000 people, shows no signs of abating, even as curfews, Internet shutdowns, and the imposition of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) fail to quell the unrest.

The Immediate Trigger and Escalation of Violence

While ethnic tensions have always simmered beneath the surface in Manipur, the immediate catalyst for the current crisis was a May 2023 High Court ruling. The court directed the state government to consider granting job reservations to the Meiteis, a move perceived by the Kukis as an existential threat to their own share of limited opportunities. Despite the subsequent withdrawal of the court's controversial directive, the damage was irreparable. The conflict escalated into a deadly spiral,

with security forces clashing with militants and mobs targeting ruling party legislators and ministers.

In a particularly horrific recent episode, three Meitei women and three children went missing from a displaced persons' camp in Jiribam. Their alleged recovery as mutilated bodies sparked protests and retaliatory violence. Over 20 people have died in violent incidents this month alone, adding to the growing toll of despair.

Political Apathy and Administrative Paralysis

The crisis has laid bare the apathy of both the state and Union governments. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has yet to visit the state since the violence erupted, and his sole mention of the situation remains perfunctory. The absence of decisive action from the Prime Minister's Office has drawn sharp criticism, with the Opposition, led by Rahul Gandhi, accusing Modi of indifference to the plight of Manipur's beleaguered citizens.

The state government, led by Chief Minister N Biren Singh, has been accused of partisan governance, favoring the Meiteis while alienating the Kukis. The BJP-led administration has shown little inclination toward meaningful political engagement or mediation. Instead, it has relied on reactive measures such as curfews, AFSPA imposition, and increased militarization, none of which have addressed the underlying issues fueling the conflict.

Erosion of Public Trust and

the NPP's Withdrawal

Public anger against the ruling dispensation has reached a boiling point. Even BJP legislators have not been spared, as mobs set fire to their homes in protest. The National People's Party (NPP), a key ally of the BJP in Manipur, has withdrawn support for the Biren Singh government, citing its failure to restore order and resolve the crisis. Though the withdrawal does not threaten the government's majority in the 60-member Assembly, it underscores the growing disillusionment with the BJP's governance.

The NPP's move has forced Union Home Minister Amit Shah to prioritize Manipur over state elections elsewhere, holding emergency meetings and reviewing the security situation. However, these actions appear reactive and insufficient to counter the escalating violence.

A National Failure of Governance

The tragedy in Manipur is not just a failure of local governance but a stark indictment of the national leadership. The BJP's strategy of electoral gains in the Northeast, once hailed as a triumph, now lies in tatters.

The party lost both Lok Sabha seats in Manipur during the general elections, reflecting public discontent with its inability to address the crisis.

The central government's lack of proactive measures has drawn

scathing criticism. The Supreme Court's rebukes on the collapse of state machinery have been ignored, and no significant political process has been initiated to reconcile the warring factions. Instead, the administration seems to be floundering, unable or unwilling to confront the deep ethnic and historical fault lines tearing Manipur apart.

The Humanitarian Cost

The human toll of the conflict is staggering. Families have been uprooted, villages razed, and communities torn apart. Reports of atrocities committed against women and children add a chilling dimension to the violence, underscoring the inhumanity of the conflict. Both Meitei and Kuki communities now live in perpetual fear, unable to rely on state or Central forces for protection. This pervasive insecurity only deepens the mistrust and animosity between the groups.

The Way Forward: A Call for Decisive Action

The Manipur crisis demands more than half-hearted interventions; it requires a comprehensive and urgent response to heal the fractured state. The following measures must be prioritized:

1. Immediate Relief and Security Measures: Central and state governments must ensure the safety of all citizens, regardless of ethnicity. Relief camps should be established with adequate re-

sources for the displaced.

2. Mediation and Political Dialogue: A neutral, bipartisan commission should be appointed to mediate between the Meitei and Kuki communities. A dialogue platform is essential for addressing grievances and fostering reconciliation.

3. Leadership Accountability: Chief Minister Biren Singh's leadership has become untenable. The BJP must replace him with a leader capable of restoring trust and demonstrating impartiality.

4. Revisiting AFSPA and Militarization: While AFSPA offers a temporary solution; its long-term imposition exacerbates resentment. Alternative strategies focused on community policing and confidence-building are needed.

5. Comprehensive Ethnic Reconciliation: The government must address historical injustices and structural inequalities that fuel ethnic divisions. This includes revisiting land rights, quotas, and political representation.

Manipur's crisis is a microcosm of the larger challenges facing India's diverse democracy. The failure to act decisively in Manipur reflects poorly on the principles of governance and rule of law.

The nation must not stand by as a state descends into chaos. It is imperative for both the Union and state governments to rise above political expediency and take bold, inclusive steps to restore peace, justice, and harmony to Manipur. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmi@gmail.com)

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

Dipak Kurmi

Trump's return and its global ripples

By: Satyabrata Borah

The return of Donald Trump to the presidency has become a topic of extensive discussion both in the United States and across the globe. His leadership, marked by an "America First" approach, has significant implications for international relations, trade policies, and global alliances. Observers note that his re-election introduces uncertainties, especially in how countries like the UK might navigate their ties with the US.

The UK, traditionally one of America's closest allies, is now preparing for potential challenges in maintaining this historic bond. Trump's policies often emphasize domestic priorities over international collaboration, which could strain efforts to strengthen trade agreements and defense partnerships.

Analysts suggest that while British leaders, including the Prime Minister, have shown a willingness to adapt, the unpredictability of Trump's foreign policy decisions might complicate matters. For example, his previous administration's focus on renegotiating deals to favor the US often left allies reassessing their strategies. One area of concern is defense and security, especially in the context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. During Trump's earlier presidency, he was vocal about NATO

countries increasing their defense contributions. This stance is likely to resurface, with Europe expected to shoulder more responsibility for Ukraine's military support.

Countries such as the UK, which have actively backed Ukraine, may face pressures to redefine their role in this ongoing crisis. At the same time, Trump's interest in pivoting US attention towards Asia could lead to a reduced focus on Europe, further complicating transatlantic relations.

Trade is another key area where Trump's policies could introduce complexities. His administration is known for prioritizing bilateral agreements over multilateral ones, which might require the UK to negotiate terms more favorable to the US.

This could lead to difficult decisions, especially as the UK balances its economic interests with maintaining broader European ties post-Brexit. Critics argue that these negotiations could limit the UK's leverage, as Trump's strategies often center on maximizing American gains.

Global reactions to Trump's leadership extend beyond the UK. In Asia, his administration's policies on China and North Korea are being closely watched. Trump has previously taken a confrontational stance on China, emphasizing trade tariffs and other restrictive measures.

This approach may escalate tensions between the two largest economies, impacting

global trade and economic stability. At the same time, Trump's handling of North Korea, which involved both threats and high-profile diplomacy, could influence how regional players like South Korea and Japan position themselves.

In the Middle East, Trump's policies are expected to reignite debates on issues such as Iran's nuclear program and US troop deployments in the region. His decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal during his earlier term remains a controversial topic. Countries in the region are now anticipating how his return might alter their strategies, especially in balancing relations with the US and other global powers.

Latin America also anticipates changes under Trump's renewed presidency. Immigration policies are likely to be a focal point, with his administration already signaling stricter measures. These decisions could influence relations with neighboring countries and potentially affect trade agreements like the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Critics argue that such policies may deepen divides while failing to address the root causes of migration.

Domestically, Trump's presidency is also expected to impact US relations with global organizations. His skepticism towards institutions like the United Nations and the World Health Organization was evident

during his previous term. Renewed tensions could emerge as Trump seeks to limit US contributions or withdraw from initiatives he perceives as unfavorable. This approach may undermine international cooperation on critical issues such as climate change, public health, and conflict resolution.

Trump's return to power raises broader questions about the evolving nature of global leadership. His emphasis on prioritizing US interests reflects a growing trend among nations focusing inward to address domestic challenges.

While this approach may resonate with certain voter bases, critics warn that it risks alienating allies and weakening collective efforts to tackle global problems. The debate over nationalism versus multilateralism remains central to discussions about Trump's policies and their implications.

The re-election of Donald Trump signifies a period of adjustment for many countries. While some leaders may view his presidency as an opportunity to renegotiate terms more favorable to their nations, others see it as a challenge requiring careful navigation. What remains clear is that Trump's leadership style and policy priorities will continue to shape global dynamics, making his second term one of the most closely observed political developments in recent history.

Rich nations are still reluctant to shell out enough funds to meet the climate challenge

By: Asad Mirza

The delegates at the ongoing COP29 are expected to deliver news solutions to save the world from a climate catastrophe, but these expectations instead of focussing on climate warriors should pressurise the developed world holding its purse strings tight, to loosen them and spend for what it has already destroyed in the race for advancement through industrialisation.

Last week, the world's biggest annual climate conference kicked off in Baku, Azerbaijan. This year's UN climate summit is struggling to focus attention on the health of the planet, with turbulent geopolitics, a confrontational host and the re-election of US climate skeptic Donald Trump stealing the limelight.

The annual conference that aims to produce global agreements to limit the warming which is tipping the world towards climate catastrophe is becoming a forum of frustration for negotiators seeking a finance deal.

Oil producer Azerbaijan, the host of this year's 29th Conference of the Parties (COP), is tasked with the limited goal of rallying countries around a target for annual financial aid for developing nations facing the rising costs of climate change.

It is a mandate that pales in comparison with the agenda for next year's conabulations in Brazil's Amazon rainforest, where governments will chart a course for the next decade. But it is considered all-important for many countries ahead of Brazil's COP30 and achieving it requires

subtle diplomatic skills.

The trickiest issue facing the climate negotiations at COP29 goes by the fancy name of the "new collective quantified goal" (NCQG), as it sounds more dignified than a "climate dereliction fun" to be funded by the developed world. The NCQG is meant to replace the longstanding goal of an annual spending \$100bn a year on climate finance from richer countries to poorer ones. It is supposed to be in place by next year, when all countries are expected to say what they are going to do to cut emissions in the next ten years.

A report in The Economist says that the good news is that in many of these countries, a little help from public financing can go a long way towards luring investors and cutting down borrowing costs.

Another trickier issue is how to disburse this fund? The Economist's report says that a package of bilateral deals between rich and developing countries would expose funding to geopolitical whims and make it hard to track total commitments. It would probably be wasteful, too, as rich-world governments seek a return on their investments by demanding that the money is used to purchase their own equipment.

The Economist's report further says that it would be wiser to entrust the World Bank with such a mission. That would require the lender to grow: the ETC's recommended climate-finance pot is worth about six times what the bank does out in a year.

The bank would need a mighty capital injection, too. Geopolitical

tensions complicate the task. Two stumbling blocks seem to be China, which is unlikely to be more generous without more of a say, and America, which refuses to give up its veto over the institution's decisions.

A report in Forbes says that experts feel that sticking with the status quo would be a huge wasted opportunity. Rich countries would get a much bigger bang for their buck - in terms of global emissions reductions - by spending money in the Global South.

In real terms COP29 is expected to build on the carbon market groundwork laid in prior COPs, aiming for a regulatory framework that ensures real, measurable emissions cuts. The International Institute for Sustainable Development says that clearer guidelines are essential for a functional and fair carbon market.

COP29 could be a decisive moment for determining how carbon markets can become a reliable tool for financing climate action or whether they will remain mired in regulatory uncertainty.

In communicating priorities for COP29, the United Nations outlined the importance of ensuring that vulnerable countries have access to resources without bureaucratic delays. Climate-driven economic losses are estimated in the hundreds of billions annually, and without improved climate funding, vulnerable countries face extreme financial strain.

In Baku, discussions are expected to focus on setting up the fund's governance structure, mobilising resources, and scaling-up

the fund to close the gap between pledges and actual needs. It is expected that any progress on adaptation and loss-and-damage could bring life-changing support for millions of people worldwide, providing an essential safety net as climate impacts intensify.

Meanwhile, India expressed serious concern about the progress the COP29 made during the week. A Gol statement stated, "We have seen no progress in matters that are critical for developing countries. Our part of the world is facing some of the worst impacts of climate change, with far lower capacity to recover from those impacts or to adapt to the changes to the climatic system for which we are not responsible."

India stressed that the Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP) at Sharm Al-Sheikh was established with specific mandate that it shall be operationalised through focused exchanges of views, information and ideas, noting that the outcomes of the work programme will be non-prescriptive, non-punitive, facilitative, respectful of national sovereignty and national circumstances, while taking into account the nationally determined nature of nationally determined contributions and will not impose new targets or goal.

Expressing frustration on the unwillingness to engage on this issue by the Developed countries during the past week, India asserted that those with the highest capacity to take climate action have continuously shifted goalposts, delayed climate action, and consumed a highly disproportionate share of the global carbon

budget.

But these solutions require integration within wider climate policies and identifying areas where real action is needed. COP29 will likely see a stronger emphasis on nature-positive initiatives, which not only support carbon sequestration but also enhance resilience against climate impacts like floods and droughts.

As noted by the World Economic Forum, protecting nature is essential for sustaining the world's carbon sinks, including forests, which currently absorb about 7.6 billion metric tons of CO₂ each year. Recognising and scaling nature-based solutions would play a role in closing the emissions gap and offer numerous co-benefits for ecosystems and biodiversity.

On November 12th, multilateral development lenders including the World Bank pledged to increase their climate finance to \$120bn by 2030 (including \$42bn for adaptation). In Baku, any breakdown of talks over climate finance would be an abdication of responsibilities by the developed world. It would also be a massive failure of imagination, if delegates are unable to thrash out a workable formula at this year's COP.

In the face of accelerating climate impacts, COP29 offers a critical opportunity for countries to act decisively. It is one of the last chances left to limit global warming below potentially catastrophic levels. From ramping up national commitments to refining the structure of carbon markets, there is much work to be done. (IPA Service)

No men, marriage, motherhood: Why South Korea's '4B' movement is inspiring American women



By: Ming Gao

In South Korea, a growing number of young women are rejecting societal expectations of marriage, motherhood and heterosexual relationships, known as the "4B Movement" or the "4 Nos".

The "B" is a homophone for the Korean word *bi* meaning "no", representing the movement's four principles: *bihon* (no marriage), *bichulsan* (no childbirth), *biyeonae* (no dating) and *bisekseu* (no sex).

By refusing to marry, have children, engage in romance, or participate in sexual relationships with men, 4B feminists seek to redefine their lives outside the confines of traditional gender roles.

In the wake of the reelection of Donald Trump, there has been increased interest in the 4B movement from women in the United States.

But what is the 4B Movement, where did it come from, and how is it reshaping the feminist landscape in South Korea and beyond?

Challenges facing young women

The 4B Movement reflects a broader dissatisfaction among young South Korean women who face instability of housing, digital sexual violence, economic disparities and cultural pressures.

It emerged in the mid- to late-2010s, following a surge of interest in feminism in South Korea, and spread primarily through women's online communities.

The roots of the 4B Movement lie in South Korea's rapid economic transformation and the subsequent challenges it posed for younger generations of the 2000s.

For young women, economic insecurity is compounded by systemic gender inequality. South Korea consistently ranks worst in the OECD for the gender wage gap, and social mobility remains limited.

Against this backdrop, traditional life paths – marriage, childbearing and homemaking – have become less appealing. Living an alternative life without men emerged as a radical strategy for young digital feminists to challenge the rigid patriarchy in South Korea.

The senseless killing in 2016 of a woman in a train station toilet by a man in Seoul shocked the nation and fuelled the movement. Online platforms became spaces where women could share their frustrations, critique patriarchal norms and organise protests.

During this period communities like radical feminist online groups gained traction. Among these was the Tal-Corset (escape the corset) movement, which encouraged women to reject societal beauty standards by foregoing makeup, cosmetic surgery and restrictive clothing.

The 4B Movement built on this momentum, targeting not only beauty standards but the very institutions that sustain patriarchy.

It collectively challenges the notion that women's value lies in their ability to support men and sustain the family unit.

'Not a baby-making machine'

The birth rate in South Korea ranks among the lowest in the world. The government has long viewed this as a national crisis. Policies such as subsidised housing for newlyweds and tax incentives for families have sought to encourage marriage and childbearing.

In 2016, the government launched a national pink birth map visualising the number of women of reproductive age in each district. It sparked outrage. Women criticised it as reducing them to reproductive tools, proclaiming, "my womb is not national property" and "a woman is not a baby-making machine".

For many 4B feminists, these policies represent a stark example of how the state prioritises population growth over women's autonomy. In response, the movement frames its rejection of marriage and motherhood as an act of political resistance.

Living on their own terms

Despite its growing influence, the 4B Movement faces significant challenges.

The radical principles have sparked backlash, with critics labelling participants as selfish or anti-social. Swearing off men as a form of protest against patriarchal structures and traditional marital norms is sometimes (mis)interpreted as implicitly favouring lesbianism, given its stance against heterosexual relationships.

The movement has also attracted negative political attention. Lee Seung-cheon, a 58-year-old Democratic Party candidate, pledged to introduce "measures to reject the 4B Movement" as part of his policy campaign in 2020.

Yet 4B feminists remain steadfast in their vision of a future where women can live on their own terms. Their rejection of traditional life paths is not a retreat into isolation but an attempt to create new ways of being free from patriarchal constraints.

As one participant noted, rejecting marriage allows women to envision futures beyond societal deadlines like "a woman's age has an expiration date".

An international movement

The 4B Movement's radical critique of patriarchy has resonated internationally.

4B Movement ideas are starting to strike a chord in the US. The movement's core principles align with broader feminist critiques of patriarchy and capitalism, which have intensified in response to political developments such as Trump's rhetoric and debates over reproductive rights.

In the US, Trump's presidency (and now his return) has been a flashpoint for feminist activism. Policies restricting access to abortion, coupled with an increase in conservative rhetoric around women's rights, have galvanised movements that resist patriarchal structures.

For American feminists, the 4B Movement offers a framework for resistance that goes beyond economic precarity. It provides a roadmap for rejecting political conflicts, focusing on reclaiming agency by prioritising autonomy over their own bodies and rights.

6B4T is inspired by the 4B Movement and has gained particular attention in China. This version incorporates additional principles, including rejecting consumerism and fostering mutual aid among unmarried women.

The spread of 4B ideas across Asia and beyond highlights the universality of feminist struggles. As the movement continues to evolve, its impact extends beyond South Korea, sparking conversations about gender, autonomy and the future of feminism.

Whether embraced or contested, the 4B Movement forces society to confront uncomfortable truths about the cost of sustaining patriarchy – and perhaps the possibilities of living without it. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

The role of women in Assamese society

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuvan

Women have been integral to Assamese society, playing pivotal roles in family structures, economic activities, cultural preservation, and social movements. Their experiences and contributions have evolved significantly over time, influenced by historical developments, socio-political changes, and economic transformations. Woman in Assam enjoyed a relatively elevated status compared to their counterparts in other regions of India, particularly within matrilineal communities like the Khasis and Jaintias. In these societies, lineage and inheritance are traced through women, granting them a degree of autonomy and authority within their households. Women actively participated in agricultural activities, trade, and cultural practices, often serving as custodians of tradition. Their roles were not confined to the domestic sphere; they were recognized as important contributors to the economy and the community's social life.

The advent of British colonial rule in the 19th century marked a turning point in the status of women in Assam. While colonial policies introduced new educational opportunities for some women, they also reinforced patriarchal norms that marginalized traditional roles. The introduction of Western education and legal reforms altered women's societal positioning, leading to a gradual shift in gender dynamics. Although some women began to access education and engage in social reform movements, many were still confined to domestic roles, facing the dual burden of household responsibilities and societal expectations.

In the post-independence era, the constitutional guarantees of gender equality and the right to education provided a framework for advancing women's rights in Assam. However, the gap between legal provisions and social realities remained wide. Societal attitudes often lagged behind these reforms, with women predominantly viewed as homemakers. The emphasis on traditional gender roles continued to restrict women's autonomy and oppor-

tunities for personal and professional development. Cultural expectations around marriage and motherhood often overshadowed women's aspirations for education and careers, leading to a persistent cycle of inequality.

Culturally, women in Assam have been vital to the preservation and promotion of Assamese traditions. They are central to the region's cultural identity, participating actively in folk music, dance, and various art forms that reflect the richness of Assamese heritage. Festivals such as Bihu showcase women's contributions, where they engage in traditional dance and song, celebrating their connection to the land and community. The mekhla chador, the traditional attire worn by women, symbolizes both elegance and the intricate artistry that has been passed down through generations. These cultural expressions empower women, allowing them to assert their identities while navigating the societal expectations imposed upon them.

Despite their cultural significance, women in Assam continue to confront numerous challenges. Socioeconomic factors play a crucial role in shaping their experiences. While women have always contributed to agricultural and economic activities, their work is frequently undervalued and overlooked. Many women remain economically dependent on male family members, limiting their agency and decision-making power. This dependence perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality, emphasizing the need for economic empowerment as a vital component of women's rights.

Education emerges as a key factor in promoting gender equality in Assam. Although literacy rates among women have improved, significant disparities persist, particularly in rural areas. Cultural attitudes and economic constraints often hinder girls' access to education, perpetuating cycles of poverty and dependence. Early marriage and childbearing further limit educational opportunities, resulting in a workforce that often lacks the necessary skills for socioeconomic advancement. Comprehensive strategies are essential to prioritize girls' education, creating supportive en-

vironments that facilitate learning and growth.

The rise of women's movements in Assam has been crucial in advocating for women's rights and addressing various issues, including domestic violence, trafficking, and economic exploitation. Grassroots organizations and NGOs have emerged to support women, providing resources and assistance to those facing abuse or discrimination. These initiatives empower women to reclaim their rights and challenge societal norms that seek to marginalize them. The push for increased representation in local governance has also gained momentum, with women's participation in decision-making processes recognized as essential for fostering inclusive development.

Self-help groups (SHGs) have become a powerful tool for women's economic empowerment in Assam. These groups provide women with platforms to pool resources, share skills, and engage in income-generating activities. By fostering a sense of community, SHGs enable women to take charge of their economic futures. Many involved in these groups have successfully launched small businesses, creating employment opportunities and gaining financial independence. The success of SHGs underscores the importance of grassroots organizing in effecting social change.

Despite advancements in women's rights, gender-based violence remains a pervasive issue in Assamese society. Reports of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking continue to plague the region, with many cases going unreported due to stigma and fear. Cultural attitudes that normalize violence against women contribute to the perpetuation of these issues. Comprehensive strategies, including legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and community engagement, are essential to address gender-based violence and create a safer environment for women. While the government has made strides in strengthening legal frameworks, implementation remains inconsistent, with many women lacking access to legal resources and support systems.

The impact of globalization

on women's roles in Assam is complex. On one hand, globalization has opened new avenues for women, providing opportunities for employment and education that were previously inaccessible. The rise of technology and digital platforms has enabled women to connect, share experiences, and access resources beyond their immediate communities. Increasingly, women are engaging in online entrepreneurship, using social media to market their products and services. This digital empowerment allows them to challenge traditional gender roles and assert their agency in new ways.

However, globalization also poses challenges, particularly concerning labor migration and exploitation. Many women seeking work in urban areas face significant risks related to safety, job security, and fair wages. The lack of protective measures for migrant women often leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Addressing these challenges requires policymakers to implement protective frameworks that safeguard women's rights in the labor market, ensuring they have access to fair wages and safe working conditions.

The representation of women in media and popular culture significantly impacts societal perceptions of gender roles. In Assam, media portrayals often reinforce stereotypes, depicting women primarily in domestic roles or as objects of desire. Such representations contribute to the perpetuation of harmful norms that undermine women's contributions to society. Promoting diverse and empowering portrayals of women in literature, film, and media is crucial for challenging existing stereotypes. Positive representation can help shape public perceptions and foster a culture of gender equality.

Looking ahead, the future of women in Assamese society holds promise, yet it is fraught with challenges that demand attention and action. As more women pursue education and careers, they are gradually redefining traditional gender roles and challenging societal expectations. The emergence of women leaders in various sectors - politics, business, and social activism - signals a shift

toward greater representation and influence. Women are increasingly asserting their rights and demanding equal opportunities, fostering a climate of change that can transform societal attitudes.

Sustained efforts are needed to address systemic issues that continue to hinder women's progress. Comprehensive policies aimed at promoting gender equality, ensuring access to education, and addressing gender-based violence are essential components of this effort. Collaborative initiatives among government, civil society, and community organizations can create an environment conducive to women's empowerment. Furthermore, engaging men as allies in these discussions is crucial, as they can help dismantle the patriarchal structures that perpetuate inequality.

In this evolving narrative, the role of women in Assamese society emerges as a testament to resilience, creativity, and the indomitable spirit of those who strive for change. Women's empowerment is not merely a matter of individual rights but a collective effort that requires the participation of all sectors of society. By acknowledging the contributions of women, addressing systemic barriers, and fostering an inclusive culture, Assam can work towards a future where women are empowered to lead, innovate, and thrive in all spheres of life.

In conclusion, the role of women in Assamese society reflects a rich and complex history of empowerment and struggle. While significant progress has been made, the journey towards gender equality is ongoing. The challenges that women face require sustained efforts from all members of society - government, communities, and individuals. By working together, Assam can create a more equitable future where women can fully realize their potential and contribute meaningfully to their families, communities, and the nation as a whole. The time for change is now, and the collective power of women, supported by allies across society, can drive transformative progress toward gender equality. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-Magazine SAMPROTIC who can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com)

Enhancing the eye lashes

By: Shahnaz Husain

Across cultures and worldwide, eyes have always played a central role in defining beauty and allure. For centuries, people have sought to enhance the appearance of the eyes through the use of various pigments and colours. Eyelashes are the thickest hairs on our body.

Nothing enhances eyes better than having long, lush lashes. Eyelashes enhance the natural beauty of the eyes by making eyes seem bigger and more alert. The upper eyelashes are arranged in five to six rows with approximately 90 to 150 lashes per eye, whereas lower eyelid lashes have between 75 to 80 lashes in four rows. Healthy eyelashes can grow to around 12 millimetres and have a slight curvature.

Like other hair on our bodies, eyelashes have a protective function.

They trigger blinking when touched and serve as the first line of defence to delicate eyes creating a barrier against environmental elements like wind, dust and rain. While the eye is open, eyelashes work almost like an air filter: stopping most airborne debris and dirt from reaching the delicate eye. When eyes are closed, lashes form an extra barrier against foreign irritants.

Not everyone is blessed with long, thick lashes, but that doesn't mean that you can't get them;

At night, use a cleansing gel and cotton wool to remove eye make-up gently. For upper lashes, put a cleanser on cotton wool and wrap it around your index finger. Brush through the lashes from underneath. To remove mascara from the lower lashes, use a cotton bud with a little cleanser on

it. To remove kajal from the lower lashes use a cotton bud that has a little cleanser on it. Also, clean the corners of the eyes with a cotton bud.

Use very gentle movements on the lashes. Brush your lashes with an eyelash brush, so that they are not entangled. Heavy eye makeup, too much mascara and even eyelash extensions can damage and lead to loss of lashes.

If you have very thin or sparse eyelashes, it may become a problem and you may wonder how to encourage their growth. You can apply very little oil on the eyelashes, using a cotton bud. You may apply almond oil, coconut oil, or olive oil. Leave it on for 15 to 20 minutes and wipe off very gently with moist cotton wool. Do not go to sleep with oil on the eyelashes, as this can lead to puffiness.

Curry leaves are also said to help. Keep curry leaves in hot water and leave it to cool. Then make a paste of the curry leaves and apply to the lashes, again using a cotton bud. Apply very little and wash off with water after 15 minutes.

You can also apply aloe vera gel. You can take the gel from the aloe vera growing in your house. The gel obtained from the plant itself is the leaf pulp and is found in the inner portion of the leaves.

First, wash the leaf well and observe total hygiene while extracting the gel. Apply a small amount of aloe vera gel on the eyelashes before bed and wash it off in the morning.

Castor oil: Apply a small amount of castor oil on the eyelashes each night before bed and wash it off in the morning.

Eyelid massage: Gently massage eyelids along the lash line.

Nowadays new eyelash serums is available, to help enhance the growth of natural eyelashes. It also improves the health and texture of sparse and brittle lashes. In serum form, it is easy to apply and includes a brush applicator. Follow the directions on the label.

Mascara adds glamour and thickness to the eyelashes. But, mascara must be removed at night, along with the rest of your eye makeup. Roll-on mascara is easy to apply. You can apply the mascara both above and below the upper lashes. This gives a thicker look.

Apply on the lower lashes too. Wait for a while and apply a second coat. Then brush out the lashes, with a small eyelash brush, otherwise, the lashes will stick together. The idea is to achieve a natural effect. You can apply a little powder on the eyelashes between two coats of mascara, to make them look thicker.

The latest in eye glamour is eyelash extensions. They are attached to natural eyelashes, one by one to make the lashes look thicker. A trained beautician has to attach them. It's up to you to decide how thick you want your lashes to be.

The eyelash extensions may last for about 3 weeks to a month and then you will have to get them done again. The eyelash extensions are synthetic strands that are specially curved to look like natural eyelashes. If you apply mascara on eyelash extensions, use the water-based kind.

You can also ask your doctor to prescribe supplements of Vitamin - A, which encourages hair growth. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the Herbal Queen of India)

Namo Drone Didi Yojana empowers women in agriculture

By: Priyanka Saurabh

Namo Drone Didi can contribute to precision agriculture and resource optimization. India's agriculture sector is on the cusp of transformation with the integration of technology-based solutions. Schemes like Namu Drone Didi that focus on drone technology offer the potential to modernize farming through precision agriculture and resource optimization, addressing key challenges in agriculture. Drones enable precise application of fertilizers and pesticides, reducing wastage and ensuring uniform distribution.

Drones under the Namu Drone Didi scheme ensure a reduction in chemical use by up to 30%. Drones allow real-time monitoring of crops, providing data on crop health, soil conditions, and early disease detection for timely intervention. In Andhra Pradesh, drones helped reduce crop losses by 20% due to timely detection of pest attacks.

Drones provide accurate data on crop growth patterns, soil health, and yield estimates, improving farm management and decision-making.

Globally, drone technology has revolutionized many industries, including agriculture. In India, drones have immense potential: they can survey large areas, monitor crops, detect diseases or pests in advance, and facilitate precise application of pesticides and fertilizers. This precision farming approach increases crop yields while reducing costs and waste associated with traditional farming methods.

However, the adoption of drones in Indian agriculture has been slow. High costs, limited awareness, and inadequate technical infrastructure in rural areas have hindered widespread implementation. To address these challenges, the Namu Drone Didi Yojana not only promotes drone technology but also empowers rural women.

Drones deployed in Maharashtra enabled farmers to better estimate yields and increase productivity. Drones allow variable-rate application of inputs such as nutrients, adjusting according to specific field needs, maximizing input efficiency. In Uttar Pradesh, drone-assisted farming enabled farmers to precisely apply fertilizers based on soil fertility variations, thereby increasing nutrient use efficiency.

Automation in drone technology reduces human error in tasks such as spraying pesticides or fertilizers, leading to more effective operations. A pilot project in Madhya Pradesh showed fewer errors in pesticide spraying, leading to a 15% im-

provement in crop yield. Drones help assess moisture levels in the soil, allowing for precise irrigation, thereby conserving water and ensuring that only the required areas receive water.

Drone-assisted irrigation reduced water use by up to 15% in water-scarce areas of Gujarat. Input cost reduction: With precise use of inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides, farmers save costs, thereby contributing to better resource management. Self-help groups in Punjab reported 20% cost savings on inputs by using drones under the Namu Drone Didi scheme. Drones reduce the need for manual labor in tasks such as spraying pesticides and fertilizers, helping farmers cut down labor costs and improve operational efficiency.

Farmers in Haryana experienced up to a 25% reduction in labor expenditure after adopting drone services under Namu Drone Didi. Drone technology significantly reduces the time required for tasks such as spraying and monitoring large farms, thereby improving overall agricultural productivity.

In Rajasthan, drone-assisted pesticide spraying reduced the time taken for operations from 7 days to 2 days, significantly increasing productivity. Drones help in precision pest management, reducing excessive use of pesticides, thereby improving long-term soil and ecosystem health. Farmers in Tamil Nadu reported a 10% improvement in crop quality by using drone-assisted pest management systems.

The Namu Drone Didi Yojana demonstrates the immense potential of technology-based agriculture in modernizing farming, enhancing precision agriculture, and ensuring optimal resource utilization. With proper implementation and support, such initiatives can lead India's agriculture sector towards sustainability and increased productivity.

Although India is not the first country to integrate drones into agriculture, its focus on empowering women through technology is unique. With continued government support, improved infrastructure, and increased awareness among farmers, the Namu Drone Didi Yojana has the potential to modernize farming, increase food security, and economically empower women.

By addressing these challenges, this initiative can serve as a model for other developing countries seeking to boost agricultural productivity while promoting gender equality and rural technological advancement. (The author is a Research Scholar in Political Science, a Poet, freelance journalist, and columnist)

The doctrine says any massive aerial attack on Russia could trigger a nuclear response

Putin signs new Russian nuclear doctrine after Biden's arms decision for Ukraine

MOSCOW, Nov 19: President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed a revised nuclear doctrine declaring that a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country.

Putin's endorsement of the new nuclear deterrent policy comes on the 1,000th day after he sent troops into Ukraine, on Feb. 24, 2022.

It follows U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied longer-range missiles.

The signing of the doctrine, which says that any massive aerial attack on Russia could trigger a nuclear response, demonstrates Putin's readiness to tap the country's nuclear arsenal to force the West to back down as Moscow presses a slow-moving offensive in Ukraine.

Asked whether the updated doctrine was deliberately issued on the heels of Biden's decision, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the document was published "in a timely manner" and that Putin instructed the government to update it earlier this year so that it is "in line with the current situation."



Putin first announced changes in the nuclear doctrine in September, when he chaired a meeting discussing the proposed revisions.

Russia's president has previously warned the U.S. and other NATO allies that allowing Ukraine to use Western-supplied longer-range weapons to hit Russian territory would mean that Russia and NATO are at war. The updated doctrine states that an attack against Russia by a nonnuclear power with the "participation or support of a nuclear power" will be seen as their "joint attack on the Russian Federation."

It adds that Russia could use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear strike or a conventional attack posing a "critical threat to sovereignty and territorial in-

tegrity" of Russia and its ally Belarus, a vague formulation that leaves broad room for interpretation.

It does not specify whether such an attack would necessarily trigger a nuclear response.

It mentions the "uncertainty of scale, time and place of possible use of nuclear deterrent" among the key principles of the nuclear deterrence. The document also notes that an aggression against Russia by a member of a military bloc or coalition is viewed as "an aggression by the entire bloc," a clear reference to NATO.

At the same time, it spells out conditions for using nuclear weapons in greater detail compared with previous versions of the doctrine, noting they could be used in case of a massive air attack involving ballistic and

cruise missiles, aircraft, drones and other flying vehicles.

The wide formulation appears to significantly broaden the triggers for possible nuclear weapons use compared with the previous version of the document, which stated that Russia could tap its atomic arsenal if case of an attack with ballistic missiles.

President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus with an iron hand for more than 30 years and has relied on Russian subsidies and support, has allowed Russia to use his country's territory to send troops into Ukraine and to deploy some of its tactical nuclear weapons.

Since Putin sent troops into Ukraine, he and other Russian voices have frequently threatened the West with Russia's nuclear arsenal to discourage it from ramping up support for Kyiv.

Russian hawks have been calling for toughening the doctrine for months, arguing that the previous version failed to deter the West from increasing its aid to Ukraine and created the impression that Moscow would not resort to nuclear weapons. (AP)

45 pro-democracy activists get 4 to 10 years in prison in Hong Kong's biggest national security case

HONG KONG, Nov 19: Forty-five ex-lawmakers and activists were sentenced to four to 10 years in prison on Tuesday in Hong Kong's biggest national security case under a Beijing-imposed law that crushed a once-thriving pro-democracy movement.

They were prosecuted under the 2020 national security law for their roles in an unofficial primary election. Prosecutors said their aim was to paralyse Hong Kong's government and force the city's leader to resign by aiming to win a legislative majority and using it to block government budgets indiscriminately.

The unofficial primary held in July 2020 drew 610,000 voters, and its winners had been expected to advance to the official election. Authorities postponed the official legislative election, however, citing public health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Legal scholar Benny Tai, whom the judges called the mastermind, received the longest sentence of 10 years. The judges said the sentences had been reduced for defendants who said they were unaware the plan was unlawful. However, the court said the penalties were not reduced for Tai and former lawmaker Alvin Yeung because they are lawyers who were "absolutely adamant in pushing for the implementation of the scheme."

In the judgment posted online, the judges wrote that Tai essentially "advocated for a revolution" by publishing a series of articles over a period of months that traced his thinking, even though in a letter seeking a shorter sentence Tai said the steps were "never intended to be used as blueprint for any political action".

Two of the 47 original defendants were acquitted earlier this year. The rest either pleaded guilty or were found guilty of conspiracy to commit subversion. The judges said in their verdict that the activists' plans to effect change through the unofficial primary would have undermined the government's authority and created a constitutional crisis.

The judges rejected the reasoning from some defendants that the scheme would

never have materialised, stating that "all the participants had put in every endeavour to make it a success".

The judges highlighted that a great deal of time, resources and money were devoted to the organisation of the primary election.

"When the Primary Election took place on the 10 and 11 July, no one had remotely mentioned the fact that Primary Election was no more than an academic exercise and that the Scheme was absolutely unattainable," the judgment read. "In order to succeed, the organisers and participants might have hurdles to overcome, that however was expected in every subversion case where efforts were made to overthrow or paralyse a government."

Some of the defendants waved at their relatives in the courtroom after they were sentenced.

Gwyneth Ho, a journalist-turned-activist who was jailed for seven years, said "our true crime for Beijing is that we were not content with playing along in manipulated elections" on her Facebook page.

"We dared to confront the regime with the question: Will democracy ever be possible within such a structure? The answer was a complete crackdown on all fronts of society," she wrote. Chan Po-ying, wife of defendant Leung Kwok-hung, told reporters she wasn't shocked when she learned her husband received a jail term of six years and nine months. She said they were trying to use some of the rights granted by the city's mini-constitution to pressure those who are in power to address the will of the people.

"This is an unjust imprisonment. They shouldn't be kept in jail for one day," said Chan, also the chair of the League of Social Democrats, one of the city's remaining pro-democracy parties.

Emilia Wong, the girlfriend of Ventus Lau, said his jail term was within her expectations. She said the sentencing was a "middle phase" of history and she could not see the end point at this moment, but she pledged to support Lau as best as she could.

Philip Bowring, the husband of Claudia Mo, was relieved that the sentences were finally handed down.

Observers said the trial illustrated how authorities suppressed dissent following huge anti-government protests in 2019, alongside media crackdowns and reduced public choice

in elections. The drastic changes reflect how Beijing's promise to retain the former British colony's civil liberties for 50 years when it returned to China in 1997 is increasingly threadbare, they said. Beijing and

Hong Kong governments insisted the national security law was necessary for the city's stability. The sentencing drew criticism from foreign governments and human rights organisations. The US Consulate in Hong Kong said the US strongly condemned the sentences for the 45 pro-democracy advocates and former lawmakers.

"The defendants were aggressively prosecuted and jailed for peacefully participating in normal political activity protected under Hong Kong's Basic Law," the statement said, referring to the city's mini-constitution.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters no one should be allowed to use democracy as a pretext to engage in unlawful activities and escape justice. Hong Kong Secretary for Security Chris Tang said in a news briefing that the sentences showed those committing national security crimes must be severely punished. (AP)



Several children injured in car-ramming incident in China



BELJING, Nov 19: Several children were injured when an SUV rammed into groups of parents and students outside a primary school in China's Hunan province on Tuesday, the third incident of killing of civilians within a fortnight in the country.

The incident took place in Changde city at around 7:30 am local time. The casualty count is not clear and authorities are yet to clarify if it was an accident or a deliberate attack. According to the state-run Xinhua news agency, multiple students were injured after being struck by the car. The injured have been rushed to a hospital. Further investigation is underway, it said. Video footage posted on social media showed screaming children and parents frantically running for cover to escape the speeding car. Later angry parents were seen beating up the driver after his capture.

Police have detained a 39-year-old man surnamed Huang who was driving the car. This is the third incident of killings or attacks in China by people in vehicles or wielding knives.

On November 12, thirty-five people were killed and 43 injured when a man ploughed his car into a crowd of people at a sports centre in Zhuhai city. Police who detained a man called Fan said his actions stemmed from his dissatisfaction with the property division outcome of his divorce. Following the incident, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang have called on officials all over the country to step up security to prevent such attacks on civilians.

On November 16, eight persons were killed and 17 injured in a knife attack at a vocational school in Yixing city of Jiangsu province. The 21-year-old suspect, surnamed Xu, who was caught later confessed

to police that he was angry over not receiving his graduation certificate due to failing exams and was dissatisfied with his internship pay.

Following the recurring attacks, the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) -- the highest national agency responsible for legal prosecution and prosecutorial investigation in China -- has pledged stern, strict and swift punishment for major vicious crimes to maintain social stability and enhance the public's sense of safety and well-being. According to an official statement, the SPP stressed a zero-tolerance approach toward crimes targeting students and compromising school safety.

The meeting underscored the importance of prosecuting such cases decisively and swiftly to deliver a powerful deterrent effect. It highlighted that prosecutorial bodies are critical in preventing and resolving risks and maintaining social stability through case handling.

The meeting also urged prosecutors to resolve disputes at their source through legal channels at every stage of case handling, to defuse potential risks before they escalate.

China has been witnessing numerous attacks on civilians which are mostly attributed by police to disgruntled elements in the society. Most of such attacks this year targeted primary schools.

Last month, five people, including three children, were stabbed near a primary school in Beijing's Haidian district. Similarly, three people, including two students, were injured by a 60-year-old knife-wielding man in Guangzhou city. In May, two people were killed and 10 others injured in a knife attack at a primary school in Jiangxi province. (PTI)

India, China should implement Modi-Xi 'important consensus' to improve ties: Chinese FM Wang tells Jaishankar

BEIJING, Nov 19: India and China should implement the important consensus reached by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping at their summit in Russia, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in his meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on the sidelines of G20 meeting at Rio De Janeiro.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the ruling Communist Party, said that the successful meeting between Xi and Modi on the sidelines of last month's BRICS summit in Kazan and the restart of China-India relations are in line with the fundamental interests of the two peoples, the expectations of Global South countries and the right direction of history.

The two sides should implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, respect each other's core interests, enhance mutual trust through dialogue and communication, handle differences properly with sincerity and integrity, and bring the bilateral relationship back on track of stable and sound development at an early date, state-run Xinhua news agency reported, citing an official statement on Wang-Jaishankar meeting on the margins of G20 Summit at Rio De Janeiro on Monday.

At their Kazan meeting, Modi and Xi endorsed the India-China agreement on patrolling and disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh and issued directions to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms, signalling attempts to normalise ties that were hit by a deadly

military clash in 2020. Wang said the two sides should send more positive signals and engage in actions that facilitate bilateral exchanges, enhance mutual trust and reduce suspicion, and carry out more cooperation and reduce attrition.

The two sides should strive to make practical progress in such issues as resuming direct flights, exchanging journalists and easing visa procedures as soon as possible, Wang said.

Noting that next year marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and India, Wang said the two sides should plan commemorative activities, and encourage exchanges and visits in various fields and at different levels to enhance understanding and mutual trust.

China and India, as two

neighbouring major developing countries, have more common interests than differences, and they should view each other's development as an opportunity and work together to achieve common development and rejuvenation, which will help safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries and contribute to global multipolarity, he said.

Both China and India adhere to a non-aligned foreign policy and multilateralism, and support the democratisation of international relations, Wang said, adding that the two countries should continue to strengthen coordination and cooperation in international affairs and further develop mechanisms such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. (PTI)

Germany's defence minister says damage to 2 Baltic data cables appears to be sabotage

BERLIN, Nov 19: Germany's defence minister said on Tuesday officials have to assume damage to two data cables under the Baltic Sea, one of which ends in Germany, was caused by sabotage - though he said they have no proof at present.

Damage was detected Monday to the C-Lion1 cable that runs nearly 1,200 km (750 miles) from the Finnish capital, Helsinki, to the German port city of Rostock. Another cable between Lithuania and Sweden was also damaged.

Speaking in Brussels, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said Russia



poses not just a military but also a hybrid threat, and that Europe needs to take a broad approach to defence. He said the damage to the two cables was "a very clear sign that something is afoot".

"No one believes these cables were severed by mistake, and I also don't want to believe versions

that it was anchors that by chance caused damage to these cables," he said at a regular meeting of European Union defence ministers.

"So we have to state - without knowing in concrete terms who it came from - that this is a hybrid action. And we also have to assume - without al-

ready knowing it, obviously - that this is sabotage."

The foreign ministries of Finland and Germany had already said Monday evening that the damage raised suspicion of sabotage. They said in a joint statement that the damage comes at a time that "our European security is not only under threat from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, but also from hybrid warfare by malicious actors".

The statement said the countries were investigating the incident, and that it was crucial that such "critical infrastructure" be safeguarded. (AP)

Imran's close aide and former Pak foreign min, 20 others indicted by Pak court

LAHORE, Nov 19: Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pakistan's former foreign minister and vice-president of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party, and 20 other leaders were indicted by a court here on multiple charges related to the May 9, 2023 riots, a court official said on Tuesday.

Qureshi described the charges, framed during a hearing held at Kot Lakhpat Jail here on Monday, as baseless and politically motivated and said the cases were designed to suppress Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) leadership.

Among the senior party leaders indicted by the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) were PTI's Punjab president Dr Yasmin Rashid, Senator Ejaz Chaudhry, former Punjab governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema, former provincial minister Mian Mahmoodur Rasheed, ex-lawmakers Aliya Hamza and Rubina Jamil, and social media activist Sanam Javed.

The session was presided over by ATC judge Manzer Ali Khan. Qureshi was transported to the court from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

A special prosecutor presented the charge sheets, which included accusations of attacking a police station, torching public property, and assaulting law enforcement personnel.

According to the court official, all accused individuals denied the allegations, pleaded not guilty, and expressed their intent to contest the charges, asserting that the prosecution lacked evidence to substantiate its claims.

The court directed the prosecution to present its witnesses during the next hearing, scheduled for November 25. On May 9, 2023, Khan's party workers vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Jinnah House (Lahore Corps Commander House), Mianwali Airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad. The Army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi was also attacked by the mob for the first time.

Speaking to reporters outside the jail, Qureshi reaffirmed his allegiance to Khan, who remains incarcerated since August 2023 in over 200 cases.

Qureshi described the cases as baseless and politically motivated, designed to suppress PTI's leadership and unlawfully keep them behind bars.

Qureshi also urged PTI workers and supporters to participate fully in the planned November 24 protest march to Islamabad, calling it a rally for the freedom of political prisoners, the restoration of an independent judiciary, and the release of Imran Khan. (PTI)

The G20's pushback on 'unilateral trade practice', like the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, is also seen as crucial for developing countries

G20 fails to give clear signal on climate finance, but support for multilateralism key: Experts

BAKU (AZERBAIJAN), Nov 19: G20 leaders have not given a strong signal to negotiators trying to agree on a new finance package to support climate action in developing countries, many climate experts feel.

However, they say it is important that the 20 richest nations in the world, accounting for 80 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, have reaffirmed their support for multilateralism and the UN climate convention to solve climate problems.

This comes amid concerns about the US and Argentina pulling out of the Paris Agreement, which has hurt the morale of negotiators at the talks in Baku.

The G20's pushback on "unilat-

eral trade practices", like the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, is also seen as crucial for developing countries.

That said, experts note some key gaps in the G20 statement. It does not explicitly mention transitioning away from fossil fuels or mobilising resources to address loss and damage caused by climate change.

Vaibhav Chaturvedi, a senior fellow at the Delhi-based Council on Energy, Environment, and Water, said the G20 is not the right platform to discuss the new climate finance package being negotiated at COP29 under the UN-FCCC process.

The real issues about quantum and who will contribute are not

addressed at the G20. These questions go beyond the G20, he said.

He added that the G20 leaders' emphasis on multilateralism is important. "This is one of the first points in the climate section. Despite uncertainties like the US and Argentina pulling out, they have stressed that the multilateral process is key," Chaturvedi said.

Harjeet Singh, climate activist and Global Engagement Director for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, criticised developed nations in the G20 for failing to specify the trillions needed or ensure funds are given as grants, which are crucial for climate justice.

"Without decisive progress on finance at COP29, we are steering



towards a catastrophic temperature scenario, where the most vulnerable will bear the gravest consequences," he said.

Trishant Dev, a programme officer at the Delhi-based Centre for

Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR). The G20 declaration could pressure countries to discuss these issues at COP29, especially since developed nations often use climate action to justify these trade policies, he said.

Chaturvedi added that the G20 had made it clear that unilateral measures should not be used as unjustified trade restrictions.

Securing agreement on a new climate finance package to help developing countries cut emissions and adapt to climate change is a top priority for this year's UN climate talks. Different estimates suggest that USD 1.3 trillion is needed annually to tackle worsening climate impacts.

But countries are struggling to

agree on how much money is needed, how the package will work, and who will contribute.

For developing nations, restrictive trade measures are another major concern.

Last week, India argued that these measures unfairly shift the burden of transitioning to low-carbon economies onto developing and low-income nations. At the same time, developed nations, which have historically caused the most emissions, are not meeting their climate finance commitments.

UN climate chief Simon Stiell on Saturday also urged G20 leaders to carry out rapid cuts in emissions to prevent climate-driven economic carnage. (PTI)

Writing on wall but is HM reading it: Cong MLAs 'skipping' Manipur NDA meet

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: The Congress on Tuesday took a swipe at the BJP over some MLAs of the ruling NDA skipping a meeting called by Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh, saying the writing on the wall is clear and asked whether Home Minister Amit Shah is reading it.



Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh also asked how long will the "excruciating agony" of the people of Manipur continue like this.

Ramesh along with Manipur Congress chief K Meghachandra Singh, AICC in-charge of state Girish Chodankar, Inner Manipur MP A Bimol Akoijam and former Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Nabam Tuki met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, apprising him of the situation in the violence-hit state and deliberated on ways to bring peace in the state.

After meeting Kharge, Ramesh told PTI that the Congress chief would send a letter to President Droupadi Murmu about the prevailing situation in Manipur. He said the INDIA bloc would raise the issue in Parliament and take up this matter collectively. Earlier, Ramesh in a post on X said that on Monday night, the CM of Manipur called a meeting in Imphal of all MLAs belonging to the NDA. The Assembly has 60 members. "Other than him, only 26 showed up. Of these 26, 4 belong to the NPP whose National President has already written to the BJP National President withdraw-

ing support to the present CM," he said. "The writing on the wall is clear. But is the grand sutradhar of Manipur - the Union Home Minister, to whom the PM has abdicated and outsourced all responsibility for the state - reading it?" Ramesh said. Later, in a post, he said, "Now we gather that the signatures of 3 MLAs who were supposedly present have been forged. "So the ACTUAL number of NDA MLAs present was just 24, including the CM." His remarks come a day after a meeting of MLAs of the ruling BJP-led NDA in Manipur adopted a resolution calling for a "mass operation" against the Kuki militants responsible for killing three women and three children in Jiribam district within seven days. Ramesh had said Modi must

first meet an all-party delegation from Manipur and then also call an all-party meeting at the national level ahead of the Parliament session starting November 25.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here along with Manipur Congress chief K Meghachandra Singh and AICC in-charge of state Girish Chodankar, Ramesh had demanded that Shah and Singh must resign. Violence has continued to rock the state as offices of the Congress and the BJP have been ransacked in the hill district of Jiribam where an unidentified body was found earlier.

The incidents occurred after irate mobs set fire to the residences of three BJP legislators, one of whom is a senior minister, and a Congress MLA in various districts of Imphal Valley where an indefinite curfew has been clamped. Security forces also foiled the attempt of the agitators to storm the ancestral residence of the Manipur chief minister on Saturday evening.

The Congress has been attacking the prime minister for not visiting Manipur, besides slamming the Centre for its handling of the situation in the ethnic strife-torn northeastern state.

More than 220 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year. (PTI)

Hundreds walk with empty coffins demanding justice in Churachandpur

For those killed in Jiribam gunfight



CHURACHANDPUR, Nov 19: Hundreds of people took to the streets with empty coffins in Manipur's Churachandpur district on Tuesday, demanding justice for those killed in a gunfight with the security forces in Jiribam. Ten suspected militants were killed in the gunfight with security forces last week after insurgents in camouflage uniforms, armed with sophisticated weapons, fired indis-

criminally at the Borobekra police station and an adjacent CRPF camp at Jakuradhor in Jiribam, according to the Manipur Police. The rally, organised by the Joint Philanthropic Organisation (JPO), started around 11 am. Hundreds of people participated in it with placards demanding justice for those killed, and a separate administration in the hill areas. The march concluded at the

'Wall of Remembrance', a memorial for the Kuki people killed in the ethnic violence in the state since May last year. Later, a memorandum addressed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah was submitted to the district administration. The Kuki-Zo groups have been claiming that those killed in Jiribam were village volunteers. However, the state police pointed to a huge number of arms and ammunition that were found at the spot after the gunfight was over to counter the claim. More than 220 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year. The ethnically diverse Jiribam, which was largely untouched by the clashes, began to witness violence after the mutilated body of a farmer was found in a field in June this year. (PTI)

LNC- Manipur appeals GPRN to withdraw order on Maremei village

IMPHAL, Nov 19: The Liangmai Naga Council (LNC-Manipur) has "respectfully" appealed to the "GPRN to withdraw the order concerning Maremei village" (GPRN order-Oking Oct. 15, 2024, Ref No. 23-31/24-25/DIRCT/MKA/GPRN). In a statement recently, the LNC-M, the apex body of the Liangmai tribe in Manipur state, issued a clarification regarding the recent GPRN order dated October 15, 2024. "The Liangmai tribe spans across Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland, with the Liangmai Naga Raungdi as its overarching body and the Liangmai Naga Council representing the tribes of more than 100 villages and a population of 70,000 in Manipur," it mentioned. The LNC-M said it "has observed that the GPRN order refers to a village named 'Maremei - Ramkamai village', which is unfamiliar to the Liangmai tribe". The correct and officially registered name is Maremei village, "as recognized by our records and the Manipur government gazette," the LNC-M pointed out. The matter in question pertains to an internal family issue within the village of Liangmai people, the LNC-M also said. "Such issues fall under the purview

of the Liangmai Naga Council, Manipur, and are best resolved within the framework of Liangmai customs and practices, which are deeply rooted in the traditions passed down by our forefathers," the LNC-M added. In light of the above, the Liangmai Naga Council "respectfully" requested the GPRN to withdraw the order concerning Maremei village. According to the LNC-M, this step will enable the Liangmai community to address and resolve the matter amicably in the best interests of the community and broader Naga solidarity. The Liangmai community has always stood at the forefront of contributing to the Naga cause and nation-building, the LNC-M also said. "We remain steadfast in this commitment and urge all stakeholders to prioritize unity and peaceful resolutions," it further said. In the absence of a withdrawal, the Liangmai Naga Council asserted that it will have no option but to take appropriate measures in the interest of the public and the Liangmai community. "We trust that the GPRN will acknowledge and respect this appeal," it further added. (NNV)

Pradyot demands justice for murdered woman, children in Manipur

AGARTALA, Nov 19: Tripura Motha founder and Tripura royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Monday strongly condemned the brutal killing of a woman and two children in Manipur, demanding that the Central government take stringent action by hanging the perpetrators to deliver justice. The victims were among six individuals reported missing from a relief camp and were allegedly abducted and held hostage by militants. Their lifeless bodies were discovered near

a river in the remote village of Jirimukh, close to the Manipur-Assam border, on Friday evening. Expressing his anguish, Pradyot said, "A 60-year-old woman and a two-year-old child have been brutally murdered in Manipur. I hang my head in shame as a Northeasterner and as a human being. The government must ensure that these culprits are hanged for killing innocent women and children in the name of their so-called cause. Such heinous acts are indefensible." He further criticised the lack of action and high-

lighted the potential for alienation in the region due to such incidents. "The Government of India must do more. The Northeast is an integral part of India, and incidents like these deepen feelings of neglect and isolation. My deepest condolences to the bereaved families," he added. Pradyot reiterated the need for humanity and justice to prevail over divisive agendas, emphasizing that the lives of the innocent and vulnerable must be protected at all costs.

Suspension on broadband services lifted in Manipur

IMPHAL, Nov 19: The Manipur government has conditionally lifted the suspension on broadband services three days after imposing it, considering the hardships faced by common people, healthcare facilities, educational institutions and other offices. Mobile internet services, however, remained suspended, according to an order issued by Home Commissioner N Ashok Kumar. Amid escalating violence, the administration clamped the restriction order in seven districts on November 16. "Considering the sufferings of the common people as the internet ban had affected functioning of important offices, institutions, and people who work from home, the state government has made a considered decision to lift suspension in case of broadband services conditionally," the order said. A subscriber shall not accept any connection other than the one allowed, and no Wifi or hotspots shall be allowed, it said. The government, however, decided to keep the ban on mobile internet data, according to the order. The administration imposed the suspension on November 16 in seven districts - Imphal East and West, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Kakching, Kangpokpi and Churachandpur - for two days to prevent anti-social elements from spreading content that might create law and order problems. The suspension was extended for two more days on Monday. (PTI)

CM urged to stop eviction until alternative accommodation provided

AGARTALA, Nov 19: Tripura Leader of Opposition Jitendra Chaudhury on Monday urged chief minister Manik Saha to halt the eviction process until provisions for livelihood and alternative accommodation are made for families below the poverty line. Chaudhury made this appeal in a letter addressed to the chief minister. In the letter, Chaudhury, who is also a CPIM MLA, mentioned that as part of a delegation, he, along with CPIM MLAs Sudip Sarkar, Ramu Das, and former MLA Ratan Das, visited the Border-Golchakkar area near the Akhaura Checkpost under Agartala Municipal Corporation on Sunday morning. "For the last few days, houses belonging to poor working-class people, who have been residing on the land adjacent to the road for 6-7 decades, have been demolished with bulldozers to construct an alternative national road in the area. Suddenly, these homes—their only means of livelihood—are being bulldozed, forcing the affected families to live under the open sky in complete destitution," the letter reads. He noted that due to their extremely low incomes, nearly 99 percent of these evicted families are finding it almost impossible to rent or secure alternative accommodation elsewhere. "Where will they go in this situation? Meanwhile, winter is fast approaching. If alternative accommodation is not arranged for them on an urgent basis, they will soon face a humanitarian disaster. During the in-

spection yesterday, some of the displaced families handed over a memorandum to the government through me. Apart from those named in the memorandum, there are many others we could not meet. In the memorandum, these distressed families requested the suspension of the eviction operation until alternative accommodation is arranged and demanded appropriate compensation," Chaudhury added. He pointed out that during the previous Left Front government, in the process of expanding and modernizing Agartala city, the road alignment was marked by constructing drains on both sides for an alternative national highway. However, after the new government assumed office in 2018, a fresh alignment was planned for this road, resulting in the destruction of many families' homes. "The actions of the Agartala Municipal Corporation and the state administration, carried out without providing alternative accommodation, are completely unwarranted, cruel, and inhumane. I humbly appeal to you on behalf of the visiting delegation and these displaced families. Immediate arrangements for alternative accommodation with basic human amenities must be made for the affected families. Additionally, livelihood provisions should be ensured for families below the poverty line. Until such arrangements are in place, the eviction process must be put on hold. I sincerely hope you will consider this serious matter from a humanitarian perspective and take prompt action," the letter concluded.

Union minister reviews CSSs in Nagaland



DIMAPUR, Nov 19: Union minister of state for home Bhandu Devraj Singh on Monday reviewed the implementation of centrally sponsored schemes (CSSs) in Nagaland. Kumar, who is on a two-day visit to the state, held the review meeting with the line departments implementing the schemes at the Nagaland civil secretariat in Kohima. After thorough deliberations with the CSSs' implementation departments, he said all the suggestions and challenges faced by the state have been duly noted. Kumar assured these would be put forth for further necessary action to the central ministry.

Nagaland chief secretary Dr J Alam, while delivering his welcome address, said the review meeting with the senior officials was convened to get an overview of the various schemes and programmes being implemented by the state government with assistance from the Government of India. Alam added the meeting also reviewed all the flagship programmes and oversaw the progress in the exploration schemes and aspirational blocks. Giving a brief overview of the state, he highlighted some major ongoing projects in the state such as four-lane national highway, railway projects connecting the state and many other iconic projects with central assistance. Chairing the meeting, home commissioner Vyas R highlighted the key issues that are very unique to the state. Representatives of Kiphire, Zunheboto and Noklak districts highlighted the progress and challenges faced by the aspirational districts/blocks in Nagaland through PowerPoint presentations. Various CSS implementing departments and aspirational districts also shared their challenges faced during the implementation of the schemes at the meeting.

CONSTRUCTION OF 30 BEDDED RPF BARRACK AT CHAPARMUKH
E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/158 of 2024; Dated: 11-11-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SN. 1. Brief Description of item:** Provision of construction of RPF Barrack at Chaparmukh (30 bedded capacity). **Tender Value:** ₹ 1,18,56,408.73; **Earnest Money:** ₹ 2,09,300.00. E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 09-12-2024 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 10-12-2024. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 09-12-2024 in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>
DRM/Works, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

E-AUCTION FOR CATERING STALLS ASSETS OVER LUMDING DIVISION			
E-auction for 15 Nos. Assets of Catering stalls over Lumding Division for a period of 05 (five) years. Details are as under. Auction Catalogue No.: CATER-LMG-06-24; Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots): 10:00 hrs. on 02-12-2024; Auction Close Date & Time: 12:50 hrs. on 02-12-2024; Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee; Trips/Days: 1826.			
Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Stations	
AA/1	Catg-LMG-UJPU-GMU-116-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Udaipur	
AA/2	Catg-LMG-BXG-GMU-102-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Bhanga	
AA/3	Catg-LMG-DSR-GMU-122-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Dhansiri	
AA/4	Catg-LMG-JID-GMU-9-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Jagiroad	
AA/5	Catg-LMG-PASG-GMU-120-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Panisagar	
AB/1	Catg-LMG-HKD-SMU-90-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Hailakandi	
AB/2	Catg-LMG-GHY-SMU-124-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Guwahati	
AB/3	Catg-LMG-AGTL-SMU-40-23-2 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Agartala	
AB/4	Catg-LMG-JID-SMU-78-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Jagiroad	
AB/5	Catg-LMG-GHY-SMU-123-24-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Guwahati	
AB/6	Catg-LMG-LKA-SMU-59-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Lanka	
AB/7	Catg-LMG-JID-SMU-75-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Jagiroad	
AB/8	Catg-LMG-DMR-SMU-93-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Dharmaganagar	
AB/9	Catg-LMG-GHY-SMU-127-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Guwahati	
AB/10	Catg-LMG-LMG-SMU-41-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Lumding	

Prospective bidders are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module of IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in.
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

Meeting discussion was centred on the current PDS challenges and key areas for improvement

Meghalaya, UN-WFP collaborate to strengthen PDS



SHILLONG, Nov 19: The State Government of Meghalaya in partnership with United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has or-

ganised a meeting in Shillong, Meghalaya on Tuesday to strengthen the Public Distribution System (PDS) and mapping out future collaborative efforts to enhance the food security in the State. The event was graced by Coming One Ymbon, Minister I/c of Food Civil Supplies

and Consumer Affairs along with Elisabeth Faure, Country Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (UN-WFP). The meeting discussion was centred on the current PDS challenges and key areas for improvement and exploration of innovative technologies and strategies to enhance transparency and accountability in the PDS supply chain in context to Meghalaya. There was also a discussion on the formulation of a collaborative roadmap that aligns with the State's objective for food security in Meghalaya. Also, there is an initiative to share best practices from other states and global insights on successful models implemented by WFP in the country. (NNV)

Ref. no: GCK. 1(2)/93-94/1608

ADVERTISEMENT

In pursuance of letter no. DE/BTC/HE/SIU/52/Pt-1/2022/95 A, dated 18th Nov./2024, applications are invited from eligible graduates along with complete bio-data and testimonials for filling up the sanctioned vacant post of 1 (one) Junior Assistant (UR post) in Girls' College, Kokrajhar.

Desirable: Computer Proficiency Certificate. Age Limit: As per Govt. of Assam Rule. Preference shall be given to the candidates belonging to BTR and knowledge of local languages. A non-refundable bank draft of Rs. 1000/- (Rupees One Thousand) only drawn in favour of Principal, Girls' College, Kokrajhar, payable at Assam Gramin Vikas Bank, Kokrajhar Branch must accompany the hard copy of application and reach the undersigned within one week from the date of publish of advertisement.

Sd/-
Principal & Secretary
Girls' College, Kokrajhar

Indira Gandhi was example of love and courage: Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: The Congress paid rich tributes to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on her birth anniversary on Tuesday with Rahul Gandhi saying that it is from his grandmother that he learnt that real strength is to fearlessly walk on the path of national interest.

Indira Gandhi, often described as the 'Iron Lady of India', was born on November 19, 1917 in Uttar Pradesh's Allahabad.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi paid floral tributes to Indira Gandhi at her memorial 'Shakti Sthal' here.

Rahul Gandhi also paid floral tributes at the Indira Gandhi Memorial at 1, Safdarjung Road.

Sharing a quote by Indira Gandhi in a post on X, Kharge said crores of Indians shall continue to draw inspiration from the life of the 'Iron Lady of India' for she was the epitome of lifelong struggle, courage and dynamic leadership who selflessly contributed to nation building.

"She sacrificed her life to preserve the unity and integrity of India. Our humble homage on her birth anniversary," he said.

In a post in Hindi on X, Rahul



Gandhi said, "(My) grandmother was an example of both courage and love. It is from her that I have learnt that the real strength is to fearlessly walk on the path of national interest." "Her memories are my strength, which always show me the way," the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, "My grandmother, Indira Gandhi ji always started her election campaign from Nandurbar in Maharashtra. She believed that the culture of the tribal society is the best and unique because it respects and protects na-

ture." "When she became the prime minister, she empowered the tribal society by making many important laws for them. She strengthened the tribals, Dalits, backward and poor the most with her policies," she said in a post on X in Hindi.

Today, the Congress is carrying forward the ideas of Indira Gandhi by demanding a caste census and increasing the reservation limit for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, she said.

"Dadi ji! The lessons of service and culture given by you will always remain with us," Priyanka

Gandhi said.

Congress general secretary, in-charge organisation, K C Venugopal, also paid tributes to Indira Gandhi on her birth anniversary.

"Her life is an inspiration for everyone, as she grew to become one of India's most successful PMs in Indian history. Her instincts to take challenges head on, fight for supreme national interest even if it means risking her life, and her commitment to help India's every citizen makes her a special leader," he said.

Even today, crores of Indians reminisce about her tenure and recognise her immense contributions to society, Venugopal said.

"We renew our pledge to build an India of her dreams, where her vision of a strong, prosperous and progressive society is fulfilled," he said. The Congress, in a post on its official X handle, said Indira Gandhi was an embodiment of strength and resilience.

"Her transformative leadership propelled India to new heights, breaking barriers and shaping India's future. We pay our heartfelt tribute to Indira ji, whose patriotism and devotion to the nation inspire millions," the party said. (PTI)

Lone slams Omar govt over 'steep hike' in power bill

SRINAGAR, Nov 19: Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone on Tuesday hit out at the National Conference government in Jammu and Kashmir over the "steep hike in electricity bills".

Claiming that the electricity bills were higher by nearly 50 per cent, Lone, who is MLA from Handwara, criticised the ruling party for creating an "electricity mess" and demanded immediate intervention.

"Phone calls from various villages reveal electricity bills inflated by 50%. Even I am confused - did they promise to decrease electricity tariffs or increase them?" he questioned. Lone accused the NC-led government of employing "age-old trickery" by raising tariffs only to later offer waivers as a political gimmick.

"Imagine a household paying 100 in electricity fees. Instead of reducing it to ₹ 50 as promised, they hike it to 200, then waive 50, leaving the consumer paying 150 - still 50% more than before the elections. This isn't relief; it's deceit. Trust me, if they do it, I will not be surprised," he said.

Calling on the Power Development Department to act immediately, Lone urged them to stop what he described as "arbitrary and unjustified" tariff hikes. (PTI)

UP bypolls: Stage set for BJP-SP electoral battle

LUCKNOW, Nov 19: It is BJP versus the SP as Uttar Pradesh gets ready for bypolls in nine assembly seats on Wednesday, which are being viewed as the first electoral battle after the Lok Sabha polls.

While the Congress is not contesting the bypolls and supporting its INDIA bloc partner Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party is contesting all nine seats on its own.

The Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM too has fielded its candidates from Ghaziabad, Kundarki and Meerapur seats, while the Aazad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) of Chandrashekhar has fielded candidates on all seats except Sisamau.

Ninety candidates are in the fray in the bypolls, with the maximum of 14 candidates in the fray from Ghaziabad assembly constituency, while the minimum count of candidates is five each from Khair (SC) and Sisamau assembly constituencies.

Though the results of the bypolls will not have any direct impact on the 403-member UP Legislative Assembly, it will send a message to various political parties.

While the SP is aiming to increase its tally further in the House, BJP and its ally RLD will try to further consolidate their presence in the Assembly.

At present, the BJP has 251 MLAs in the Assembly followed by the SP with 105 MLAs. BJP allies Apna Dal (Sonelal) has 13 MLAs, RLD has 8 MLAs, SBSP has 6 MLAs, and NISHAD party has 5 MLAs.

The Congress and Jansatta Dal Loktantrik have two MLAs each, while the BSP has one MLAs.

This will be the first electoral test of the INDIA bloc as well as the NDA in the politically-crucial state after the Lok Sabha elections.

Ahead of voting, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday urged voters to vote for his party.

In a post on X of the SP, he said, "I would like to ask all my voters, especially the young farmers, to help. The administration can only create disturbances in the elections. I hope the administration will work to protect the rights to save the Constitution given by Babasaheb

Bhimrao Ambedkar."

UP BJP spokesperson Manish Shukla on Tuesday took a dig at the Samajwadi Party saying, "Samajwadi Party is afraid of losing the bypolls. Akhilesh Yadav wants to escape responsibility by blaming the Election Commission for the defeat."

"Due to fear of defeat, the SP is making childish demands from the Election Commission that identity cards should not be checked. Whereas in the past, women wearing burqas have been caught doing fake voting by wearing burqas."

Shukla was referring to a recent letter written by SP's UP unit chief Shyam Lal Pal in which he had requested the Election Commission to issue instructions that "on the day of polling, no police personnel should check the voter ID card of the voter."

Pal, citing the handbook for returning officers, said on the day of polling, the ID of the voter could be checked by the polling officer.

RLD spokesperson Ankur Saxena said his party is going to retain the Meerapur seat, while the NDA will make a clean sweep by winning all the constituencies where bypolls are taking place.

Spokesperson of Uttar Pradesh Congress Manish Hindvi said, "The people of the state have made their choice clear in the Lok Sabha elections, in which the INDIA bloc got the maximum seats. This momentum will definitely carry on further in the bypolls."

Traders' body Bhartiya Udyog Vyapaar Mandal also appealed to traders to ensure hundred per cent voting.

"We will first present an example through hundred per cent voting and then in subsequent elections, we will have dialogue with other organisations to join our endeavour," Ravikant Garg, president of the Bhartiya Udyog Vyapaar Mandal, told PTI.

The bypolls will be held at Katehari in Ambedkar Nagar, Karhal in Mainpuri, Meerapur in Muzaffarnagar, Ghaziabad, Majhawan in Mirzapur, Sisamau in Kanpur city, Khair in Aligarh, Phulpur in Prayagraj, and Kundarki in Moradabad on November 20. (PTI)

Tawde distributed cash to voters in Palghar, claims BVA leader Thakur; BJP denies

MUMBAI, Nov 19: BJP general secretary Vinod Tawde was caught in a huge row after Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA) chief Hitendra Thakur on Tuesday accused him of distributing money to voters in Palghar on the eve of the Maharashtra assembly polls.

The saffron party denied the claims, while the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) accused it of misusing government machinery and engaging in corrupt practices. Tawde, however, asserted that he was in Nalasopara to provide guidance regarding election procedures and challenged the opposition parties to verify his activities.

Talking to reporters, BVA MLA Thakur said, "Some BJP leaders informed me that party general secretary Tawde had come to Virar to disburse ₹ 5 crore to influence voters. I thought a national leader like him would not stoop to such a trivial task. But I saw him here. I urge the Election Commission to take action against him and the BJP."

The BVA legislator alleged the hotel Tawde was staying shut the CCTV recording.

"The hotel administration seems to be in cahoots with Tawde and the BJP. They only activated their CCTV after we requested it. He was distributing money to manipulate voters," he said.

A video has surfaced on social media in which BVA workers can be seen confronting Tawde outside the hotel where he was staying.

Deputy Commissioner of police Purnima Chowgule Shringi of Zone II, Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar police commissionerate, confirmed that two first information reports have been registered at the Tuljini police station in connection with incidents linked to the hotel where the alleged cash distribution took place.

Without providing further details, she assured a thorough investigation into the incident.

The BJP, however, dismissed Thakur's claims, terming them as a mere publicity stunt.

BJP leader Pravin Darekar remarked, "The MVA has already lost the game. They are destined for defeat in this election, which is why they are making such absurd allegations against us."

Talking to reporters later, Tawde said he was in Nalasopara to provide guidance regarding election procedures and not to distribute money. He further challenged opposition members to verify his activities.

Leaders of the opposition MVA demanded a comprehensive investigation by the Election Commission, with Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut suggesting a conspiracy against Tawde by some BJP leaders.

Raut said, "No matter how much the BJP tries to hide, whatever happened in Nallasopara-Virar, it happened before the camera."

Chief Parliamentary Secretaries should quit, contest assembly polls again: Anurag Thakur

HAMIRPUR (HP), Nov 19: Former Union minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday called upon the six chief parliamentary secretaries to contest assembly polls again from their seats after the High Court quashed their appointments, an official statement said.

On Wednesday last week, the Himachal Pradesh High Court declared that the law under which the appointments were made was void. A division bench of the high court comprising Justices Vivek Thakur and B C Negi had also directed that all the facilities and privileges of these CPSs be withdrawn immediately.

Chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had appointed six CPSs -- Sanjay Awasthi from Arki Assembly, Sunder Singh from Kullu, Ram Kumar from Doon, Mohan Lal Barakta from Rohru, Ashish Butail from Palampur and Kishori Lal from Baijnath -- on January 8, 2023, ahead of cabinet expansion.

The BJP has been demanding that the membership of all the legislatures appointed as CPS be cancelled. However, Technical education minister Rajesh Dharmani maintained that the CPS was appointed under



the act passed by the Vidhan Sabha. They do not come under the preview of office of profit and the Vidhan Sabha membership of six CPS is safe.

As per the statement, Thakur said that in the wake of the High Court judgment, the six chief parliamentary secretaries should quit their seats and contest fresh assembly elections from their seats.

He said that the money spent on the CPS should also be deposited in the treasury of the state government. The Congress was aware that the appointment of MLAs as CPS was against the law.

The state is under debt of ₹ 96,000 crore. Despite this, the Congress government has increased the debt by giving facilities to the CPS. This is playing with the interests of the public, he added.

The former Union minister said that the false guarantees of Himachal Congress have been exposed across the country. The condition of the Congress has become such that now the party's national president Mallikarjun Kharge has started questioning Rahul Gandhi's policies. (PTI)

"The conduct of the BJP-Shinde alliance is unbefitting of Maharashtra, a state known for its history of valour and justice, under leaders like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Shahu Maharaj, and social reformers such as Phule and Ambedkar. The people of Maharashtra will not tolerate such dirty politics," Patole said. (PTI)

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'Hemant Soren wants to turn Ranchi into Karachi,' alleges Giriraj Singh

PATNA, Nov 19: Attacking the ruling JMM-Congress coalition in Jharkhand, Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh on Tuesday claimed that Chief Minister Hemant Soren wants to turn the state capital "Ranchi into Karachi".

Speaking to reporters in Patna, Singh urged the people of Jharkhand to vote for the safety of women.

"Hemant Soren and Congress want to turn Ranchi into Karachi, and Dumka, Deoghar and Sahibganj districts into Bangladesh. The Congress and its allies want to divide us. I urge people, a day before the final phase of polling in Jharkhand, to vote for the safety of



their 'bahu-beti'," he said.

Polling for 38 assembly seats in the second phase will be held in Jharkhand on Wednesday.

Accusing the Congress and its allies of dividing the people, Singh said, "They are talking about 'vote-jihad'. Their basic motive is to divide the votes of the majority community. People must not allow this to happen."

Asked about Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge likening the BJP and RSS to "poison", he said, "Although he is a puppet in the Congress, he should not use such unparliamentary and derogatory words. In fact, Congress leaders use poisonous words in their speeches with a motive to divide the voters into communal lines."

Addressing a rally in Sangli in Maharashtra

on Sunday, Kharge said, "If there is anything which is politically the most dangerous in India, it is the BJP and RSS. They are like poison. If a snake bites, the person (who is bitten) dies... such a poisonous snake should be killed."

On the allegations of religious conversions in Buxar, Moithari, Begusarai and Lakhisarai districts of Bihar, Singh said strict action must be taken against preachers indulging in such activities.

"It is quite surprising that RJD and Congress leaders are maintaining a stoic silence over the conversion activities being carried out by missionaries," he said. (PTI)

BJP has itself become a crisis for farmers: Priyanka Gandhi

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday claimed that there is a "crisis of fertilizers" in the country and wondered how the BJP government has not been able to estimate in 10 years how much fertilizer is needed in the country.

The Congress general secretary said that be it the price of crops or the availability of fertilisers and seeds, the BJP, which makes big claims, has itself become a crisis for the farmers.

"This is the peak season for sowing of Rabi crops and as usual, there is a crisis of fertilisers in the entire country. Long queues are being seen for fertilisers in many states including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh," Priyanka Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X.

Farmers are wandering here and there leaving their work in the fields and protesting at various places, she said.

"Due to the crisis of fertilisers in every season under the BJP rule, this problem of the farmers has now become common. Has the BJP government not been able to estimate in 10 years how much fertilizer is needed in the country," she asked. (PTI)

Maharashtra agrarian distress story told in soyabean, cotton crops: Congress slams Mahayuti



NEW DELHI, Nov 19: The Congress on Tuesday claimed that the story of Maharashtra's agrarian distress is told in the crops of soyabean and cotton which are being procured below the minimum support price (MSP) due to the Mahayuti government's reluctance to follow up on its procurement promises.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh pointed out that the MVA has guaranteed legal status to MSP and a price of ₹ 7,000 per quintal of soyabean.

"A tale of Maharashtra's agrarian distress, told in two crops - Soyabean: Deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis promised ₹ 6,000 per quintal of soyabean in 2013, and announced a MSP ₹ 4,892 MSP this year. Currently, soyabean is being sold at ₹ 3,200 to ₹ 4,200 per quintal," he said.

Talking about cotton, Ramesh said during the MVA government, cotton used to fetch ₹ 12,000 to ₹ 12,500 per quintal. Today, the same cotton is being sold at throwaway prices, causing mas-

sive losses to farmers, Ramesh said.

"This is the result of the Mahayuti government's reluctance to follow through on its procurement promises and the BJP's reluctance to give legal status to MSP," the Congress leader said.

In contrast, he said, the MVA has guaranteed legal status to MSP, prices set by the Swaminathan Commission's formula of one-and-a-half times the comprehensive cost of cultivation and a price of ₹ 7,000 per quintal of soyabean. It is clear which way the farmers of Maharashtra will vote, Ramesh said.

The ruling Mahayuti alliance comprises Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, the BJP and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP.

The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) consists of the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP).

Ramesh's remarks come a day before the voting for Maharashtra assembly elections. Counting of votes will take place on November 23. (PTI)

Marathwada's water woes example of BJP, Mahayuti's failure to provide sustainable solutions: Cong

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: The Congress on Tuesday accused the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra of creating a water crisis in Marathwada and said the region's water woes remain a glaring example of its inadequate planning and failure to provide sustainable solutions.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the Mahayuti's "six-step guide to creating a water crisis" includes delayed implementation of a water grid.

Despite launching the ambitious Marathwada Water Grid Project in 2019, the BJP-led government failed to ensure its timely execution, he said in his post on X.

Ramesh said that after returning to power by horse-trading in 2022, the Mahayuti revived the Water Grid Project but its execution continues to be slow, with no substantial relief provided to Marathwada's water-scarce regions so far.

The government's focus on securing ₹ 20,000 crore from the



central government and international organisations has delayed the scheme's implementation on the ground, the Congress leader said.

He also alleged that there was a failure on the part of the Mahayuti government to address the issue of unpredictable rainfall.

response, including temporary measures like the 2016 "Latur water train," was insufficient to address the systemic causes of the crisis.

He also accused the Mahayuti government of having inconsistent political priorities.

"Bureaucratic delays and shifting priorities under successive BJP-led administrations have deepened the water crisis instead of resolving it," Ramesh said.

"Marathwada's water woes remain a glaring example of BJP's and Mahayuti's inadequate planning and failure to provide sustainable solutions," he said.

The ruling Mahayuti alliance comprises Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, the BJP and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP. The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) comprises the Congress, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP).

Ramesh's remarks come a day before the voting for Maharashtra Assembly elections. The results will be out on November 23. (PTI)

Case against 4 unidentified persons for murder bid

Ex-minister Anil Deshmukh attacked

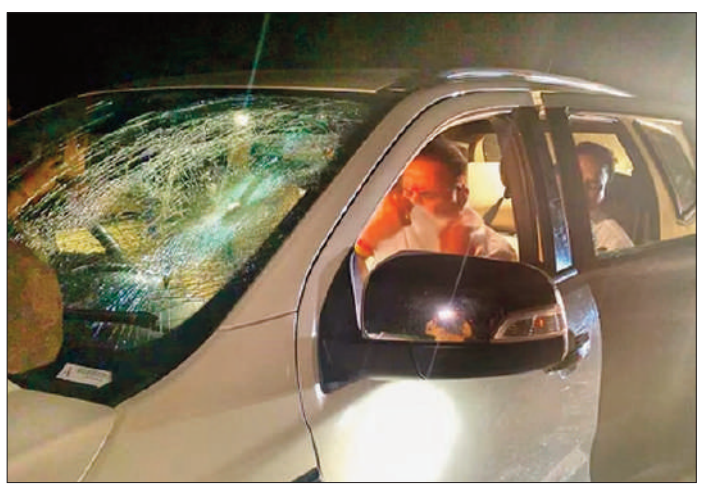
NAGPUR, Nov 19: Police have registered a case against four unidentified persons on charges of attempt to murder after NCP (SP) leader and former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh was seriously injured in stone pelted at his car in Nagpur, officials said on Tuesday.

The incident took place at around 8 pm on Monday and Deshmukh was later admitted to a private hospital in Nagpur.

State NCP (SP) spokesperson Pravin Kunte claimed there was a "conspiracy" against Deshmukh, who received injuries on his head and shoulder, and blamed the ruling BJP for the incident.

The party headed by Sharad Pawar has demanded a high-level probe into the incident, which occurred on the last day of campaigning for the Maharashtra assembly elections scheduled on November 20.

Deshmukh was returning to Katol after attending a meeting in Narkhed village. Some unidenti-



fied persons threw stones at his car near Belphata on Jalalkhedha Road near Katol in Nagpur district.

The former minister, who received injuries during the attack, was immediately rushed to the Katol Civil Hospital, police said.

He was later admitted to a private hospital here. Nagpur Rural Superintendent of Police (SP)

adding that senior police officials and the district collector have also visited the incident spot.

Poddar appealed to the people not to pay attention to any rumours.

Anil Deshmukh's son Salil Deshmukh is contesting from the Katol assembly constituency on the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) ticket against BJP's Charansingh Thakur.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, NCP (SP) spokesperson Kunte said the former minister suffered injuries on his head and shoulder and doctors have advised him bed rest.

Asked who was behind the attack, Kunte blamed it on the BJP and its leaders.

He alleged there was a "nexus" of Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis, who is also the state home minister, BJP MLC Parinay Fuke and Katol nominee Thakur operating in the area.

There is no law and order in the state and a former home minister is

attacked, Kunte said, claiming no police security was provided at Deshmukh's residence through the night.

He also raised questions over Fuke holding a press conference on Tuesday morning and claiming the attack on Anil Deshmukh was a "political stunt".

"It is not a stunt but a conspiracy against Anil Deshmukh," Kunte claimed.

Earlier, NCP (SP) spokesperson Vedprakash Arya on Monday sought a high-level inquiry into the incident and police protection for Deshmukh's family.

"Some people attacked Anil Deshmukh's car in Belfata Bhisnur in Katol, wherein Deshmukh received serious head injury. His treatment started in Katol but due to the serious injury, he was shifted to Nagpur for treatment," Arya said in a statement.

He claimed that their political opponents were staring at a crushing defeat and, therefore, resorted to such a cowardly attack. (PTI)

Early warning system key to successful handling of disasters: Odisha minister

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 19: Odisha Revenue and Disaster Management minister Suresh Pujari on Tuesday said a proper early warning system is key to successful handling of disasters.

Speaking at a function marking a consultation with United Nations India and Reliance Foundation, Pujari said once the early warning system becomes perfect, mitigating the situation and facing natural disasters will become easier for the government.

He said though Odisha has proved time and again for successfully facing natural disasters in the past it will be holding meetings further and try for a collective approach to face such disasters in future.

Pujari claimed that Odisha has become a role model for the entire country in disaster management.

The consultation hosted by Reliance Foundation and UN India held its first meeting in

Bhubaneswar where stakeholders exchanged views on how to go for an early warning system to face natural disasters.

Referring to the recent severe cyclonic storm Dana that hit Odisha coast in October, the minister said that the state government has shared its experience and exchanged ideas with other stakeholders. The state also shared its lessons from handling natural disasters in the past.

UN-Resident Coordinator India, Shombi Sharp, said: "The UN remains committed to supporting efforts through our various agencies, working closely with the government, civil society and partners like Reliance Foundation to strengthen Early Warning Systems and build community resilience".

He said the UN India is also showcasing Odisha's leadership in early warning systems for disaster response, a crucial story to tell and an opportunity to share best prac-

tices and knowledge with other states and countries in the Global South.

Reliance Foundation CEO, Jagannath Kumar said as climate change drives more extreme events, there is a need to strengthen impact-based forecasting to ensure it translates more effectively to local action.

"We have witnessed the life-saving potential of early warnings while serving communities during cyclones, floods and other extreme events. India is pioneering knowledge advancement in rapidly advancing early warning systems. We have been driving innovative solutions in early warning systems through extensive use of technology and approaches for effective reach and impact", he said.

Experts from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh shared their best practices and highlighted the importance of strengthening collaborations. (PTI)

Himachal contractor alleges fraud by former MLA Chaitanya Sharma

UNA (HP), Nov 19: A contractor here has accused former MLA from Gagret Chaitanya Sharma and two others of cheating him of ₹ 8 lakh under the pretext of securing work in the Public Works Department, police said on Tuesday.

The complainant, contractor Surendra Kumar Bhola, of the Bhadrakali village of the district, alleged fraud and criminal conspiracy against Sharma and his associates, Mahesh Yadav and Harshit Tiwari, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Vasudha Sood said.

According to Sood, the matter is being investigated. In his complaint, Bhola said that in January 2024, he met the then Gagret MLA Chaitanya Sharma at his residence and seeking help to obtain Public Works Department (PWD) contracts.

He said that the MLA

directed him to meet his associates Mahesh Yadav and Harshit Tiwari in this regard and said that he will tell them to do the needful.

According to Bhola, as per the instructions of Sharma, on February 1, 2024, he went to the MLA's residence in the morning and met Yadav and Tiwari.

He alleged that they demanded ₹ 8 lakh to get the work done -- ₹ 6 lakh to be deposited in a specified account and ₹ 2 lakh to be paid in cash. The contractor said that he transferred ₹ 6 lakh to an SBI account through Canara Bank's Daulatpur Chowk branch and handed over ₹ 2 two lakh in cash to Yadav and Tiwari on the same day.

Bhola further alleged that despite giving the money, he was neither given any contract in the PWD, nor is the money refunded. (PTI)

Jamia announces shift to online classes

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Jamia Millia Islamia has announced the shift to online classes for all students, including those enrolled in its schools, until November 23, due to the deteriorating air quality in the national capital.

The decision was made in view of the severe air pollution levels, with the city's 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 460, placing it in the "severe plus" category. In a notification, the university said that regular physical classes would resume on November 25, prioritising the health and well-being of students.

The administration also directed the heads of all its schools to suspend physical classes until further notice and conduct classes online.

On Monday, both Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University announced similar measures, shifting to online classes until November 23 and November 22, respectively. However, the schedule for exams and interviews at both universities will remain unchanged, as said in their notifications.

The Delhi government has declared the ongoing air quality crisis a "medical emergency" and urged institutions to take necessary precautions to protect public health. (PTI)

Delhi Police arrests Chinese national for cyber fraud



NEW DELHI, Nov 19: The Delhi Police has arrested a Chinese national for his alleged involvement in a cyber fraud of ₹ 43 lakh in Shahdara, officials said on Tuesday.

The arrest has helped the police unearth an online stock trading scam of more than ₹ 100 crore which was being orchestrated via social media groups, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam said.

The accused has been identified as Fang Chenjin, a Chinese national residing at Safdarjung enclave, he said.

Sharing details on the probe, Gautam said, "A complaint was lodged at the cybercrime portal in July, where the complainant reported that he was lured into fraudulent stock market training sessions and subsequently tricked into investing ₹ 43.5 lakh in several transactions. These investments were directed to multiple bank accounts controlled by the fraudsters."

During the investigation, the police obtained details of the bank accounts to which the stolen funds were transferred and further analysed the call records of several suspected mobile numbers. A thorough investigation was conducted into the bank accounts and mobile numbers associated with all the suspects, and technical analysis revealed a link to fraudulent activities.

"We traced the funds to a bank account registered under the name Maha Laxmi Traders, located in Mundka, Delhi. This account was found to be involved in fraudulent transactions, including a transfer of

₹ 1.25 lakh made in April this year," he said.

Further inquiry led the police to a mobile number which was registered in the name of Fang, which led them to him. He was arrested after evidence from his mobile phone and social media chat logs related to the fraud were recovered, said the DCP.

The social media conversations between him and an associate clearly showed that he was directing the fraudulent activities, including the recharge of the mobile number used in the scam. Further probe revealed that Fang was linked to two other significant fraud cases involving cybercrime and money laundering in Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, police said.

"There are also 17 criminal complaints registered with the cyber crime portal, all linked to the same Fincare Bank account with the total amount defrauded exceeding ₹ 100 crore," the DCP said, adding that the accused Chinese national revealed that he came to India on a work Visa for a Taiwani company in Andhra Pradesh in April 2020.

According to the police, Fang was even arrested by the Andhra Pradesh police in a cheating case that was registered on the complaint of the company's owner where he was working as a vendor.

"He spent around 7 months in jail in Tirupati jail in Andhra Pradesh," Gautam said.

The passport and visa of the accused were seized at the time of arrest by the Andhra Police. When the Delhi Police arrested him, Fang had no valid visa, he added. (PTI)

SpaceX successfully launches ISRO's 4,700 kg communication satellite

BENGALURU, Nov 19: The country's latest communication satellite, GSAT-N2 was successfully launched by billionaire Elon Musk-founded SpaceX from Cape Canaveral in the US, ISRO's commercial arm NSIL has said.

The communication satellite will enhance broadband services and in-flight connectivity

across the Indian region, NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) said.

As the satellite was heavier than ISRO's current launch capabilities, it had to opt for a foreign launch vehicle, top space scientists and former chiefs of the country's space agency said. (PTI)

Vedic-era sage Bharadwaj conceptualised 1st aircraft: UP Gov



LUCKNOW, Nov 19: Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel claimed Vedic-era sage Bharadwaj conceptualised the idea of an aircraft but said the credit for its invention has gone to the Wright Brothers.

Addressing a convocation function at a university, Patel said students should study ancient Indian texts to appreciate the unparalleled research and discoveries made by their ancestors.

"The sages and scholars of ancient India made remarkable discoveries and innovations that are benefiting the world even today," she was quoted as saying in a statement issued by Raj Bhavan.

Citing the example of Bharadwaj, the governor said, "He had conceptualised the idea of an aircraft, but the credit for its invention was given to another nation, and it is now recognised as the invention of the Wright Brothers."

She made the speech at the 9th convocation of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University in Lucknow on Monday.

Bharadwaj, a prominent 'rishī' from the Vedic age, is mentioned in both the Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. Orville and Wilbur Wright, together known as the Wright Brothers, are credited with flying the first self-propelled aircraft on December 17, 1903, in North Carolina, USA. However, some BJP leaders have argued that the concept of a flying machine is demonstrated in the 'Pushpak Vimana' described in the Ramayana.

Interestingly, a research paper presented at the 102nd Indian Science Congress in 2015 claimed that Shivkar Bapuji Talpade had flown a flying machine over Chowpatty in 1895, eight years before the Wright Brothers.

The paper also claimed that aeroplanes existed in India 7,000

years ago and were capable of travelling between countries and even planets.

The paper, presented by a retired principal of a pilot training institute, attracted sharp criticism from some scientists who argued that it undermined the primacy of empirical evidence, which is the foundation of the 102-year-old Congress.

At the convocation, Patel urged universities to encourage students to delve into ancient Indian texts to appreciate the unparalleled research and discoveries made by their ancestors, and described these texts as "true treasure troves of wisdom."

Referring to the Rampur Raza Library, she highlighted its priceless collection of ancient books and artwork, some of which remain vibrant to this day, the statement said.

The colours used in these illustrations, derived from natural vegetation, have not deteriorated over time, Patel said.

The governor also instructed universities to facilitate the study of these ancient texts and translate them into various languages to ensure this knowledge reaches a wider audience, the statement added. She remarked that India, the land of Buddha, has always chosen the path of peace over conflict, and under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country is achieving new milestones in education and research.

Patel further stated that with a population of 1.4 billion, India is being "skilfully" guided by the Prime Minister, whose policies have elevated the nation's stature on the global stage.

The governor highlighted the substantial funds allocated for education in the current budget and urged universities to undertake projects in this direction and ensure that their benefits reach the students.

She also noted that the universities of Uttar Pradesh are performing well in national and international rankings. The universities' placements in the NAAC and NIRF rankings show that "even better results can be achieved with hard work," she added. (PTI)

Landmark buildings in MP to turn blue to mark World Children's Day

BHOPAL, Nov 19: The UNICEF has partnered with Madhya Pradesh Tourism (MPT) Department and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to illuminate historic and landmark buildings in blue colour under its "GoBlue" theme to raise awareness on child rights issue.

"November 20 is marked as World Children's Day. UNICEF, civil society organisations (CSOs) mark the day and week as child rights week. GoBlue is one of the themes of this year's World Children's Day to stand for child rights," a UNICEF official said.

To mark the day, all properties of the state tourism department and the ASI heritage properties, like Jahaz Mahal in Mandu in Dhar district and others will go blue, he said.

"To start with, the Pyramid of Jagran LakeCity University in Bhopal went blue on No-



vember 17 while on Monday night Jahaz Mahal or the Ship Palace in Mandu, Dhar district of MP were illuminated in blue," UNICEF Madhya Pradesh communication specialist Anil Gulati told PTI on Tuesday. He also expressed his gratitude towards the ASI and MPT for partnership for child rights. In addition UNICEF in partnership with the State Government are also working to provide a platform

to expressions of children on climate change by exhibiting images on the theme taken by children, he said.

UNICEF's "Go Blue" campaign for World Children's Day encourages people to show support for children's rights by wearing something blue, changing their profile picture online, signing a petition to demand a world where every child is safe and supported and incorporating blue

into their day.

On World Children's Day, schools and landmark buildings around the world light up blue. Some of the landmark buildings that were lit up in blue colour in the past include the Acropolis of Athens (Greece), the Empire State Building (New York), the Al Noor Mosque (New Zealand), the European Parliament in Belgium, the Shanghai Tower in China, the House of Peoples' Representatives in Ethiopia, The Rashtrapati Bhavan in India, The Petra in Jordan and The Frida Kahlo House in Mexico, UNICEF website said.

World Children's Day is celebrated on November 20th to mark the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). UNICEF raises awareness for child rights and issues impacting children on this day, it added. (PTI)

No. SSUHS/213/2024/6886

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

FINAL ROUND OF COUNSELLING FOR SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSION INTO VACANT SEATS OF MASTER OF PHYSIOTHERAPY COURSE (MPT) IN JORHAT MEDICAL COLLEGE, JORHAT FOR THE SESSION 2024-25 UNDER SSUHS

It is for information of all concerned candidates who appeared the Entrance Test held on 21-07-2024 that final round of counselling for selection of candidates for admission into vacant seats of Master of Physiotherapy course (MPT) in Jorhat Medical College, Jorhat for the session 2024-25 under Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences (SSUHS) will be held on 28th November, 2024 from 12.00 Noon onwards at the Conference Hall of SSUHS. Rank wise seats will be allotted till the availability of seats in the particular categories.

Name of the Course:

(1) Master of Physiotherapy (Musculoskeletal Disorders and Sports) = 1 seat (unreserved)

The candidates are requested to bring the following original documents along with one attested photocopies at the time of counselling

- Passport size photograph
- Admit Card of H.S.L.C. Examination (Age Proof)
- Mark Sheet and Pass Certificate of H.S.S.L.C. or equivalent examination
- Mark Sheet and Pass Certificate of B.P.T. examination
- Caste Certificate (wherever applicable. NCL is mandatory for OBC candidates)
- Permanent Resident Certificate of Assam
- Score Card of Entrance Examination
- Counselling Fee payment receipt of Rs.750/- (The candidates who have already paid counselling fee in the first round need not pay the fees again.)

A non-refundable counselling fee of Rs.750/- (Rupees seven hundred fifty) only is to be paid online on or before the time of counselling (www.ssuhs.in - Fee Collect Student Category - Counselling Fee - MPT). Also an admission fee of Rs.33,000/- (Rupees thirty three thousand) only is to be paid by the candidates in online mode during spot admission on 28-11-2024, if selected in counselling.

Sd/-
Registrar,
Janasanyog/D/8975/24/20-Nov-24 Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences

NoTDB/15th FC/72/2021-22/1212

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NO- 13/2024-25

Date 18/11/2024

Sealed tenders with a validity period of 180 days from the date of receipt in prescribed form affixing non-refundable court fee stamps of Rs. 8.25/- (Rupees Eight and Twenty Five Paise) only subsequently to be drawn up in printed F-2 form are hereby invited from the Govt. registered PWD (Roads and Building), P&RD and other Govt. registered contractor's under Class-I (A/B/C) Class-II and Class-III category from approved firm according to tender limit of eligibility for the following works under 15 FC (Untied Grant) for the year 2023-24 during 2024-25 and will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 2:00 PM on 10/12/2024 and will be opened on the same date and placed at 2:15 PM in the presence of willing contractors or their authorized agents.

Sl. No.	Name of Dev. Block	Name of work	A/A No.	A/A Amount in Rs.	Tender Amount in Rs.	Earnest Money	Completion period
1	Tamulpur Dev. Block	Const. of crematorium ground at Kalbari Daugangphara	BTC/FC-Cell (15 th FC-Untied)-111/2023/Baksa-100, Dated: 08/11/2024	9,52,408/-	9,52,408/-	2% in case of Gen. and 1% in case of ST/SC	180 Days

Details NIT may be seen in all working days in the office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent up to 12:00 Noon on all working days from 18/11/2024 to 10/12/2024 in the office of undersigned on payment of in the form of Banker Cheque/Demand Draft of any Nationalized Bank duly Pledged to the **Block Development Officer, Tamulpur Development Block**. The tender cost (Non-Refundable) must be in the form of Banker Cheque/Demand Draft of a Nationalized Bank drawn in favour of the **Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar** and payable at SBI, kokrajhar to be deposited 0.03%.

Sd/- Block Development Officer,
Tamulpur Dev. Block, Tamulpur

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/892



No OTT platform is buying 'All We Imagine As Light', claims Hansal Mehta

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Filmmaker Hansal Mehta has claimed that Payal Kapadia's Cannes winner "All We Imagine As Light" is facing difficulty in securing a platform for its digital debut. The film scripted history by becoming the first film from India to win the Grand Prix award at the Cannes Film Festival in May this year. On Monday night, Mehta shared a review of the film by American news outlet The New Yorker, saying that he has heard that no OTT plat-

form has bought the film as of yet. "And from what I hear a film that no OTT platform is buying. The harsh reality of making independent films in India. This is no country for the spectacular All We Imagine As Light. HOPE I'M PROVED WRONG," the filmmaker said. Distributed by Rana Daggubati's Spirit Media, the film has so far released theatrically in Kerala and will make its debut in rest of the country on November 22. "All We Imagine as

Light", a Malayalam-Hindi feature, is about Prabha, a nurse, who receives an unexpected gift from her long estranged husband that throws her life into disarray. Her younger roommate, Anu, tries in vain to find a private spot in the big city to be alone with her boyfriend. One day the two nurses go on a road trip to a beach town with their

friend Parvati where the mystical forest becomes a space for their dreams to manifest, according to the official plotline. Starring Kani Kusruti, Divya Prabha and Chhaya Kadam, "All We Imagine As Light" is an official Indo-French co-production between petit chaos from France and Chalk & Cheese and Another Birth from India. (PTI)



Mobile theatre company Picturetime to screen RRR, Rockstar at IFFI

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Intiaz Ali's "Rockstar", SS Rajamouli's "RRR" and Mani Ratnam's "Ponniyin Selvan" are some of the movies that will be shown at two inflatable theatres during the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI).

These films and many others will also be shown across north and south go through Picturetime Digiplex, a mobile theatre company.

The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) have partnered with Picturetime to screen movies during the annual film gala, slated to take place from November 20 to 28 in Goa.

With a seating capacity of 120 per screen, the inflatable theatres will also showcase Pa. Ranjith's latest action adventure "Thangalaan" and "The Vaccine War" by Vivek Agnihotri.

The inflatable theatres will also screen movies that competed in the festival's main competition, the Indian Panorama section, such as Malayalam drama "Aattam", Bengali drama "Aparajito", based on the making of the Satyajit Ray classic "Pather Panchali", Avinash Arun's "Three of Us", Rishab Shetty's "Kantara" and Adivi Sesh's "Major".

From the Indian classic, the company will hold screenings of Ray's "Agantuk", Kundan Shah's "Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro", "Guide" featuring Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman, Ketan Mehta's "Mirch Masala", Raj Kapoor's "Bobby", and Anup Singh's "Qissa", starring late Irrfan Khan.

Sushil Chaudhary, Founder and CEO PicturetimeDigiplex, said the company has a firm belief in making the big screen experience accessible and affordable to everyone.

"This year at IFFI, our two inflatable theatres will not only give delegates an immersive cinematic experience but will also ensure that locals in Goa—beyond the main venues—can engage with world-class cinema through our traveling open-air screen," Chaudhary said in a statement.

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, in collaboration with the NFDC and ESG, will host the 55th edition of the festival. (PTI)

MP govt to make 'The Sabarmati Report' film tax free

BHOPAL, Nov 19: The Madhya Pradesh government on Tuesday decided to declare "The Sabarmati Report", a film on the Godhra train burning incident of 2002, as tax free in the state. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav made this announcement and said he will also go to watch the movie.

Helmed by Dheeraj Sarna, the film revolves around the 2002 Godhra burning train incident which triggered communal riots in Gujarat.

"The Sabarmati Report' is a very good movie. I will go to watch the movie myself. I also told my ministers, MLAs and MPs to watch this film. We are also going to make it tax free in the state so that maximum people can watch it," Yadav told reporters here. He said it (Godhra incident) was a dark chapter of the past and truth will come out through the film.

While accusing the opposition of playing "dirty politics" on the Godhra incident for vote bank, Yadav said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was then the chief minister of Gujarat, saved the honour of the state and the country.

Earlier on Sunday, PM Modi said a fake narrative can persist only for a limited period of time, while referring to "The Sabarmati Report" film.

Modi made the comments on X, reacting to a user's post praising the movie "The Sabarmati Report" for "bringing out the important truth of one of the most shameful events in our recent history".

Madhya Pradesh cabinet minister Vishvas Sarang on Tuesday said the movie has brought out the truth of the Godhra incident, in which 59 persons were killed.

The facts shown in the movie have proved that the Congress and the opposition had set a narrative to defame Gujarat in the entire world at that time, the BJP leader claimed.

The Congress always distorted history to defame the majority community in the country and mislead the society, Sarang alleged. "We along with the party workers and public will watch 'The Sabarmati Report' movie," he said. (PTI)



Lindsay Lohan says Pink Slip band from original movie is back in 'Freaky Friday 2'

LOS ANGELES, Nov 19: Actor Lindsay Lohan, who is reprising her role in the upcoming "Freaky Friday" sequel, says the Pink Slip band from the original movie is also returning in the Disney film. The band featured actors Christina Vidal and Haley Hudson as Maddie and Peg, members of Pink Slip alongside Lohan in the original movie.

"Pink Slip is back together, the band. Yes," Lohan said on The Tonight Show. "We just finished in August. It's just been such a labor of love to make happen. And Jamie (Jamie Lee Curtis) and I, even at the table read, we were just smiling so big. I don't think we were acting well, because we were so happy. But the movie's funny, it's really funny," she added. The upcoming sequel also

features Mark Harmon, Chad Michael Murray, Lucille Soong, Stephen Tobolowsky and Rosalind Chao, returning to reprise their roles. The new movie is directed by Nisha Ganatra. The original film, directed by Mark Waters, released in 2003. It followed the story of a mother-daughter duo, played by Curtis and Lohan, whose souls exchange after their visit to the mysterious Chinese restaurant. "Freaky Friday 2" is produced by Andrew Gunn, who was also the producer of the original movie. (PTI)

SUCCESS CAN ISOLATE YOU AND LEAD TO FAILURE: SHAH RUKH KHAN

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Tuesday said his way of dealing with moments of despair in life is to shut himself up in his bathroom and cry before getting on with the next thing. Speaking at From Bollywood Superstardom to Business Success - Key Learnings On and Off Screen session during the Global Freight Summit in Dubai, the actor-producer touched upon the failure of his movies before the COVID-19 pandemic, his philosophy on success and stardom, his childhood and how his goal is now to capture the young audience. Shah Rukh admitted that he is self-critical but does not show the moments of weakness to anyone. "I cry a lot in my bathroom. You can wallow in self-pity for just about that much time and then you have to believe that the world is not against you. Your film did not go wrong because of you or because the world is conspiring to destroy your work. You have to believe that you made it badly and then you have to move on," he said. One cannot blame life for failure, the actor said, adding that he tries to "re-calibrate and come back". Shah Rukh said he believes that success somehow leads to failure because of the isolation of ideas. "You are so driven by success and that was my problem. I am very driven, I don't take things for granted, I was getting up in the morning and saying to myself, 'I need to keep doing this'... Success can isolate you and lead to failure.

While you are successful, you need to be aware that the world is changing around you. You need to look around, you can't be with blinkers on." The 59-year-old actor, who made a successful comeback in 2023 with three hits in "Pathaan", "Jawan" and "Dunki", said if an artist is able to touch basic emotions, then their brand travels everywhere but it should also reflect the times. "If you live in a time of strife, your product needs to give you a feeling of safety. You feel that you are anti-establishment, want to change things, then my movie needs to show me as a hero who takes on the world..." "My success came in the '90s when there was this opening up of my country India. We were going around the world and talking about India. The kind of cinema I did, 'tujhe dekha to ye jaana sanam' (referring to his 1995 hit 'Dil-wale Dulhania Le Jayenge'), everybody liked it and some of them even got married watching this film 30 years ago. It had moments of happiness, love and Switzerland. It was the sign of times." Asked about the advice he would give to his younger self, Shah Rukh thought about it for a moment and then said, "Maybe a better hairstyle and better fitting suits". The actor said now that he has 35 years of experience in movies, he realises that many of the decisions that he took as a 25-year-old, he would not make them now if he looks back at them through the lens of experience. "And maybe I wouldn't have reached

where I reached. I would still want my younger self -- sorry this is politically incorrect -- I would want him to be brash, overconfident, bordering on arrogance, being extremely stupid and silly but being extremely gutsy also." The actor, who has three children -- Aryan, Suhana and AbRam -- with wife Gauri, said his core competence is that he can "act a bit" and while that never changes, he keeps experimenting with his craft, technique and art within it. "Now my focus is that my youngest kid should also think that I am a big enough star. He has not seen too many of my films. He is 11 years old. One day my elder kid came and said, 'You know, he knows you are a big star'. I want my son to experience stardom, knowing that I am a star is not good enough. If I can capture him as an audience then I am capturing the younger generation," he said. Shah Rukh joked that whenever someone questions his stardom, he just needs to walk across to his house, stand on a railing and wave to the people. "And I am very arrogant about it... Jokes apart, I am very humble and I bow to all of you for making this possible. I don't say this with humility but I say this with gratefulness 'Thank you for making me the star I am'," he said. The actor also discussed how life has intermingled with social media and the youngsters are more video literate than the generation before. "You really need to focus while trying to hold the attention of youngsters... I'm not saying the older people are boring and you can make them happy with small things but younger people have smaller attention spans so I measure my success by 'Can I hold the attention of a

younger audience now because there are so many other distractions?'" Asked about his philanthropic endeavours, the actor said as someone who comes from a lower middle class background in India, he has deep respect for what he has received in life. "I fully understand that my success is not just because of me, it is a confluence of a lot of people coming together whether through cinema or at a personal level... I can go and stand outside the railing of my house and nobody needs to love me back. It is a two way street. When you become the chosen one for some reason and you have this privilege of good fortune, then it is the natural consequence that you share it with people who made it happen," he said. The actor said he lost his parents at a young age and the way he looked at life was that he had to work hard and become successful so that his parents don't feel bad that they couldn't fend for him. Shah Rukh also touched upon his image of a superstar, saying that despite the perception, he has always tried to stay true to who he is. "I work for the myth that Shah Rukh Khan is, I am an employee of this myth, I am not the owner of this myth," he said. (PTI)



India beat Japan 2-0, to face China in final of women's ACT hockey

RAJGIR (BIHAR), Nov 19: Defending champions India continued their unbeaten run and defeated Japan 2-0 to enter the final of the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Tuesday.

Vice-captain Navneet Kaur converted a penalty stroke in the 48th minute while Lalaremsiami struck from field play in the 56th minute for India, who had plenty of scoring chances including 13 penalty corners.

India will face China, whom they defeated in the league stages, in the final on Wednesday. Earlier, China beat Malaysia 3-1 in the first semi-final.

Malaysia will take on Japan in the third-fourth place match, while Korea finished fifth after beating Thailand 3-0 in the fifth-sixth place classification match.

The Indians continued their attacking game and put on early pressure on the Japanese defence, just like the last league game.

The play was mostly inside the Japanese half as the Indian defence was hardly tested.

India had the first shot at the goal inside the initial five minutes. Skipper Salima Tete's attempt was thwarted by Japanese goalkeeper Yu Kudo.

The Indians repeatedly penetrated the Japanese citadel and in the process secured two penalty corners in a span of two minutes but Kudo was alert under the bar to deny Navneet Kaur and Deepika.

Three minutes into the second quarter, India secured three back-to-back penalty corners but failed to find the back of the net.



It was raining penalty corners for the hosts as they got back-to-back set pieces in the 21st minute but Kudo produced a brilliant save with her fully-stretched right leg to deny Deepika again.

In the 24th minute, India earned a penalty corner followed by another in the next minute but failed to get past Japanese goalkeeper Kudo, as they also

lacked in execution.

A minute after the change of ends, India secured two penalty corners but wasted both.

In the 35th minute, Kudu again denied Deepika from a set piece.

In the 41st minute, Deepika stole the ball just outside the Japanese circle, but shot wide from a one-on-one situation with Kudo.

Seconds from the end of third quarter, Kudo once again pulled off a brilliant save to deny Uditra from another penalty corner.

In the 47th minute, India secured their 12th penalty corner but failed to breach Kudo.

But a minute later, India broke the deadlock through a penalty stroke earned by Deepika and Navneet made no mistake.

The goal seemed to have reju-

venated the Indians as they scored a fine field goal in the 56th minute.

Lalaremsiami slammed into the back of the Japanese goal after she was brilliantly set up by Sunelita Toppo's terrific run from the right flank.

Japan got a penalty corner in the dying moments, but failed to get past a rock solid Indian defence. (PTI)

Target Kohli's body, his front pads to put him on the back-foot: Healy's advice to Aussie quicks

SYDNEY, Nov 19: Legendary Australian wicket-keeper Ian Healy wants his country's pace attack to employ every strategy, from targeting Virat Kohli's front foot to "body bashing" him with short-pitched deliveries, to get the Indian stalwart out in the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy, beginning in Perth on Friday.

The star Indian batter has been enduring a lean patch across all formats in recent months, with just two centuries and 11 fifties in his last 60 Test innings.

However, despite these struggles, Kohli boasts an impressive average of 54.0 in Australia.

Healy has urged the formidable Australian pace trio of Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc to try and put Kohli on the back-foot.

"The first matchup I'm looking at is how our quicks can bowl to Virat Kohli, and I think they should target his front pad quite often," Healy told SEN Radio.

"He sits that front foot there and he can play from anywhere -- he can play square on the off-side, he can whip onto the leg-side or he can rock

back ... but they've got to look for any sort of insecurity in his form and maybe target that front pad."

Healy, who played 119 Tests scoring nearly 4,500 runs, feels the Aussie quicks should not target Kohli's front foot far too often as the Indian stalwart might understand the trick.

"Don't do it every ball because he'll get used to it... it's the impact ball that has to be on the front pad after he is set up with seam."

If the tactic doesn't work, Healy wants the bowlers to target Kohli's body.

"If that's (front-foot tactic) not working, body bash. Bowl at the back arm pit, that's the right arm as a right-handed batsman... and it's got to be hot," Healy said.

"Have him jumping at times if he wants to ride those deliveries -- ducking, weaving or bending backwards. Get that short leg position right next to him on the leg side and if you need a bumper, it's got to go out of the badge. He might try to bust out of a hard spell with a hook shot or pull shot and that will be hard to control if it's badge height. So that's the second tactic, body bashing," opined Healy. (PTI)



Shafali dropped from Indian women's team for ODI series in Australia

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Top-order batter Shafali Verma was on Tuesday dropped from India's 16-member women's team for the three-match ODI series in Australia in December after a string of poor performances in the past one year. The BCCI selectors seem to have once again lost patience with the 20-year-old right-handed batter, whose recent ODI form has been disappointing. Shafali has scored just 108 runs in six matches this year with 33 being the highest.

She was dropped in December last year from the team midway during the home ODI series against Australia on the basis of her poor run, before making a comeback against South Africa in June this year in Bengaluru.

In fact, the youngster, rated as the next big thing in Indian women's cricket when she broke into the team in 2021, has not scored a ODI half century since making an unbeaten 71 against Sri Lanka in Pallekele in July 2022. Her next highest score was a 49 against the same opponent in the same series.

Four other players -- Uma Chetry, Dayalan Hemalatha, Shreyanka Patil and Sayali Satghare -- were also left out from the squad that played in India's 2-1 home series win against New Zealand in Ahmedabad last month. Harleen Deol, Richa Ghosh, Minnu Mani, Titas Sadhu and Priya Punia are the five players who did not face New Zealand but were named in the team for the Australia series.

The first two ODIs will be played at the Allan Border Field in Brisbane on December 5 and 8 before the action shifts to WACA Ground, Perth on December 11 for the final match of the series, which is a part of the ICC Women's Championship.

India's squad for three-match ODI series: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Priya Punia, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Yastika Bhatia (WK), Richa Ghosh (WK), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Minnu Mani, Priya Mishra, Radha Yadav, Titas Sadhu, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Saima Thakor. (PTI)

Croatia, Denmark qualify for Nations League quarterfinals with draws

MADRID, Nov 19: Denmark and Croatia completed the Nations League quarterfinals lineup after both sides secured draws.

Denmark went 0-0 in Serbia, and Croatia came from behind to share 1-1 with visiting Portugal.

They joined France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands in the last eight.

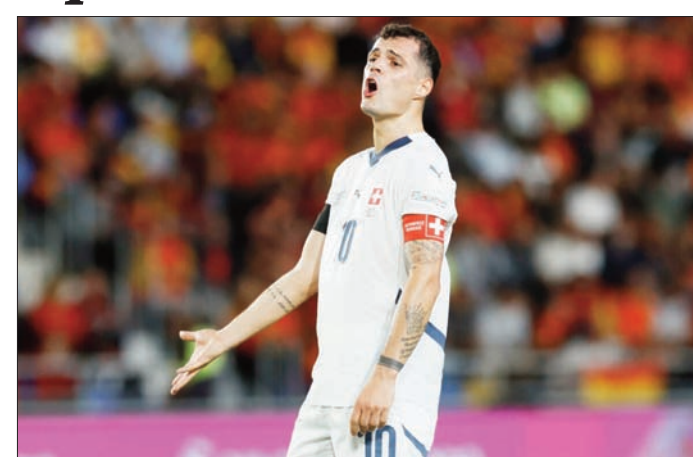
The quarterfinals will be held from March 20-23.

In Warsaw, Liverpool fullback Andy Robertson scored an injury time header to give Scotland a 2-1 win over Poland and send the host down into League B. Scotland has a playoff to secure its League A status.

Northern Ireland will step up to League B after topping its group. Northern Ireland let slip a two-goal lead but drew in Luxembourg 2-2. Romania hammered Cyprus 4-1.

San Marino will jump into Group C after beating Liechtenstein 3-1. After going nine matches without a win, Scotland appeared rejuvenated as it condemned a Robert Lewandowski-less Poland to League B.

Scotland took just one point from its first four games in



Group A1 but beat Croatia at home on Friday and was 1-0 up after three minutes in Warsaw.

Billy Gilmour's threaded pass found Ben Doak, who rolled the ball to John McGinn to score his second goal in four days.

Scotland hit the woodwork twice in the first half and its inability to open a greater lead all cost it when Kamil Piatkowski lashed a stunning strike into the top corner of the net to equalize 14 minutes into the second period.

However, Scotland pushed

forward for a winner and Robertson headed the decider in the third minute of stoppage time.

Croatia needed only a draw to secure qualification but it made the home fans in Split sweat before getting the point it needed against group winner Portugal.

With 32 minutes gone, Joao Felix brought down a superb 45-year pass from Vitorinha and slipped the ball under the advancing keeper to give the visitors the lead. When Andrej Kramaric hit the post and Josko Gvardiol had a 62nd minute goal

ruled out for offside it looked like it might not be Croatia's night.

But Manchester City's Gvardiol got the equalizer just a few minutes later and Croatia held on to take the second quarterfinal spot from Group A1.

There was little to play for in Tenerife, where Spain, top of Group A4, took on the already relegated Switzerland.

Coach Luis de la Fuente offered a first start to Barcelona midfielder Marc Casado and gave debuts to Samu and Aitor Paredes in a much-changed Spain side.

But it was the two Bryans, Gil and Zaragoza, who got the goals that mattered for the European champions.

Pedri's first half penalty was saved but Yeremi Pino converted to put Spain ahead.

Joel Monteiro equalized for Switzerland after 63 minutes but Bryan Gil got Spain back in front five minutes later. Andi Zeqiri equalized again from the penalty spot with five minutes remaining but a stoppage time penalty from Bryan Zaragoza at the other end gave Spain all three points. (AP)

Anupama stuns Zhang to enter China Masters second round; Sumeet-Sikki also win

SHENZHEN, Nov 19: India's Anupama Upadhyaya recorded a stunning three-game win over world number 15 American Beibei Zhang to progress to the women's singles second round at the China Masters Super 750 tournament here on Tuesday.

The 19-year-old from Almora, ranked world number 50, showed great composure to outsmart Zhang 21-17 8-21 22-20 in a 48-minute contest. It was her first second round appearance in a BWF Super 750 world tour event. Anupama, who had won titles in Kazakhstan International challenge and Polish Open early in the year, will face Japan's Natsumi Naidaira in the next round.

India's B Sumeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy also advanced to the mixed doubles second round but it was another heartbreaking defeat for Priyanshu Rajawat, who lost in the men's singles opening round. Sumeeth and Sikki, the husband-wife duo, fought past the American pair of Presley Smith and Jennie Gai in a tense 63-minute encounter, winning 23-21, 17-21, 21-17.

The Indian duo will now take on the top-seeded Chinese pair of Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping in the next round.

However, the day proved disappointing for Rajawat and Aakarshi Kashyap. World No. 34 Rajawat put up a valiant fight but ultimately went down 24-22, 13-21, 18-21 to World No. 32 Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo in a gruelling three-game contest.

This marks Rajawat's third consecutive loss to Wardoyo, having previously fallen to the Indonesian at this year's All England Championships and 2023 Indonesia Masters.

Rajawat made a strong start by winning the first game and even led 12-8 in the decider. But Wardoyo clawed his way back, leveling the score at 17-17 and 18-18. Fate then seemed to favour the Indonesian, as his smash clipped the net, giving Wardoyo a critical lead. Rajawat's challenge ended when he misfired a crucial push at the net, handing the match to his opponent. In women's singles, Kashyap was no match for the 2022 World junior champion and current world number 14 Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan, losing 10-21 18-21. (PTI)

Messi's Argentina could reach the verge of World Cup spot by beating visitor Peru

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 19: Lionel Messi's Argentina will be on the verge of confirming a 2026 World Cup spot if it beats Peru in Buenos Aires in South American qualifying.

Victory would give defending champion Argentina 25 points from 12 matches, historically good enough for at least sixth place in the 10-team standings. South America has six entries into the World Cup.

But Argentina will be without five injured players after losing to Paraguay 2-1 last Thursday when it hosts Peru, which is second to last.

Meanwhile, Brazil and Uruguay will meet in Salvador, and both coaches expect to finish the year better than they started.

Derival Junior, in charge of Brazil since January and still struggling to convince fans he's the right choice, could move to second place with a win.

Marcelo Bielsa, who was recently under fire by Uruguay great Luis Suarez, will seek to add at least one point to the

team's tally to prove Friday's last minute 3-2 victory against Colombia was no fluke.

Uruguay and Colombia are three points behind Argentina. Brazil is fourth. Ecuador is a point behind in fifth.

Argentina left behind defenders Lisandro Martinez and German Pezzella when it travelled to Paraguay. Another three were injured out of the home match against Peru: Cristian Romero, Nahuel Molina and Nicolas Tagliafico. The trio started against Paraguay.

Argentina left a poor image against Paraguay in Asuncion from its third loss in qualifying. Veteran Messi had a quiet performance, and strikers Lautaro Martinez and Julian Alvarez were no better. Observers wondered whether the team's magic was running out.

"I don't know whether (rival coaches) they found an antidote (to Argentina)," coach Luis Scaloni said. "We hope to go back on a positive patch."

Scaloni is expected to field Gonzalo Montiel in Molina's



place; Leonardo Balerdi in Romero's; and Facundo Medina replacing Tagliafico.

Brazil summoned right back Danilo in the only change to the team that drew with Venezuela

1-1 on Thursday. Danilo replaced Vanderson, who was suspended. Derival Junior was already under pressure to bring in the experienced right back and avoid testing too many new

Argentina left a poor image against Paraguay in Asuncion from its third loss in qualifying. Veteran Messi had a quiet performance, and strikers Lautaro Martinez and Julian Alvarez were no better. Observers wondered whether the team's magic was running out

players.

Brazil's unimpressive form this year has caused many fans to openly say they won't be watching the national team until performances improve. But that narrative has prompted a plea from captain Marquinhos.

"I am asking you not to abandon the national team. Don't leave us, no," he said in a news conference. "This is my third cycle here. I can say 100% sure that everyone here has pride, faith and hope. And dignity. We are living this moment as if it was the last in our life. Unique."

Brazil has lost four matches in qualifying and won some others in unconvincing fashion.

Plus, its biggest available star, Real Madrid winger Vinicius Junior, has so far not delivered a good performance.

Uruguay's Nahitan Nandez and Santiago Bueno are not playing in Salvador but Bielsa has yet to say who will replace them.

Many Uruguay players also need to be extra careful on Tuesday so they don't miss the following clash against Argentina in March. Manuel Ugarte, Jose Maria Gimenez, Brian Rodriguez, Darwin Nunez, Nicolas Fonseca, Rodrigo Bentancur and Rodrigo Aguirre will be out if they get a second yellow. (AP)

Gill's injury a jolt, Reddy can be tried in Perth and Brisbane: Ganguly

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Shubman Gill's thumb fracture is certainly a "jolt" for India ahead of the series opener against Australia but former captain Sourav Ganguly firmly believes the team has the quality and mental fortitude to overcome the recent shock loss at home in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy starting in Perth from Friday.

Gill, who has five hundreds in 29 Tests, had scored a fifty in Melbourne and a game-setting 91 at Brisbane in the two victories on the previous tour.

He suffered a left thumb fracture while fielding in the intra-squad simulation between senior team and India A, ruling him out of the first Test.

"Shubman's injury is jolt for the team no doubt as he is an in-form batter and has scored in Australia. A thumb fracture could rule him out for two Tests. "But I believe the other batters would step up in absence of Rohit (on paternity leave) and Shubman during the first Test. I don't think New Zealand defeat would have any bearing on this series," the former BCCI president told PTI in an interview ahead of the marquee series.

With Hardik Pandya not playing Test cricket anymore, India don't have too many genuine pace bowling all-rounders and while Nitish Kumar Reddy is still very raw, one of India's finest captains feels that the



Andhra cricketer needs to be given chances in specific conditions.

"Look, there is absolutely no point in playing two specialist spinners either at Perth (Optus) or at the Gabba (Brisbane). You obviously need to find a way to play Reddy in these conditions. He is a good batsman and coming in at lower middle order, it will lend proper balance to the side," he gave his rationale for inclusion of a multi-skilled player.

Ganguly also felt that Mohammed Shami should have travelled to Adelaide and played

the second Test starting December 6, which is a day/night game. Shami is not being fast-tracked immediately by the selectors, who want him to play in Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament before taking a call on his travel Down Under.

"Shami bowled nearly 45 overs, fielded for more than 100 overs and also scored some runs. That's a good enough fitness test to be sent to Australia because you need a bowler of his calibre alongside Jasprit Bumrah." The talks over a possible transition post the shock loss to

New Zealand has gained traction but the 51-year-old finds no merit in that argument. "Transitions will happen when it has to happen. I think any player shouldn't be judged on basis of age. Form and fitness should be the only two criteria to judge a player."

If there are two batters that Ganguly is looking forward to seeing in the series, it is Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant.

"I have full confidence in Virat Kohli. He has been a proven performer and he will have a very good series. Kohli and second best Test batter in

the current line-up Rishabh will be key. If these two can perform, India will have a good series," he said.

Ganguly also doesn't believe that the team is under-cooked in terms of facing Australia in a five-match series.

"Undercooked is a term used when you haven't played any Test cricket at all. They have just played five Tests in last seven weeks so how does the question even arise?"

"I can understand that the defeat against New Zealand was unexpected but you have to understand we played on some extremely difficult tracks. In Australia, the tracks will be good for batting," Ganguly said.

But won't there be a mental impact of such debacle going into a high-profile against the Aussies?

"I don't think so. But I must say that we need to get back to playing on good cricket pitches at home."

"We should stop this habit of playing on rank turners. The batsmen lose confidence on such tracks and we have a team which can win Test matches on good tracks. "Also on turners, you need to learn to grind before you can attack. There are two types of tracks where you can't just hit through the line and get out of trouble. One is a seaming track and other being a rank turner." (PTI)

I've got nothing but respect for Virat, he's a champion: Lyon



PERTH, Nov 19: Virat Kohli has been struggling for form of late but veteran Australia spinner Nathan Lyon has nothing but respect for the Indian super star, who he says is a champion you can not write off.

Kohli has been enduring a lean patch over the past few months. In his last 60 Test innings, he has managed just two centuries and 11 half-centuries.

This year, he has averaged only 22.72 across six Tests, and in the three games against New Zealand, he could manage only 93 runs.

But Lyon remains wary of what Kohli could do in the five-match Test series beginning here on Friday.

"Overall, look at his record. You don't write off champions. I've got nothing but respect for Virat," Lyon was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

"I want to get him out, there's no point in hiding behind that, but it's challenging. It's been pretty amazing competing

against him for so many times.

"Him and Smithy (Steve Smith) are probably the best two batters in our last era of this last decade," said the 36-year-old off-spinner with 530 wickets from 129 Tests. Lyon is one of the four members of the current squad who were part of Australia's last successful Test series against India in 2014-15.

India have won the last two series in Australia but they have come here after a shock 0-3 loss at home against New Zealand. Lyon doesn't believe that India are vulnerable this time around.

"They're dangerous all the time. They're a side full of superstars. They've got so much experience, but talented youth as well and you can never write off that," said Lyon, who took 22 wickets when Australia toured India in 2023.

"I was fascinated by that series to New Zealand, but we're expecting the best India that we've played against for a number of years now." (PTI)

Bumrah is 'Cat burglar' for Brett Lee, India's 'X-factor' for Head

PERTH, Nov 19: Dubbed as the bowler "impossible to face" by swashbuckling Australian batter Travis Head and a "cat burglar" by former tearaway pacer Brett Lee, Jasprit Bumrah's reputation precedes him.

The India pacer, who is set to captain India in the first Test of the five-match series starting here Friday, has left both past and present Australian players in awe of his skill and threat.

Not since the golden era of the West Indies in the 1970s has a touring pace bowler struck fear into the hearts of Australians as much as Bumrah, according to the local media here.

On his two previous Test tours of Australia, the 30-year-old Bumrah, who is set to captain India in the first Test of the five-match series here from Friday, took 32 wickets at an average of 21.25, including a match-winning 6/33 during the 2018 Boxing Day Test.

Since the start of the 20th century, only two touring bowlers have taken more wickets in Australia at a lower average -- Richard Hadlee and Curtly Ambrose.

Head, Usman Khawaja and Steven Smith -- all top-order batters -- who are set to face Bumrah in the marquee five-match series are unanimous about the pivotal role the Indian pace



spearhead can play for India.

"Impossible (to face). You try to feel like you're one step ahead, but it always feels like he's that next step," Head told 'Fox Cricket'.

"Any format of the game, he's incredible. He's their X-factor, he's the guy they go to every time, and more often than not, he's able to produce for them."

"In big moments you want big players, and I think he's their biggest. You've got your work cut out as a batter. He's someone that's going to be difficult over summer."

Part of Bumrah's magic is his signature bowling action, which defies cricket convention. "He (Bumrah) creeps in like a cat burglar,"

pace legend Lee said in a lighter vein.

Bumrah's "awkward and weird" action made Khawaja wonder where the ball came from when he first faced the Indian.

"When I first faced Bumrah, I was like, 'Oh where did that come from?'" Khawaja said. "It comes at you a little bit quicker than you expect because of the awkwardness of his action and how he releases the ball."

"Much like Mitchell Johnson, he had a weird action too. The ball used to come out and felt like it got to you quicker because you didn't get a look at it the whole way. Jasprit's a little bit the same, with arms going everywhere."

Star batter Smith is one of the few Australian players who has an impressive record against Bumrah, averaging 56.67 across formats, but the New South Welshman admitted that he still feels vulnerable against the Indian speedster early in his innings.

"He's just awkward with the way he bowls, it's obviously very different to a lot of other people," Smith said.

"It takes a little bit getting used to. I've played against him quite a lot now, and it still takes a couple of balls to get used to the different rhythm." (PTI)

PCB appoints Shahid Aslam as Pakistan team's batting coach

KARACHI, Nov 19: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has brought back Shahid Aslam as the batting coach of the national white-ball squads after the players struggled in the recent series in Australia.

Aslam who is a qualified coach has worked for a number of years with the Pakistan team in different capacities including assistant coach, fielding coach and assistant manager. But for the last two years he has been working in a coaching capacity at the High Performance Centre in Lahore.

Previously former Test captain Mohammad Yousuf was working as the batting coach with the national team and was then made a national selector. But Yousuf then not only stepped down as selector but also as batting coach and was working at the HPC. Yousuf recently also resigned from his position at the HPC but the PCB has rejected his resignation. Now Aslam has been brought in as batting coach on the recommendation of the interim white-ball coach, Aaqib Javed. The PCB on Monday appointed Aaqib as the white-ball head coach until the ICC Champions Trophy early next year after Australian Jason Gillespie turned down a chance to become all-format coach. (PTI)

Pant rejects Gavaskar's assessment, says did not leave DC due to disagreement over retention fee



NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Rishabh Pant on Tuesday rejected the legendary Sunil Gavaskar's assessment that the India wicketkeeper-batter left Delhi Capitals due to disagreement over his retention fee ahead of the mega auction of the Indian Premier League.

Pant, who captained Delhi Capitals last year after making a comeback from a horrific car accident, is among the marquee players who were not retained by their franchises. He is expected to be one of the most sought-after players when the auction takes place in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on November 24 and 25.

"My retention wasn't about the money for sure that I can say," Pant wrote on X, responding to a broadcaster video showing Gavaskar talking about the auction dynamics.

Gavaskar said while he expects Delhi Capitals to rope in Pant once again, he also wondered if there was a disagreement over the fee between the franchise and the player.

"The auction dynamics are completely different; we don't really know how it will go. But what I feel is that Delhi would certainly want Rishabh Pant back in the squad," Gavaskar told Star

Sports.

"Sometimes, when a player is to be retained, there is talk between the franchise and the player and franchise about the fees that are expected."

"As you can see, some of the players who have been retained by the franchise, they've gone for more than say, what the No 1 retention fee deduction would be. Clearly I think, maybe there was some disagreement over there," he said.

Gavaskar said Delhi Capitals will have to look for a new captain as well if Pant is not there in the roster.

"My feeling is that Delhi would definitely want Pant back because they need a captain as well. If Rishabh Pant is not in their squad then they have to look for a new captain. My feeling is (that) Delhi would definitely go for Rishabh Pant," he said.

Pant, along with other former captains Shreyas Iyer (Kolkata Knight Riders) and KL Rahul (Lucknow Super Giants), is listed at a base price of Rs 2 crore each among marquee Indian players.

Pant has always been a part of the Delhi franchise since his IPL debut in 2016, scoring 3,284 runs at 35.31 with one century and 18 fifties in 111 matches. (PTI)

PERTH, Nov 19: Former all-rounder Shane Watson has advised the Australian team to avoid getting into confrontations with Virat Kohli in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as he feels the intensity the celebrated Indian batter derives from provocations brings the best out of him.

Going through a lean run of form, Kohli has enjoyed great success in Australia in the past and will look to regain his touch in the five-match Test series, which gets underway on Friday at the Optus Stadium here.

Provoking the Indian batting mainstay has often proved to be counterproductive for the Australians, and Watson has experienced it himself.

"The one thing that I know of Virat is... because the fire burns so brightly and deep inside him, the intensity he brings to every ball that he is engaged in a game has been superhuman," Watson was quoted as saying on the Willow Talk podcast.

"But, there have been in recent times where moments in this career that fire has started to go out because it is just so hard to maintain that intensity in every moment he is involved in a game."

"And, that is where Australia have to leave him alone and hope he doesn't bring the intensity -- nine out of 10 intensity -- to every ball."

Kohli has played 13 Tests in Australia



since 2011, amassing 1,352 runs at an average of 54.08, including six centuries and four fifties, with a top score of 169.

While this would be his fifth tour Down Under in the longest format, Kohli's best outing came during the 2014-15 series when he aggregated 692 runs in four Tests at an average of 86.50, including four hundreds and a half-century.

These remarkable numbers are not lost on

Watson.

"We have seen that when he has had success in Australia, he is up and above for everything in the middle. Every ball he is up for every single moment."

"You can see the fierce intensity that he brings, and if he gets that, then it shuts everything else out. That is when he is at his absolute best."

"If there is stuff happening around and

India's confidence 'damaged' but Australia won't underestimate visitors: Labuschagne

PERTH, Nov 19: A shattering defeat to New Zealand on home soil would have caused a "little bit of damage" to India's confidence but Australia will not make the mistake of underestimating the visitors, said charismatic batter Marnus Labuschagne here on Tuesday.

The world No. 2 India are heading into the five-Test Border-Gavaskar series, starting here on Friday, following their whitewash at home, which ended their 12-year unbeaten run in their own backyard.

Australia's middle-order mainstay Labuschagne believes the loss to the Kiwis would have dented India's confidence.

"It's really hard to judge. They played in completely different conditions -- spinning conditions -- but having India come here off the back of a loss at home is something that's never happened before (in my career)," Labuschagne told

the media.

"I think that is a good thing in terms of... they are probably a little bit lower on confidence, not coming off a Test victory, losing to New Zealand 3-0. I think that's going to do a little bit of damage to their confidence."

However, Labuschagne insisted that Australia, who have lost each of their last four series to India both home and away, will have to guard against complacency.

"They're a quality line-up and they're one of the best teams in the world. So you can never underestimate a team like that," he said.

India staged an incredible comeback on their last Australia tour in 2020-21 to win 2-1, despite the absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli and injuries to several other frontline players along the way.

"That's what happened in 2021 -- the likes of (T) Natarajan played, (Mohammad) Siraj got his first crack in Australia, Washington

Sundar played," Labuschagne recalled.

"They had all these guys that were probably a little bit new -- Shubman (Gill) played those couple of games (in the 2020-21 series) -- so there were new faces around," he added.

With India set to take the field without regular captain Rohit Sharma and No. 3 batter Gill in the first Test at the Optus Stadium here, Labuschagne said India have enough talent in their ranks to meet all challenges.

"They're a quality line-up and they've showed that over a period of time. You can't ever underestimate the depth of Indian cricket," he said.

"Anyone that gets the opportunity to play for India have had to do a lot of hard work and find their way into that side... to actually play for a team like that, you have to be a very good player," Labuschagne added. (PTI)

Roger Federer tells Nadal that he made him enjoy tennis more

MALAGA (SPAIN), Nov 19: Roger Federer says Rafael Nadal made him enjoy tennis "even more" during a rivalry that spanned 40 matches over 15 years.

Writing on social media Tuesday, hours before the start of the Davis Cup Final 8, Nadal's last event before heading into retirement, Federer began his message with the word "Vamos" and said: "As you get ready to graduate from tennis, I've got a few things to share before I maybe get emotional."

"Let's start with the obvious: you beat me -- a lot. More than I managed to beat you. You challenged me in ways no one else could," Federer said. "On clay, it felt like I was stepping into your backyard, and you made me work harder than I ever thought I could just

to hold my ground. You made me reimagine my game -- even going so far as to change the size of my racket head, hoping for any edge."

Federer, now 43, was established at No. 1 in the rankings when Nadal, now 38, came along. Federer started his career with a 7-0 record in Grand Slam finals before his first loss at that stage arrived against Nadal in the 2006 French Open final, the first of their three consecutive title matches in Paris -- each with the same result. Nadal also defeated Federer in the 2008 Wimbledon final, ending the Swiss star's bid for a sixth championship in a row at the All England Club. In all, Nadal led their head-to-head series 26-14, including 10-4 at Grand Slam tournaments and 6-3 in Slam finals. (AP)

Australia have to leave Kohli alone, hope he doesn't bring the intensity: Shane Watson

that intensity is not there, that is when you will see the not-so-best version of Virat. So from an Australian perspective, let's hope we get to see that version of him," Watson said. Kohli's performance in the red-ball format this year has been below par, managing just 250 runs in six Tests at an average of 22.72.

When the discussion turned to Australian batting, Watson backed Steve Smith to bring the very best of him against the formidable Indian bowling attack.

Smith will be back at his usual number four slot after struggling as opener following the retirement of David Warner.

"Steve wanted to open. He was super keen to take up a new challenge. But, one thing with that opportunity he had was he wasn't actually batting at his best at that time," Watson noted.

"So, he got an opportunity to open, and Steve Smith at his very best would have made the most out of it because he just loves scoring runs, whether it is opening or at No. 4. You could see it a few times he got out when he was opening -- his game and his technique was a little bit off."

For the marquee series against fierce rivals India, the Australian selectors have picked 25-year-old uncapped Nathan McSweeney to open the innings alongside Usman Khawaja. (PTI)