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Himanta hints at seeking Interpol help to probe ISI activities

GUWAHATI, March 4: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said his government may seek the help of agencies like the Interpol in investigating the alleged interference of Pakistani national Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, who allegedly has links with Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi's British wife, in India's internal affairs.

Sarma, however, said the probe is at an initial stage and he has already informed Union Home Minister Amit Shah about the developments in the case.

"The matter is very sensitive. I have informed the home minister about the issue. The SIT is doing its investigation, but we can do our probe until a certain level only. We may have to take the help of agencies like Interpol at a certain stage," he told reporters here.

"The entire probe is at an initial stage now and the government will take it forward as far as possible in the coming days," he added.

The state police on February 17 constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe a case against the Pakistani national for his social media comments on Assam and India's internal affairs.

Sheikh, an advisor of the Pakistan Planning Commission and a former colleague of Gogoi's British wife Elizabeth Colburn, was charged under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Unlawful



Activities (Prevention) Act or UAPA.

The CM, who also holds the Home portfolio, further claimed that the SIT has obtained a lot of preliminary information related to the Pakistani national.

"When he visited India, many people from Pakistan accompanied him. Even people like the attorney general of Pakistan came to India and they stayed in smaller hotels to be away from public glare. This entire tour exercise was continuing till 2018," he said. Sheikh came to India 18-20 times, tweeted and commented on Assam, and was in touch with (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Conrad eager to end border dispute with Assam

Process of negotiation is moving forward in a positive manner: M'laya CM

SHILLONG, March 4: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Tuesday assured that his government would work to find a solution to the remaining areas of differences with regard to the border with Assam for ensuring long lasting peace.

"We will work towards finding a solution and ensure long lasting peace. Today, we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and find a solution to (resolving) six areas of differences," Sangma said in his reply to a motion moved by UDP legislator from Nongpoh Mayral Born Syiem in the Assembly.

Stating the issue is very complicated, the chief minister said that many governments in the past did not even want to discuss the border issue but it is only the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA) government that took the bold steps to say "let us discuss and find a way



forward". He informed that the government has resolved the Tarabari sector (one of six resolved areas of differences) based on the will of the people. The Assam government has completely backed off after villages under the sector came to Meghalaya. "That is why there are no teachers in the schools (in such vil-

lages). Some actions have been taken and more steps will be taken to address the matter," the CM said. Sangma also assured that the government will take steps on a war footing to ensure required infrastructure including road connectivity and all services are provided to people living in the resolved areas

of differences.

On the alleged use of forces by Assam, the chief minister said this is a challenging situation. "For the past 53 years this kind of situation has been fluctuating and volatile. Having said that, what is important to note is that the process with which we are moving forward in a positive manner is something we have not seen in the past."

"These are very complicated problems, but it is only through dialogue we find solutions..." he stated while expressing concern over sad incidents that took place in the border areas. Sangma also urged the members to inform him if there is any delay in the construction of the border police outpost, which seeks to increase the presence of forces in the border areas. "If there are those which are yet to start the construction, it must be because of the consensus of the land availability," he said. (NNN)

President Trump temporarily suspends all military aid to Ukraine

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, March 4: US President Donald Trump has temporarily suspended, with immediate effect, the delivery of all American military aid to Ukraine, just days after an unprecedented showdown with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office.

A report in The New York Times quoted a senior administration official as saying that Trump temporarily suspended the delivery of all US military aid to Ukraine and that the order takes effect immediately, affecting "more than \$1 billion in arms and ammunition in the pipeline and on order".

The report said Trump's decision to halt military aid "resulted from a series of meetings" at the White

House between the US leader and his senior national security aides.

The official said "the order would be in effect until" Trump determined that Ukraine had demonstrated a commitment to peace negotiations with Russia.

The order also pauses "hundreds of millions of dollars in aid through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which provides funds that Kyiv can use only to buy new military hardware directly from US defence companies."

According to the US State Department, Washington has till date provided USD 65.9 billion in military assistance since Russia launched its premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal full-scale invasion of Ukraine (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Total police raj': Cong decries gunning down of 72 accused in Assam since 2021, seeks SC cognisance

GUWAHATI, March 4: The opposition Congress on Tuesday accused the BJP government in Assam of running a "police raj" after official data tabled in the assembly revealed that 72 accused persons were gunned down and 220 injured in police actions since Himanta Biswa Sarma became the chief minister in May 2021.

The Congress also stated that the Supreme Court should take suo motu cognisance of the data while issuing a verdict in an ongoing case on alleged fake encounters in the state.

Sarma, who also holds the home portfolio, tabled a set of official papers in the assembly on Monday, revealing that 256 police actions have been taken between May 10, 2021 and February 23 this year. Magisterial inquiries were conducted in 175 cases but not in 81 others.

The government, however, registered police cases in each incident under relevant laws and as per guidelines of the National Human Rights



Commission (NHRC).

Reacting to the data, Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia of the Congress said that the apex court, which is already hearing a case on 171 alleged fake encounters in Assam, should take cognisance of the latest data and go for further suo motu hearing before pronouncing the verdict.

"The SC should take cognisance of these latest facts and open the case instead of reserving the

verdict. This news should be taken into consideration suo motu," Saikia told PTI.

He alleged that the figures show that there is a "total police raj" in the state without any regard for the rule of law.

"We strongly condemn such a situation. We have been trying to raise the matter in the assembly so many times, but answers had always been evasive. Such killings of accused persons are happening because the ruling party is using the police for political gains," Saikia said.

The documents tabled in the House showed that 38 people were killed while they were in police remand. Additionally, 34 more lost their lives in police action while they were in custody but before being sent to police remand.

Similarly, 181 people received bullet injuries in these incidents while they were in police remand and 40 more were injured before being sent to police remand. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

33 arms surrendered in Manipur

IMPHAL, March 4: Thirty-three arms and ammunition were voluntarily surrendered by the public in five districts in strife-torn Manipur, police on Tuesday.

The arm surrenders were made in Churachandpur, Thoubal, Imphal East, Imphal West, and Bishnupur districts, a senior officer said.

Notably, Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla has recently extended the deadline for the surrender of looted and illegal arms till 4 PM on March 6, following demands by people from both hill and valley areas for additional time.

Bhalla had on February 20 urged the people of the state to voluntarily surrender looted and illegally held weapons within seven days, assuring no punitive action would be initiated against those giving up arms during this period. Chief Secretary PK Singh had also said that the seven-day time given for voluntarily surrendering weapons is enough if one wants to give up arms and asserted that (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

AIUDF MLAs protest in Assam Assembly, suspended

GUWAHATI, March 4: Legislators of the opposition AIUDF demonstrated in the Assam assembly on Tuesday, demanding a breach of privilege motion against Health Minister Ashok Singhal for his purported remarks against Bengali-speaking Muslims.

Speaker Biswajit Daimary had to adjourn the House for 20 minutes as the din continued.

AIUDF MLA Rafiqul Islam sought to move the breach of privilege motion at the end of the Question Hour.

The speaker said that the motion was disallowed as it does not meet the requirements.

Islam said that it was a matter of grave concern for a minister to make remarks against an entire community.

He maintained that Singhal's remarks, made recently at his constituency Dhekiajuli, indicated that Bengali-speaking Muslims, referred to as 'Miyas', would be deprived of



benefits of government schemes.

"He has made it publicly clear that he dislikes an entire community. He should be dismissed as a minister, and if he is to continue, he must apologise for his remarks," Islam said. Daimary said that while he was sympathetic towards the sentiments of the community, the breach of privilege motion cannot be allowed as per rules.

Following the ruckus, proceed-

ings of the House were adjourned for 20 minutes by Daimary as the AIUDF members sought the motion even after Daimary had disallowed it. When the House reassembled, they continued to press for their demand. Deputy Speaker Numal Momin, who was now presiding over the proceedings, requested them to take their seats and bring the issue under relevant provisions, as a breach (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Modi govt weakening RTI in name of data protection: Kharge

NEW DELHI, March 4: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday accused the Modi government of weakening the Right To Information (RTI) Act in the name of data protection and asserted that his party will keep fighting against the "dictatorial" regime to secure the rights of the people.

Kharge asserted that the Congress will not let RTI weaken and will continue to raise its voice from the streets to Parliament.

"On one hand, India has been topping the charts on Misinformation and Disinformation for the past years and on the other hand, the Modi government is bent on weakening the Right To Information (RTI) Act implemented by the Congress-UPA by bringing in the Data Protection law," the Congress chief said in a post in Hindi on X.

Whether it is information in the public sector like the list of ration cards, beneficiary labourers of MGNREGA, names of people in-



involved in public welfare schemes, voter list in elections, or the names of scamster billionaires who fled abroad after taking loans from government banks - it is important for the public to have the names of all

these in the public domain, he asserted.

But now the Modi government is weakening the RTI in the name of Data Protection, due to which such names will no longer be made public, Kharge claimed.

The Right to Privacy is a fundamental right, and the Congress has fought for it, but when it comes to Public Welfare, the Right to Information is necessary, he asserted.

The Right to Privacy was also taken care of in the RTI brought by the Congress, but this does not mean that the list of beneficiaries or the names of scamsters should not be made public, Kharge said.

"The Congress party will not let RTI weaken, we have raised our voice for it earlier also, and will continue to raise our voice from the streets to the Parliament. We will keep fighting against this dictatorial government to secure the rights of the people!" the Congress chief said. (PTI)

Over 60,000 kgs of seized betel nuts unclaimed in Cachar

SILCHAR, March 4: Over 60,000 kgs of unclaimed betel nuts, which have been seized during separate operations, in Lakhimpur police station in Assam's Cachar district has emerged as a problem for the local authorities, as no one has come forward to claim the goods, a senior officer said.

With owners not claiming their goods, questions are also being raised on whether the betel nuts were meant for smuggling, he said.

"Lakhimpur Police Station is grappling with a massive stockpile of seized betel nuts, with no rightful owner stepping forward to claim the commodity. Two separate operations have led to the confiscation of 60,420.26 kg of betel nuts, which (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Industry should take advantage' World looking at India as trusted partner: Modi

NEW DELHI, March 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday nudged the Indian industry for "big steps" to take advantage of global opportunities at a time when the world is looking at India as a trusted partner, saying the government will launch two missions to promote manufacturing and exports.

Addressing a post-budget webinar on Regulatory, Investment and Ease of Doing Business Reforms, Modi asked the industry to identify new products that can be manufactured in the country to meet global demand. "Our country is capable of doing this, all of you (industry) are capable, this is a great opportunity for us. I want our industry should not look at these expectations of the world as a mere spectator. We cannot remain spectators, you will have to look for your role in this, you will have to seek opportunities for yourself," Modi told the industry players.

The Prime Minister also stressed the need to develop new modes of



credit delivery to ensure access to timely and low-cost funds to over six crore micro, small and medium units across the country. He said five lakh first-time women and SC&ST entrepreneurs will be provided loans of up to Rs 2 crore.

"Today, India is a growth engine

for the global economy. India has proved its resilience even in difficult times... Today, every country wants to strengthen its economic partnership with India. Our manufacturing sector should take advantage of this partnership," Modi added.

The Prime Minister said the in-

dustry has gained new self-confidence due to the government's consistency and assurance for reforms. "I want to assure the stakeholders in manufacturing and export sectors that this will continue in the coming years. I urge you to move ahead with confidence and take big steps. For the country's manufacturing and export sectors new avenues have been opened," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said MSMEs need not only credit but also guidance, and suggested that industries should establish mentorship programmes to support them.

Asserting that stable policy and improved business environment are vital for any country to progress, he said the government has done away with over 40,000 compliances at the Centre and state level and is working on the Jan Vishwas 2.0 Bill.

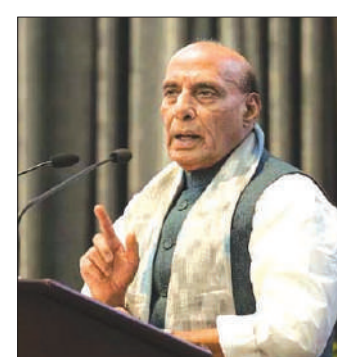
"We are working on the Jan Vishwas 2.0 Bill. We have decided to constitute a committee to review non-financial (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NEW DELHI, March 4: India's security apparatus must remain adaptive to emerging threats such as cyber and hybrid warfare as well as "space-based espionage", Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday.

He said internal security is not just about managing conventional threats like terrorism, separatist movements, and left-wing extremism but it is also about preparing for unconventional threats that can destabilise the nation's economic and strategic interests.

"The adversaries of today do not always come with traditional weapons; cyber-attacks, misinformation campaigns, and space-based espionage are emerging as new-age threats that require advanced solutions," he said.

The defence minister was speaking at a conference on 'Advanced Technologies for Internal Security and Disaster Relief Operations' organised jointly by the Defence Re-



search and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). In his address, Singh highlighted the growing complexities in global security and the increasing overlap between internal and external threats.

"Security challenges in the modern world are evolving rapidly, and the overlap between internal and external security is increasing," he said. "It is imperative that our institutions break silos and work collab-

oratively to ensure a strong, secure, and self-reliant India."

The defence minister said India's national security must be viewed holistically, integrating efforts across different security agencies and leveraging the latest technological advancements.

"The DRDO has played a pivotal role in enhancing India's defence capabilities, and its contributions to internal security are equally commendable," he said.

"From small arms and bullet-proof jackets to surveillance and communication systems, DRDO's innovations are empowering our security forces," he underlined.

Singh urged DRDO and MHA to work together to create a common list of scalable products that can be jointly developed and deployed in a time-bound manner. "Our security forces require the best tools and technologies to remain ahead of the curve," he said. It is encouraging to see DRDO's (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Govt steadfast in easing regulatory burdens, taking steps to make India export-friendly: FM

NEW DELHI, March 4: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the government remains steadfast in reducing regulatory burdens, besides enhancing trust-based governance and taking steps to make India a "seamless, export-friendly" economy. A robust manufacturing sector free from unnecessary regulatory bottlenecks will further attract both domestic and foreign investments, driving economic growth, positioning India as a trusted global player, Sitharaman said while addressing a post-budget webinar on 'MSMEs as engine of growth, manufacturing, exports, regulatory, investment and EoDB Reforms'.

"Our government remains steadfast in reducing regulatory burdens and enhancing trust-based governance to improve the ease of doing business. Through the budget announcements, we are taking various steps towards making India a seamless, export-friendly economy, one where businesses are free to focus on innovation and expansion, and not paperwork and penalties," Sitharaman said.

Addressing the webinar earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked Indian industry to take "big steps" for taking advantage of global opportunities at a time when the world



is looking at India as a trusted partner, which can produce quality goods.

"I want that our industry should not look at these expectations of the world as a mere spectator. We cannot remain spectators, you will have to look for your role in this, you will have to seek opportunities for yourself," Modi said.

In her 2025-26 Budget speech, the minister had announced that a high-level committee for regulatory reforms will be set up for a review of all non-financial sector regulations, certifications, licences, and permissions.

"The committee will be expected to make recommendations within a year. The objective

is to strengthen trust-based economic governance and take transformational measures to enhance 'ease of doing business', especially in matters of inspections and compliances," said the Budget speech.

Sitharaman said decriminalisation of business-related laws reduces the legal risks, allowing industries to operate with greater confidence. Over 42,000 compliance requirements have already been removed, and over 3,700 legal provisions have been decriminalised since 2014. In the Jan Vishwas Act 2023, more than 180 legal provisions were decriminalised.

"Our government will now bring up the Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 to decriminalise more than 100 provisions in various laws. It will further simplify processes for businesses," Sitharaman said.

She said the government's "unprecedented" push for infrastructure development helps create jobs, strengthen industries, and also lays the foundation for greater private sector participation in India's growth story.

"The pathway for reforms are complemented by the government's unwavering focus on capital expenditure as a driver of economic growth," Sitharaman said. (PTI)

Kiara Advani leads Stayfree's new period campaign

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 4: Stayfree has launched a new brand campaign for its Stayfree Secure XL product, featuring Bollywood star Kiara Advani as its ambassador.

The campaign challenges a long-standing reality where women often feel the need to act as if nothing is wrong during their periods, despite experiencing discomfort and challenges. In the campaign film, Kiara Advani reflects on her acting journey, revealing that her first experience with "acting" began not on a movie set but when she had to pretend to be comfortable during her first period. The campaign highlights common struggles faced by millions of women, including the worry of leakage in social settings, discomfort during long journeys, and skin irritation caused by pads. Stayfree Secure XL aims to address these issues with its unique LeakLock technology and clinically tested non-irritant cover, which promises up to 12 hours of protection and comfort. The campaign reinforces the message that when pads are comfortable, periods become more manageable. Manoj Gadgil, Vice President of Marketing and Business Unit Head for Essential Health & Skin Health at Kenvue, explained the insight behind the campaign, acknowledging the difficulties women face during their periods. "Despite constant worry about leakage and discomfort from skin irritation, girls and women put up an act, braving through their days as normal. At Stayfree, we are committed to offering superior products that improve their period experience by providing long-lasting protection and comfort."

Axis Bank unveils 'One Axis CSR Vision'

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 4: Axis Bank recently launched its "One Axis CSR Vision" initiative at Abhisaran 2025, an event aimed at strengthening its social impact strategy.

The gathering, held in Mumbai, brought together senior officials from Axis Bank, Trustees of the Axis Bank Foundation (ABF), and over 70 NGO partners to discuss sustainable solutions for social challenges.

The event marked a milestone in the bank's corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, celebrating the success of its "Mission 2 Million" initiative and unveiling the ambitious "Mission 4 Million" program.

The new mission aims to extend support to 2 million additional vulnerable households by focusing on sustainable livelihoods, financial empowerment, and skill development. Key figures from both Axis Bank and the NGO community attended, including S Ramadorai, chairperson of the ABF, and Munish Sharda, executive director of Axis Bank.

Sensex sinks below 73,000 amid global equity rout on tariff war worries

MUMBAI, March 4: Falling for the third straight day, benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 96 points to close below the 73,000 mark on Tuesday amid global equity rout on tariff war worries and persistent foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE barometer closed at 72,989.93, down by 96.01 points or 0.13 per cent, as 18 of its components declined and 12 settled with gains. During the day,

it dropped 452.4 points or 0.62 per cent to a low of 72,633.54 but recovered some of the losses in the second half.

Extending the losses for the 10th straight session, the 50-share Nifty of NSE fell by 36.65 points or 0.17 per cent to close at 22,082.65. The index opened below the 22,000 level at 21,974.45 but managed to recover some losses later.

From the Sensex pack, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Technologies, Nestle India, Asian Paints, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Infosys, Maruti Suzuki India, Titan, Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries were among the laggards. On the other hand, State Bank of India, Zomato, Tata Consultancy Services, Adani Ports, Power Grid, Tata Steel and HDFC Bank were the gainers. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Himanta hints at seeking

Assamese people, he claimed. "We have found the name of an Assamese woman, whose husband works at JNU, and both of them were in touch with this person. The investigation is not centred on one individual, but it is seen that there is an influence of ISI or the Pakistani government in India."

"And noteworthy is that Assamese people are involved in it. That is why we are monitoring it, but we cannot comment on it immediately. We will need two-three months," the CM said. Sarma and the BJP have been attacking Gogoi, the deputy leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, alleging that his wife has connections with the ISI.

After much hue and cry, the state cabinet on February 16 decided not to register any case against Gogoi or his wife but instructed the DGP to file an FIR against the Pakistani national.

The state government also announced that it would write to the Centre to probe Colburn's participation in Lok Sabha campaigns in the erstwhile Kaliabor constituency, which was won by Gogoi twice, despite being a British citizen. Gogoi has alleged that the BJP was going to extreme lengths to defame him and his family, and asserted that he would be taking appropriate legal actions. (PTI)

President Trump temporarily

on February 24, 2022, and approximately USD 69.2 billion in military assistance since Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014. This latest setback for Ukraine in the third year of its war with Russia comes just days after Trump and Vice President JD Vance had a heated verbal exchange with Zelensky, who was visiting the White House last Friday and the two countries were all set to sign a rare mineral deal. But talks between Trump and Zelensky unravelled in a heated exchange that played out in front of the global media. (PTI)

'Total police raj': Cong decries

It was not known exactly how many of these incidents were unilateral action by the police and how many were encounters, when both sides were engaged in gunfights. A year-wise breakup shows that the highest number of people were killed in 2021, the year when Sarma became the CM of Assam. That year, a total of 31 people lost their lives in 83 cases of police action, both in remand and before remand.

Also, 67 people were injured, including 54 in police remand and 13 before remand. In 2021, magisterial inquiry was conducted in 52 cases, while no such probe was ordered in 31 incidents. The next year, 18 accused were gunned down, including three before their police remand. A total of 79 others were injured in 95 incidents, out of which magisterial probes were conducted in 66. In 2023, the documents showed that 13 accused were gunned down, including nine before remand. Additionally, 35 people were injured in 44 incidents, out of which magisterial probes were ordered in 35 cases. In 2024, 10 people lost their lives, including three before police remand. A total of 35 people were injured in 28 cases, out of which magisterial probes were ordered in 21 incidents. In the current year till February 23, no death has been reported but five people have been injured during police remand in six different instances. Out of these, magisterial probes have been ordered in only one case.

Another set of documents showed that a total of 136 people were killed across Assam in police action since 2016, when the BJP came to power for the first time in the state. Earlier, the high number of shoot-outs whipped up a political furore with the opposition alleging that the Assam Police have turned "trigger happy" and were indulging in "open killings" under the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led regime.

The Supreme Court was on February 25 informed by the Assam government that the 2014 guidelines for investigating police encounters were duly followed in the state and unnecessary targeting of security forces was demoralising. Following the submission, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh reserved the verdict on a plea seeking an independent investigation over 171 alleged fake police encounters in Assam between May, 2021 and August, 2022, in which 56 people died, including four in custody, and 145 were injured.

The petitioner, Arif Md Yasmin Jwadder, had challenged a January 2023 order of the Gauhati High Court, which dismissed his PIL over the encounters by Assam Police. In October last year, the SC had termed the situation "very serious" and sought details, including on the probe conducted in these matters. (PTI)

World looking at India as trusted

sector regulations. Our endeavour is to make them modern, flexible, people-friendly and trust-based." The government will launch two missions to promote manufacturing and exports, he said. Observing that the focus should be on better technology and quality products, the Prime Minister urged all stakeholders to identify new products in demand globally that can be manufactured in India and encouraged them to approach countries with export potential strategically. "The world is currently experiencing political uncertainty, and the entire world views India as a growth centre," Modi said, adding that during the COVID crisis, when the global economy slowed down, India accelerated global growth. Modi said the definition of MSMEs was further expanded in the FY26 Budget to instil confidence in their continuous growth. This will create more employment opportunities for the youth. However, the biggest problem faced by MSMEs was the difficulty in obtaining loans. He noted that ten years ago, MSMEs received loans worth approximately ₹ 12 lakh crore, which has now increased to around Rs 30 lakh crore.

The Prime Minister also said that in Budget FY26, the guarantee cover for MSME loans has been doubled to ₹ 20 crore. Additionally, customised credit cards with a limit of ₹ 5 lakh will be provided to meet working capital needs. Underlining that the government has facilitated loan access and introduced a new type of loan, Modi said people are now receiving loans without guarantees, something they never imagined before. Over the past 10 years, schemes like MUDRA, which provide loans without guarantees, have also supported small industries, he noted.

He emphasised the need to develop new modes of credit delivery, ensuring that every MSME has access to low-cost and timely credit. He also announced that five lakh first-time entrepreneurs from women, SC, and ST communities will receive loans of ₹ 2 crore. He urged the industry to create a mentorship programme to help these individuals. Modi asked the industry not to be "mere spectators" but to actively seek their role and carve out opportunities, pointing out that it is easier today compared to the past, as the country has friendly policies and the government stands shoulder to shoulder with the industry. (PTI)

33 arms surrendered in Manipur

the forces would take action after the expiry of the period to recover such guns. More than 250 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 2023. The Centre had imposed President's rule in Manipur on February 13, days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post leading to political uncertainty in the northeastern state. The Manipur assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs. (PTI)

India's security apparatus must

focus on modernisation, with products like small arms, surveillance equipment and drone systems either inducted or undergoing evaluation for deployment in internal security agencies," he highlighted. Singh recalled his tenure as the home minister, highlighting how the collaboration between security agencies and scientific institutions led to significant technological advancements. He cited examples of DRDO-developed technologies such as the corner shot weapon system, INSAS rifles, IED (Improvised Explosive Device) jammer vehicles and riot control vehicles, which were effectively integrated into the operations of Central Armed Police Forces.

Singh also spoke about the importance of leveraging technology not just for security but also for disaster management and humanitarian relief. "The role of technology is not just in defence but also in ensuring peace and social welfare. Advanced systems like bulletproof jackets, drones, surveillance equipment and anti-drone technologies must be leveraged not only for security operations but also for disaster management and humanitarian relief," he said. Singh said the increasing frequency of natural calamities like cyclones, avalanches, earthquakes and cloud bursts underscored the critical need for advanced rescue tools. He mentioned that the use of technologies such as thermal imaging cameras, drone-based detection systems, and victim locating devices can significantly reduce casualties and damage. Referring to the recent avalanche at Mana in Uttarakhand, the defence minister lauded the use of advanced rescue equipment in saving lives and reducing the impact of the disaster. He said the impact of disasters can be minimised with the use of advanced technology.

"Today, India is a prospering nation, and disaster management must become an integral part of our preparedness." "It is not enough for security agencies and technology developers to take the lead; we must also educate the general public. Every citizen should know how to respond in times of crisis," he said. (PTI)

AIUDF MLAs protest in

of privilege motion was not admissible in this case. As the AIUDF MLAs persisted with their demand, Momin ordered the suspension of the entire bench for 10 minutes. "The AIUDF MLAs are suspended for 10 minutes. We can't adjourn the House again and again as it is run on taxpayers' money," the deputy speaker said. (PTI)

Over 60,000 kgs of seized betel

continue to remain unclaimed despite repeated efforts to trace their legitimate proprietors," the official said on Monday. The first case of October 13, 2024 involved the seizure of 405 sacks of betel nuts, weighing 26,905 kg. In another case of December 26, 2023, a staggering 33,515.26 kg of betel nuts were seized.

The official said sacks of the betel nuts have been lying on the premises of Lakhimpur Police Station, but no individual or entity has come forward with valid proof of ownership. The authorities have issued multiple notifications, urging the rightful owners to establish their claim by submitting the necessary documentation, yet the stockpile remains untouched, he said. With such an enormous quantity remaining unclaimed, the matter has sparked speculation about its origins and whether these seized commodity is linked to illegal trade or not, the official said. A final call for any individual or business unit with rightful ownership of these confiscated goods to come forward and submit the required documents is being made. Failure to do so may lead to further legal action regarding the unclaimed property, he added. (PTI)

OFFICE OF THE JOINT DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES CUM MEMBER SECRETARY DISTRICT HEALTH SOCIETY, KARBI ANGLONG NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION <i>Karin Anglong, Diphu. Tele- 03671-273038 Email: nhm.karbianglong@gmail.com</i>	
No.NHM/K-Ang/RBSK/MHT/2022-23/76405	Dated: 03-03-2025
Short Notice inviting Quotation	
<p>Scaled Quotation affixing court fee of Rs.8.25 (Eight Rupees and Twenty-Five paise Only) or of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council/Cash receipt of Rs. 10 (Rupees Ten Only) are invited from the Supplier/Farm regarding supply of Vehicle for RBSK (MHT) programme under NHM Karbi Anglong for FY 2025-26. The invitation of the vehicle will be for Manja BPHC, Bokajan BPHC, Hawraghat BPHC and Chowkiola BPHC. The vehicle should be preferable type of Bolero/Scorpio/Innova, /SUV 300/Ecco Van. The application should be submitted as per the following address." The Joint Director of Health Services, Diphu Karbi Anglong" and last date of submission is on 15th March, 2025 at 4.00 pm at the drop box of the office of DPMU, NHM, karbi Anglong.</p>	
<p>Terms and Conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Each supplier shall submit only ONE quotation. The supplier/Farm should have GST registration. The vehicle will be used for mobility support for RBSK (MHT) team to visit School and AWC for screening of Children's and for referral purposes. Monthly hiring charge of the vehicle shall not exceed maximum of Rs. 30,000/- (Rupees Thirty Thousand Only) per month inclusive GST. POL Driver allowance and maintenance of the vehicle. The vehicle must be on road worthy condition and must have valid registration certificate, insurance certificate, fitness certificate, pollution certificate, and up to date tax payment, and to submit the above documents at the time of apply. The Driver of the vehicle must have valid driving licensee. Block should ensure that the vehicle Log book shall strictly be maintained and need to be counter signed by Block Programme Manager and Block in charge on monthly basis. Hiring charge should be paid on monthly basis after submission of the Bill along with xerox copy of signed log book. In case of sudden breakdown of vehicle, the party shall manage by providing alternative Vehicle for the days. The 1st party reserves the right to cancel the terms of agreement with the 2nd party at any time and without assigning any reasons thereof In case of 2 party desire to withdraw the agreement of contact before the end of the term, the 2nd party need to give information prior to 15 (Fifteen) days to the 1st party for further arrangement. The contact will come into effect from 1st April-2025 up to 31st March, 2026 or may be extended as per the situation. In case of type of vehicle or rate if any charges required decision need to be taken in the meeting of District level RBSK committer with proper justification and documentations. In case of any emergency/requirement of the vehicle, the SDM&HO of the BMW is allow to decide for utilizing the RBSK (MV) vehicle of the Block BPHC subject to non-hampering of RBSK scheduled Programme. Notwithstanding the above, the purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject any quotation and to cancel the bidding process and reject all quotation at any time prior to the award of contact. The Bidder shall indicate the name of the Bank, address and account number. All legal disputes shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts of Law Karbi Anglong district. 	
<p>Sd/- Joint Director of Health Services cum Member Secretary, DHS Karbi Anglong, Diphu Dated: 03-03-2025</p>	
<p>No. NHM/K-Ang/RBSK/MHT/2022-23/76406-76411</p>	

37 bedded patient care cabin facility to be developed within a four storied block Union minister Sonowal lays foundation stone for capacity expansion at AMCH

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 4: The Union minister of ports, shipping & waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation stone for a 37 bedded patient care cabin facility block to be developed within the Assam Medical College & Hospital (AMCH) premises here on Tuesday.

The cabins will be spaced out across four floors with advanced medical care for patients. The fully furnished four storied facility will be developed with an investment of ₹ 8.89 crore. The Oil India Limited (OIL) will support the cost as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Speaking on the occasion, the Union minister said, "Under PM Narendra Modi's visionary leadership, the healthcare system in India has undergone a tremendous transformation which has made it effective for people from all sections of the society. The Ayushman Arogya Bharat is transforming India's healthcare landscape—affordable, accessible, and world-class. A Viksit Bharat begins with a healthy



Bharat, and we are steering the nation towards excellence in healthcare for every citizen. Healthcare excellence is key to achieve the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's Viksit Bharat."

Highlighting the role that AMCH has played, Sarbananda Sonowal said, "AMCH Dibrugarh, Northeast India's pioneering medical college, has long been the backbone of healthcare in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and beyond.

As demand surges for affordable, high-quality treatment, a new facility in Assam emerges—not just as an expansion, but as a promise to redefine specialised care for the region. I am confident that the capacity expansion at AMCH will further bolster the commitment of Narendra Modi government to reshape and strengthen country's healthcare system—accessible, affordable, and built to last—boosting the region's medical backbone

with vision and resolve." Advising the students of AMCH who gathered at the auspicious occasion, the MP from Dibrugarh LSC, Sarbananda Sonowal said, "Good health is a way of life. Through yoga, balanced nutrition, and mindful living, we build strength, resilience, and inner harmony. A healthy lifestyle isn't just about adding years to life—it's about adding life to years. Breathe, move, and thrive—your wellness journey is equally crucial for an efficient healthcare delivery system in the country. As the future caregivers of humanity, you hold the power to heal and transform lives. We wish you the best health and a sound mind, for with these strengths, your contribution to nation-building and improving lives will be even more meaningful." The event saw the presence of Rituparna Baruah, Chairman, Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC), Government of Assam; Akhim Hazarika, Chairman, District Development Authority (DDA), alongside senior officials from OIL and AMCH.

NABARD organises International Women's Day in Hojai

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, March 4: National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) DDM Office for Hojai district organised the International Women's Day 2025 event with the theme "March Forward: Promises to Progress" on Monday.

The event was organised by NABARD in the Village Knowledge Centre Hall at Kaki-Thaisupar, in presence of District Commissioner Bidyut Bikash Bhagwati.

In addition to the local women achievers, women entrepreneurs, educationists & social activists, the programme was also attended by the principal (I/c) Food Craft Institute (FCI) P S Bordoloi, LDM-Hojai, M N Bora, DICC Superintendent, BM of PNB, Kaki Ramraj Meena, BPM-ASRLM, Mukut Deka of Gramya Unnayan Santha, Sujay Kr Dutta of Hojai Unnayan Mancha etc.

Welcoming the dignitaries as well as the participants, the DDM-NABARD, Rajendar Perna spoke

about the vision and mission of NABARD for promoting rural prosperity and opined that without the empowerment and development of women, the rural prosperity will be a distant dream.

He informed the participants that all the projects or initiatives of NABARD in the district have majority of women beneficiaries/representatives. He also highlighted about various brands like NABA Sakhi Sanitary Pads, NABAHUM and NABARAJ Agarthas developed by NABARD trained women artisans.

Guiding the participants during the inaugural speech, DC, Hojai spoke about the initiatives of the Govt of India, Govt of Assam and organisations like NABARD for the betterment of lives of women in rural areas through implementation of various support schemes, incentives for establishing individual enterprises, marketing etc. He also spoke about schemes like Lakhpati Baideo, Sukanya Samridhi, Drone Didi etc. and cited the role of women in the success of

brands like Lijjat Papad, AMUL etc. He appreciated the initiatives of NABARD like the Watershed project, Millet project, formation and promotion of FPOs, various skill building programmes in the district.

Principal (I/c) of FCI, the LDM, Hojai, Bankers, ASRLM representatives have also guided the participants and praised the effort of NABARD in organising such events for inspiring the rural women artisans.

During the event, DC, Hojai felicitated and distributed mementoes to local women achievers selected from varied sectors like education, banker, social service, farmer, micro entrepreneurs etc. The felicitated women achievers also spoke about their efforts, challenges and their present day of satisfaction. They also encouraged other participants to work sincerely in achieving their desired dreams and targets and expressed their sincere gratitude to NABARD for organising IWD-2025 event.

Assam BJP lauds Srimanta Sankaradev chair at Pandit Ravishankar Shukla University

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 4: The State BJP, Assam Pradesh has extended gratitude to Chattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai to institute a dedicated chair in the name of Vaishnavite saint and social reformer Srimanta Sankaradev at the Pandit Ravishankar Shukla University.

"I express my gratitude to Chattisgarh chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai for establishing a chair in the name of the Vaishnavite saint-scholar at the varsity. This significant initiative will bring the States of Assam and Chattisgarh closer to each other emotionally, culturally and academically," Baruah quipped.

The State BJP President also appreciated Chattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka for taking initiatives for cultural exchanges between both the States.

The Chattisgarh Government has allocated ₹ 2 crore for this initiative in the State Budget 2025-2026.

The chair is intended to promote research and study of the Bhakti Movement and the life of the 15th-

16th century saint-scholar Srimanta Sankaradev.

In the wake of the criticism levelled by the Opposition parties against minister Ashok Singhal that he showed disrespect to the bhaona created by the saint-scholar, the BJP, Assam Pradesh makes it clear that no one in the party could downplay the state's rich cultural mosaic, history and tradition. The Bharatiya Janata Party and the BJP-led Government are wholly committed to proliferating the high ideals of the great saint-scholar through a slew of initiatives such as preservation of the satras, massive publicity of the saint-scholar's creations and to spread them far and wide and ambitious projects to develop the historic Batadrava Satra.

The statement further stated that the party and the government will take the saint-scholar's creations, including bhaona together with his invaluable contribution to the global stage in the coming days.

On the other hand, the BJP, Assam Pradesh also welcomed the Cabinet decision to set up Ratan Tata Electronic City at Jagirroad.

Senior citizen's ATM card stolen, ₹ 62,000 looted in Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, March 4: In a shocking incident, a miscreant stole ATM card from a senior citizen from ATM booth, and ₹ 62,000 was looted from his account in Nagaon.

The incident occurred on Friday evening, and the victim, Lakhidrat Hazarika, a resident of Dimaruguri, reported the matter to the Nagaon Itachali outpost police.

According to Hazarika, his ATM card was stolen by a youth who befriended him near the State Bank of India ATM at Itachali. The youth, who introduced himself as a bank employee, helped Hazarika withdraw ₹ 9,000 from his account. After the withdrawal, the youth snatched the ATM card from Hazarika and fled the scene.

The stolen ATM card was used to withdraw ₹ 31,000 from the same ATM, and another ₹ 31,000 was withdrawn from a different ATM at Balaji Service Station. The total amount looted from Hazarika's account is ₹ 62,000.

Meanwhile Nagaon police have launched an investigation into the matter, but the culprit is yet to be arrested. This incident has raised concerns about the safety of senior citizens and the need for increased security measures to prevent such crimes.

It's worth noting that such incidents are not uncommon in Nagaon, and the police have been urged to take strict measures to prevent such crime in the area.

Experts delved into importance of endangered languages

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 4: There is an urgent need to safeguard the endangered languages of Assam and the Northeast, experts said on Tuesday at a National Conference on Language Preservation, organised by the department of linguistics, Gauhati University in collaboration with the North East Regional Language Centre (CIIIL).

"Language is not just a means of communication; it is the very essence of identity and culture," said Nani Gopal Mahanta, vice chancellor, Gauhati University.

He highlighted the pressing need to safeguard the endangered languages of Assam and the Northeast, emphasising the role of linguistic diversity in cultural preservation. Drawing a pertinent reference from the University Anthem, he remarked, "Sanchi paate bhakha dibo, shifung e akha dibo"—a testimony to the University's commitment to nurturing language

and knowledge.

"This is a critical moment. We cannot let languages like Singpho and Tai Ahom fade into oblivion. Our University will appoint scientific officers dedicated to documenting and preserving these rich linguistic heritages," he announced.

Dr Aleendra Brahma, an alumni and the co-ordinator of the event, emphasised the collective responsibility to preserve indigenous languages. "This conference is not just a scholarly gathering; it is a call to action. We must weave research and community outreach together to breathe life into our endangered languages," Brahma stated.

The event brought together academicians, researchers, and linguists, fostering meaningful discussions on language conservation strategies. Participants explored interdisciplinary approaches, highlighting the need for digital documentation, storytelling, and grassroots initiatives.

NHM workers on strike in Margherita



HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, March 4: The All Assam Health and Technical Workers Union, NHM, Assam has launched a three-day pen down programme across the state starting from Tuesday till March 6.

Employees who were working under Ketetong Block Primary Health Centre, Margherita also participated in the three-day pen down programme on the premises of Margherita FRU/civil hospital bringing government hospitals in the state to a standstill.

In Margherita FRU/civil hospital doctors, nurses and technicians under All Assam Health and Technical workers Union NHM, Assam, joined the three-day pen down programme, causing problem among patients who came from far flung areas for health related issues at Margherita FRU/civil hospital.

Under Ketetong Block Primary Health Centre such as Jagun MPHC, Digboi FRU/civil hospital,

Tirap gate state dispensary, Hasak MPHC, Ledo MPHC, Pengree MPHC, Kothalguri Model Hospital, Inthem MPHC and Margherita FRU/civil hospital with a total of 110 staffs participated at the three-day pen down programme who were working since many years but unfortunately we have been deprived of our basic rights said Nihar Ranjan Chetia president of All Assam Health and Technical Workers Union, NHM Tinsukia district committee.

Nihar Ranjan Chetia said that due to lack of response and gross negligence shown towards our demands by Assam Government we have been compelled to initiate pen down at our workplace, as several times we have submitted memorandum to the mission director, National Health Mission, Assam and Government of Assam but nobody is giving importance to our prayer.

"We demand that immediate regularization of services for all

NHM technical employees through special recruitment drive against existing vacancies and new vacancies to be created at newer health institutions and suspend fresh recruitment until NHM employees are fully absorbed against vacancies, till 8th Pay Commission recommendations/regularization process come into force, provide salary as per with 7th pay commission recommendation with pay fixation with immediate release of incremental arrear salary with effect from 1st January 2016 and implement Supreme Court verdict 213 of the year 2013 "equal pay for equal work", along with gratuity, equal leave policy, equal pension scheme, equal death benefits, equal Health insurance scheme and equal bank loan facilities as similar to that of state government regular employees otherwise in the coming days we shall indefinitely call for a pen down programme," said Nihar Ranjan Chetia.

NHM contractual staff in Dibrugarh on strike

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, March 4: Contractual employees of the National Health Mission (NHM) in Dibrugarh went on a 3-day strike in response to a call from the All Assam Health and Technical Employees Welfare Association (AAHTEWA).

The workers have been protesting against the long-term deprivation of health employees appointed on contractual basis in 2006.

The NHM workers demanded equal pay for equal work, following the Supreme Court's ruling and are also seeking the regularisation of their jobs, pay revision as per the 7th Pay Commission's recommendations and the extension of benefits like medical, house rent, gratuity, and pension enjoyed by state government employees.

"During Covid-19 when there was a nationwide lockdown, we risked our lives, attending to the patients and ensuring that vaccination drives were carried out effortlessly. However, we are neglected by the government," a protesting nurse said. The contractual NHM workers, who are paid very low salaries, said that their contributions during the pandemic have not been recognised or rewarded adequately.

Massive fire engulfs property

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, March 4: A massive fire broke out at the residence of Harka Bahadur Chetry at Durbin Tila village in West Karbi Anglong under Zirkindeng police station.

The fire started under unknown circumstances and reduced the house of Chetry to ashes before any help could reach the place.

Along with household domestic goods, important documents, cash of ₹ 35,000/- and agricultural produce also went up in flames. More than 50 mauns of paddy and zinger are also reduced to ashes. A report has been filed at Zirkindeng police station.

Simaluguri Bihu from April 24

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, March 4: The Simaluguri AASU is going to hold the 12th Bihu Sammilan on April 24 and 25 at Kakajan Field. The Bihu committee was formed in a meeting yesterday with Pranob Buragihain as president, Rajat Dutta, Niranjan Mahanta and Bidyut Konwar as vice presidents and Manov Hazarika, the president of Sivasagar District AASU as the general secretary. Diplina Deka will be the star attraction of the Bihu programme. Over ₹ 1.5 lakh will be given away as prize money in various competitions. The interested Hussori parties may contact on phone numbers 9101019862 and 70024881951.

Oath taking ceremony

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, March 4: The West Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (WKADCC) recently organised an oath-taking ceremony to mark the transition of leadership, with Alice Engtipi, former executive member (EM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), formally assuming the role of President in charge. The event was held in the presence of senior party leaders and workers.

The ceremony saw Engtipi took charge from outgoing president in charge Jatiram Patra, who handed over responsibilities amid applause from attendees. The occasion was graced by prominent figures, including WKADCC Vice-President Rupsing Bongrung, Longwel Phangocho, General Secretary (Administration), Honsing Enghee, and General Secretary (Organisation) Chatra Sing Teron. General Secretary Jubindra Rongphar and Secretaries Sarsing Teron and Robin Ronghang were also present to witness the transition.

Golden Jubilee celebration

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, March 4: The Kumoi Anchalik Yubak Sangha, a cultural organisation is going to organise a two-day event on March 8 and 9 on its premises marking its golden jubilee celebrations. The publicity secretary of the golden jubilee celebration committee Sanu Gogoi informed the Hills Times that on March 8, the programme will be inaugurated by the King of the historic Kumoi kingdom Suchen Bardoloi. Thereafter the flag of the organisation would be hoisted by the president of the celebration committee Pradeep Deuri. Thereafter the Kulai Social Forestry's Officer will plant sapling on the premises of the organisation.

Entrepreneurship Development Programme concludes in Kokrajhar

Organised by CIT Kokrajhar collaboration with the Government of Bodoland Territorial Region

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, March 4: The Science, Technology, and Innovation Hub (STIHUB) at Central Institute of Technology (CIT) Kokrajhar conducted the first phase of the Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) to foster entrepreneurial growth among aspiring business minds.

It was organised by CIT Kokrajhar collaboration with the Government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

The STIHUB focused on science, technology, and innovation-driven entrepreneurship, empowering individuals across various sectors. With a dedicated team, STIHUB aimed to create a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing training, mentorship, and support to aspiring business minds. This Entrepreneurship Development Programme has been designed to be conducted in multiple phases, ensuring long-term support for entrepreneurs in Koka-

jar and beyond. The five-day programme, held from February 27 to March 3, featured distinguished speakers, business leaders, and policymakers who shared valuable insights on entrepreneurship, technology, and financial empowerment. The inaugural session commenced with participants' registration and the felicitation of the Guest of Honour, Nishikant V. Deshpande, BoG chairman of CIT Kokrajhar, former director, NIT Silchar. The event was inaugurated with a ceremonial lighting of the lamp, followed by the felicitation of guest speakers. The programme's first session, led by Pratibha Das Hatibaruah, director at Flugelsoft, focused on leveraging social media for entrepreneurial success. Later in the day, Kalyanjit Hatibaruah, chairman of Flugelsoft Group and Angel Investor in Mumbai Angels, conducted an insightful session on utilizing Artificial Intelligence for business development. On



February 28, the agenda centered around agribusiness, with Rangan Bhuyan, Ex-Centre Head - IIPM (Ministry of Commerce, GOI Jorhat Centre & Consultation on Tea & Agri Business), discussing new avenues in tea and allied crops, while Simanta Goswami, Director of Training and Development of Veecap Eduventures Pvt Ltd, highlighted the leadership qualities essential for entrepreneurs. The third day of the program, March 1, featured discussions on the significance of Farmer Producer Organiza-

tions (FPOs) by Kuntal Purkayastha, District Development Manager (DDM), Kokrajhar, Assam, and an online session on technological innovations in farming with Parikshit Sai Sampat from Pranam Kisan. The fourth day, March 2, focused on financial literacy and sustainability. Priyanka Nahata, Associate Business Partner of Integriy Money Tree Pvt Ltd for Kokrajhar division, guided participants on savings and investment strategies for wealth creation, followed by the second session where

Dolly Bhasin from SmartEdge and CO-PI STIHUB delivered an online session on sustainable fashion in textiles, handloom, and the circular economy.

The final day, March 3, featured a session by Kankan J Khargoria, Project Manager at Ernst & Young LLP, Assam StartUp, Govt. of Assam, who elaborated on the Assam Startup Initiative and funding schemes for MSMEs and startups. A key highlight of the day was the presence of esteemed guest Madam Pami Brahma, Joint Secretary of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), engaged with participants, emphasizing BTC's future uptake on initiatives such as the 'Super 50 for Entrepreneurs' program. Additionally, Pranav Kumar Singh, principal investigator of STIHUB, delivered a brief yet impactful speech, emphasizing the crucial role of grassroots entrepreneurs in driving economic growth. He specifically highlighted the dedication of women

participants who remained actively engaged throughout the five-day program, acknowledging their perseverance and commitment to entrepreneurship. He commended their dedication to self-reliance and business development, reinforcing the importance of inclusive participation in economic progress. He expressed his gratitude to BTR Government, Esteemed Guests, Resource persons, participants, and organizing team for their invaluable support. The programme concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony followed by an exhibition showcasing entrepreneurial products allowing participants to network and explore market opportunities. The STIHUB team delivered closing remarks, reaffirming their commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the region. This Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) Phase I marked the beginning of a long-term initiative.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm -Abraham Lincoln

Trump throws a challenge

The US President Donald Trump has fired his missile on Europe, especially, France, UK and Germany by suspending arms aid to Ukraine after categorically making it clear that President Zelensky has to agree to the peace and security deal proposed by Trump on Friday in the White House meeting. The deal is still on the table and only this deal and not all those proposed by EU members at the Sunday meeting in London would be considered. The directive of Trump is not so much against Zelensky but more against the French President Emmanuel Macron and the British Prime Minister Keir Starmer who floated one month Ukraine truce plan in their meeting giving full backing to the Ukrainian president in his stand that Putin was not serious on peace and Trump was imposing Putin's plan on Ukraine. The EU countries agreed to increase their spending for Ukraine war. British Prime Minister already announced an immediate aid of US\$ one billion. Within 24 hours of this Sunday meeting of the European leaders led by the French president, Trump announced his halt to aid decision and made it clear that he did not care for any other formula. Simultaneously, in order to put pressure on Zelensky to surrender to Trump's peace and security draft including the minerals, the U.S. administration sources launched a campaign for the resignation of the Ukrainian president and his replacement by someone who would abide by the Trump formula.

Not only that, in order to create panic in European nations, the leading supporters of the MAGA group have launched a campaign for the withdrawal by the U.S. from NATO, the IMF and the World Bank. Elon Musk is leading the campaign and interestingly the secretary of the state Marco Rubio who is a senator from Florida and a long term protagonist of the anti-communist rich Cuban immigrants in Florida is behind the campaign. This is meant to hit the EU nations below the belt so that after doing away with all brave postures of taking a position in variance with Trump, they agree to his terms finally and let his peace plan work. According to Trump advisers plan, once an agreement is concluded with president Putin, Trump will direct his focus on China and arrange for a summit with the Chinese president latest by May this year. Trump advisers want the US President to get the Nobel Peace Prize at the end of this year. All these plans are getting delayed which the impatient U.S. President is not ready to tolerate.

Trump's think tank including the right wing Heritage Foundation are reported to have told him that if Trump sticks to his position on Ukrainian peace formula, European nations will be compelled to come around him because they are not prepared to carry the Ukraine war burden on their own. As a result, Trump is not caring at all for the views of the EU leaders. He is determined to prove this time that he is the leader of the free world, whether Europe wants to stay with him or not.

British Prime Minister's dangerous delusions on Trump and Ukraine

By: Ben Chacko

On the one hand, Keir Starmer hosts European and Canadian leaders for a summit on militarisation in response to the abrupt US policy shift on Ukraine. On the other Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu blocks all humanitarian aid to Gaza, threatening to derail the second phase of the fragile ceasefire.

Donald Trump's position on Gaza, calling for the ethnic cleansing of its whole population, has not been endorsed in European capitals. But nor has it bothered them enough for heads of government to race to Washington to beg him to change his mind. Peace in Ukraine is, apparently, a far greater threat than war in the Middle East.

Starmer and Macron's Washington visits failed. The British PM was an embarrassment in Washington, told "that's enough" by the US president even as he fawned on him by weaselling out of a question on Trump's threats to Canada.

But the sycophancy secured nothing, as Trump and Vice-President JD Vance's public humiliation of Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday showed. Even now, Starmer, like NATO secretary-general Mark Rutte, calls on Zelensky to "patch things up" with Trump. They delude themselves: the shift in US policy is not down to some personal falling out.

Washington wants an off-ramp from confrontation with Russia to concentrate on its global "peer competitor," China; it recognises that the Pacific, not the Atlantic, is now the global centre of gravity economically, and has demoted Europe in its hierarchy of geopolitical interests accordingly; and it appreciates, apparently rather better than EU or British leaders, that the war is being lost.

Vance was not the first to point out that Ukraine faces severe manpower problems and endemic draft-dodging, leading it to deploy press gangs to seize men for the front line on the streets. The less propagandistic parts of the British media, such as the Financial Times, have reported on this for

months. Starmer's inane pledges to supply Ukraine for "as long as it takes" ignore the fact that the longer the fighting goes on, the worse for Ukraine: one reason Ukrainians show majority support for talks in polls.

Having howled down all talk of negotiations for three years, a White House U-turn means Starmer is now in favour of talks too. But he deludes himself again believing that Europe, if it ramps up military spending (and NATO countries already account for 75 per cent of world military spending), will convince Trump to offer the very "security guarantees" he has repeatedly ruled out to a hazardous Franco-British deployment in Ukraine.

That this is about appeasing, not defying, Trump is clear since Starmer offers no quid pro quo for a US retreat from Europe. He does not suggest pulling back British warships helping US counterparts goad China in its coastal seas, or withdrawal from provocative Pacific commitments like the Aukus submarine pact.

If Britain "steps up" in Europe, it will be at the cost not only of our foreign aid budget but of social security and public services too. But it is more serious still to oppose British militarism because of its essential character. Britain is an imperialist country, involved in multiple acts of aggression against other countries from 1999 on, and has recently played a direct role in Israel's war on Gaza.

At the 2022 Trades Union Congress, an NEU delegate opposing increased arms spending pointed out that for all the lofty talk of defending Ukraine, British bombs would actually be used "to kill kids in Yemen."

The British state does not have a benevolent side determined to uphold national independence in Ukraine, and a malevolent one helping crush any prospect of that in Palestine.

It is part of a belligerent US-led alliance whose wars have cost millions of lives. If Trump is now disrupting that alliance, we should take the opportunity to seek real independence and pursue a peaceful foreign policy. (IPA Service)

Assam's lifeline: The essence of Clause Six

Assam, a state rich in cultural diversity and natural beauty, has long been a land of contrasts. Its history is marked by waves of migration, cultural assimilation, and struggles for identity. At the heart of Assam's quest to preserve its unique identity lies Clause Six of the Assam Accord, a provision that has become a symbol of hope and resilience for the Assamese people. This writup explores the essence of Clause Six, its historical roots, significance, and the challenges surrounding its implementation.

The Assam Movement (1979-1985) was a defining moment in the state's history. It was a mass uprising led by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) against the influx of illegal immigrants, primarily from Bangladesh. The movement was driven by the fear that unchecked migration was altering Assam's demographic fabric, threatening the cultural and linguistic identity of its indigenous population. After years of protests and negotiations, the Assam Accord was signed on August 15, 1985, between the Government of India, the Assam government, and the leaders of the Assam Movement. The Accord aimed to address the concerns of the indigenous population by detecting and deporting illegal immigrants and safeguarding their rights. Clause Six of the Accord emerged as a critical provision, promising constitutional, legislative, and administrative safeguards to protect

the cultural, social, and linguistic identity of the Assamese people.

Clause Six states: "Constitutional, legislative, and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve, and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity, and heritage of the Assamese people." This clause is not just a legal provision; it is a lifeline for the Assamese community, a promise to ensure that their identity remains intact in the face of demographic and cultural challenges. Assam's demographic composition is complex, with numerous indigenous communities, each with its own language, culture, and traditions. The Assamese language, while widely spoken, is not the mother tongue of all residents, making the preservation of linguistic identity a delicate issue. Clause Six seeks to address these complexities by providing a framework for safeguarding the rights of the indigenous population.

Despite its significance, Clause Six remained largely unimplemented for decades after the signing of the Assam Accord. The delay in its implementation became a source of frustration and disillusionment for the people of Assam. Various committees were formed over the years to define the "Assamese people" and recommend measures for safeguarding their rights, but none of their reports were acted upon. The issue gained renewed attention in 2019, following the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which sparked widespread protests

across Assam. The CAA, which grants citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, was seen as a direct threat to the Assamese identity, as it could lead to further demographic changes in the state. In response to the protests, the Government of India constituted a high-level committee in 2020 to recommend measures for the implementation of Clause Six. The committee, headed by Justice (Retd.) Bipul Kumar Sharma, submitted its report in February 2020, proposing a range of measures to protect the rights of the Assamese people.

These included reservations in legislative assemblies and local bodies, land rights, and cultural and linguistic safeguards. However, as of 2025, the recommendations of the committee have yet to be fully implemented, leaving the future of Clause Six in a state of uncertainty.

Clause Six is more than just a legal provision; it is a symbol of hope and resilience for the people of Assam. It represents their collective aspiration to preserve their identity in the face of external pressures and internal challenges. The clause acknowledges the historical injustices faced by the Assamese people and seeks to rectify them through constitutional and legislative measures. One of the key aspects of Clause Six is its focus on cultural and linguistic preservation. Assam is home to a rich tapestry of lan-

guages, including Assamese, Bodo, Mising, Karbi, and others. The clause aims to ensure that these languages are not overshadowed by dominant languages and that the cultural heritage of the state is protected for future generations. Another critical aspect of Clause Six is its emphasis on political representation. The clause seeks to ensure that the indigenous population has a fair share of political power, both at the state and local levels. This is particularly important in a state like Assam, where demographic changes have often

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

led to the marginalization of indigenous communities.

The implementation of Clause Six is not without its challenges. One of the most contentious issues is the definition of the "Assamese people." The term is often interpreted in different ways, with some arguing that it should include all indigenous communities of Assam, while others believe it should be limited to those who speak Assamese as their first language. This ambiguity has made it difficult to formulate policies that are inclusive and equitable. Another challenge is the balancing act between protecting the rights of the indigenous population and ensuring the rights of other communities. Assam is a diverse state, and any measure to safeguard the interests of one group must not come at the expense of another.

This requires a nuanced approach that takes into account the complexities of the state's demographic and cultural landscape. The delay in the implementation of Clause Six has also led to growing frustration among the people of Assam. Many feel that the promises made in the Assam Accord have been repeatedly broken, leading to a sense of betrayal. The lack of political will to address these issues has further exacerbated the situation, creating a trust deficit between the people and the government.

In conclusion, Clause Six of the Assam Accord is a vital provision that holds the key to preserving the cultural, social, and linguistic identity of the Assamese people. It is a testament to their resilience and determination to protect their heritage in the face of challenges. However, the delay in its implementation and the lack of clarity on key issues have left the future of Clause Six uncertain. For the people of Assam, Clause Six is not just a legal provision; it is a lifeline, a promise that must be fulfilled to ensure the survival of their identity and heritage. The time has come for the government to take concrete steps to implement Clause Six and address the long-standing grievances of the Assamese people. Only then can Assam truly move forward as a land of unity in diversity, where the rights and identities of all communities are respected and protected. (The writer is an Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-magazine SAMPROTIK)

Hopes for a truce between Kurdish militants and Türkiye brighten

By: Asad Mirza

It appears that one of the Middle East's most intractable conflicts might be nearing its end, and its ramifications will be felt far and wide, following the call for peace by PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. For half a century, Kurdish militants have fought Türkiye for independence in the southeast of the country, which has claimed more than 40,000 lives and has rippled beyond Türkiye's borders into Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

On Thursday last (27 February), Abdullah Öcalan, the jailed leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), called on its members to lay down arms and dissolve the group.

However, the call's success now hinges on sustained cooperation among the various parties involved, but political analysts are far from confident that the PKK militants, based in mountainous northern Iraq, will heed the appeal of Öcalan, who has been held in an island jail near Istanbul for a quarter of a century.

Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, called Öcalan's message the start of a new phase for peace efforts, although his government has publicly rebuffed suggestions that Öcalan's call could be followed by peace talks.

Analysts say that for now, Erdoğan, 71, is focused especially on the domestic political dividends that peace could bring as he looks to extend his two-decade rule beyond 2028 when his term expires.

The announcement created ripples across the Middle East, and may affect an array of Kur-



dish militia groups with long-held but varied ties to the PKK. The group, which is classified as a terrorist in Türkiye, the US, and the UK, called Öcalan's announcement part of "a new historic process" for the Middle East.

The group's executive committee also called for Öcalan to be freed from his island prison, to "personally direct" a meeting that would prompt them to lay down their weapons.

According to the New York Times, PKK launched an armed insurgency against the Turkish state in the early 1980s, originally seeking independence for the Kurds, who are believed to make up about 15% or more of Türkiye's population.

Initially the insurgency started from the mountains in eastern and southern Türkiye, PKK fighters attacked Turkish military bases and police stations, prompting harsh government responses. Later, the conflict spread to other parts of the country, with devastating PKK bombings in Turkish cities that killed many civilians.

In 1999, Türkiye captured Öcalan and convicted him of leading an armed terrorist group. He received a death sentence that was later commuted to life in prison. Since his incarceration, Öcalan has shifted its ideology away from secession and toward Kurdish rights inside Türkiye.

The Kurds are an ethnic group of roughly 40 million people concentrated in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Türkiye. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims.

The Kurds were promised a nation of their own by world powers after World War I, but that was never granted. There were Kurdish rebellions in various countries over the following generations, and Kurds have faced state suppression of their language and culture.

Since the 1991 Gulf War, the largely Kurdish northern region of Iraq has been semi-autonomous. Multiple efforts to freeze or end the Türkiye-PKK conflict have been made, starting with a ceasefire in 1993 and talks in 2009-11 and 2013-15. But all of them collapsed.

In this context, Dr Medhat Hamad, a professor of Iranian and Asian Studies at Tanta University in Egypt and head of the Farabi Centre for Political and Development Studies, told Türkiye's Hawar News that Abdullah Öcalan's announcement is of utmost importance, as it reveals a political, ideological, and even a new national self-review that he conducted after a thorough analysis of the entire global and regional scene.

This also reveals that there has been a genuine review in the Turkish political mindset that manages the affairs of the Turkish state on one hand, and the conflict with the Kurds in general and Öcalan in particular on the other hand. Therefore, Dr Hamad said, Öcalan would not have issued this statement unless he had Turkish assurances, promises, and commitments to open the space and provide a sound democratic life for the Kurds to achieve what they could not achieve through arms.

Dr Hamad explained that the PKK leader Öcalan has read between the lines regarding what the future holds for the Kurdish issue on one hand, and perhaps some Western plans, especially American ones, which could strike at the strategic and vital interests of both the Kurds and the Turks together in the coming years, extending what happened in Syria, and this is very important and extremely dangerous.

Dr Hamad said that Öcalan has a realistic understanding of the regional and international scene. He said, "Abdullah Öcalan perhaps wanted to save the future of the Kurdish cause, unlike some other political organisations, and he read the

scene well and he wanted to preserve the existence and essence of the Kurdish cause for the next hundred years."

Meanwhile, Türkiye's Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Erdogan's right-wing ally, has become a staunch supporter of the peace process and the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli, who started the new process after his unexpected call suggesting that Öcalan announce an end to the insurgency in exchange for the possibility of his release in October 2024, has welcomed the recent call.

Yet, restoring peace might not be that easy, the Washington Institute's Turkish research programme director Soner Cagaptay told Reuters that the PKK leaders holed up in the Qandil mountains of northern Iraq remain deeply suspicious of Ankara's intentions.

"Elderly commanders might also object to disbanding the PKK entirely or immediately without achieving any of its original goals - an outcome that could suggest they have thrown their lives away for nothing," he said.

The details of Öcalan's announcement were "purposefully shrouded in mystery, in part because Ankara's two previous dialogues with the PKK failed miserably", said Cagaptay.

Indeed, if Öcalan's followers heed the new call, it would mark a turning point for Türkiye and have far-reaching implications for the Middle East, as Erdogan looks to capitalise on the upheaval in Syria and military gains against the PKK fighters based in northern Iraq. (IPA Service)

IMF sees India's growth rate stagnant for the next five years

By: Dr. Gyan Pathak

India's growth rate has decelerated to four years low in 2024-25, and the quarter four performance of the economy would be key to achieve the projected 6.5 per cent of GDP growth rate. More serious concern lies ahead. Even International Monetary Fund (IMF) sees India's growth rate to remain stagnant at 6.5 per cent yearly until 2030. World Bank has said that to become a developed country by 2047, India will need an annual growth rate of 7.8 per cent. In the backdrop of such projections, India needs not only to work very hard but also a paradigm shift in its developmental policies.

The latest advance estimate of the National Statistics Office shows that country's GDP picked pace and grew by 6.2 per cent in October-December 2024 compared to only 5.6 per cent in July-September 2024. For the full financial year 2024-25, the GDP growth rate, as per the second advance estimates was seen marginally higher at 6.5 per cent as against 6.4 per cent as per the first advance estimates released in January 2025. Nevertheless, the growth will still be four years low. However, the key for achieving even 6.5 per cent growth rate will depend on the performance during January-March 2025. To achieve 6.5 per cent of growth rate in the current financial year, India will need a growth rate of 7.6 per cent in the last quarter.

It should be noted that India has revised its GDP growth rate for the year 2023-24 upward to 9.2 per cent from the earlier estimate of only 8.2 per cent. It was thus the second highest growth rate of India in the last 12 years. In 2021-22 India's growth rate was 9.7 per cent which was from a very low base of a negative growth of (-7.3 per cent.

The latest World Bank report released last week said

that India will need to expand at an average annual rate of 7.8 per cent in real terms to realise its goal of emerging as a developed country by 2047, but to happen this all growth engines, backed by a sustained reforms push, must perform more optimally. It says that departure from business as usual approach will now be required to emerge as a high-income country. It has projected a 6.7 per cent growth rate for India for the next two years through until 2026-27.

The recent consultation paper released by the IMF has though commended India's growth rate and said that the real GDP of the country is expected to grow at 6.5 per cent in 2024-25 and 2025-26, it has also included the downside risks too.

IMF says, "Risks to the economic outlook are tilted to the downside. Deepening geo-economic fragmentation could affect external demand, while deepening regional conflicts could result in oil price volatility, weighing on India's fiscal position. Domestically, the recovery in private consumption and investment may be weaker than expected if real incomes do not recover sufficiently. Weather shocks could adversely impact agricultural output, lifting food prices and weighing on the recovery in rural consumption."

On the upside, deeper implementation of structural reforms could boost private investment and employment, raising potential growth, it says, adding India's financial sector health, strengthened corporate balance sheets, and strong foundation in digital public infrastructure underscore India's potential for sustained medium-term growth and continued social welfare gains.

Executive Directors have stressed that in the face of headwinds from geo-economic fragmentation and slower

domestic demand, continued appropriate policies remain essential to maintain macroeconomic stability. India's strong economic performance provides an opportunity to advance critical and challenging structural reforms to realize India's ambition of becoming an advanced economy by 2047.

IMF's Macroeconomic Framework for India for 2020-21 to 2029-30, shows India's growth rate projections. The growth rate had been decelerating from 9.7 per cent in 2021-22. It decelerated to 7 per cent in 2022-23, and 8.2 per cent in 2023-24, which Government of India had revised it recently to 9.2 per cent. Then there is a sharp decline to projected growth rate of only 6.5 per cent for 2024-25. IMF's projection of India's growth remains the same until 2029-30.

IMF sees saving and investment as percentage of GDP to deteriorate over the year. The projected gross savings has been estimated at 32.7 per cent for the current financial year, which is likely to decline to 30.5 per cent. Gross investment would also decline from 33.6 per cent to 32.6 per cent during this period.

As for growth rate of merchandise export, the paper sees sharp rise from 0.4 per cent in 2024-25 to 4 per cent by 2029-30. However, it also sees sharp rise in merchandise imports from 6.2 per cent to 7.2 per cent during this period.

As for India's GDP is concerned, IMF has estimated it to be USD 3,843 billion in 2024-25. The paper has projected it to increase to USD 6,243 billion by 2029-30. It should be recalled that Modi government had claimed in 2018 that India would be \$5 trillion economy by 2025. It later claimed that the government would make India a \$10 trillion economy by 2030. However, India seems not on track to achieve this, it has miles to go. (IPA Service)

A woman chief minister of BJP in Delhi is welcome, but what about Reservation Bill?

By Harsh Bodwal

Rekha Gupta's appointment as the Chief Minister of Delhi marks a significant political moment, not just for the Bharatiya Janata Party ('BJP'), which has returned to power in the national capital after 27 years, but also for the broader discourse on women's representation in Indian politics. The decision to elevate Gupta to the state's top executive position came after eleven days of deliberation within the party's high command, eventually making her the fourth woman Chief Minister in Delhi's history, only the second to currently serve in the chief minister's position nationwide.

As she took the oath of office, in a grand ceremony at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan, accompanying Gupta were her six cabinet colleagues: Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, Ashish Sood, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Ravinder Indraj Singh, Kapil Mishra, and Pankaj Kumar Singh. Inconspicuously, they were all men. The optics of this moment vividly portrayed that while the appointment of a woman as Chief Minister was being celebrated as a step toward gender inclusivity, a closer look at the electoral landscape suggested otherwise.

The 2025 Delhi Assembly election, despite being fought largely on issues concerning women: ranging from safety to economic welfare, had strik-

ingly poor women's representation. Only 5 of Delhi's seventy seats were won by women - a mere 7.14 percent representation in the assembly. It gave us a sharp realist lens on the ineffectiveness of campaign narratives on women's empowerment and representation.

Among the five elected women in Delhi, four belong to the BJP: Rekha Gupta (Shalimar Bagh), Poonam Sharma (Wazirpur), Neelam Pahalwan (Najafgarh), and Shikha Roy (Greater Kailash). The sole woman legislator from the Aam Aadmi Party ('AAP') is Atishi, the former Chief Minister, who contested and won from the Kalkaji constituency.

Throughout the Delhi elections, all the major political parties aggressively tussled over wooing women voters. AAP, BJP, and the Congress all promised cash-transfer schemes targeted specifically at women.

AAP pledged ₹ 2,100 per month for women in Delhi, while both BJP and Congress went a step further, offering ₹ 2,500 per month if voted to power. This trend of competitive populism underscores the mistreatment of women within an electorate merely as a voting demographic, and not as stakeholders in electoral contests.

Despite rhetorical commitments to women's welfare, each of the parties were reluctant to field women as candidates. BJP, which contested 68 seats, allocated only 8 tickets to women, a



meagre 11.76 percent. AAP, contesting all 70 seats, nominated just 9 women (12.85 percent), while Congress also fielded just 9 women candidates. These figures clearly depict patriarchal arrangements within party structures, where women are continued to be considered political liabilities.

The distribution of women candidates across constituencies is also revealing. In 21 of Delhi's seventy seats, which is thirty percent of the total, there was not a single woman candidate, neither party affiliated nor independent. Across twenty constituencies, only one woman contested and one won. This systemic exclusion from political competition raises serious concerns about the structural barriers that

continue to limit women's access to legislative and executive roles. This consistent underrepresentation of women in candidate selection provides a broader reflection of the inherent patriarchy of political institutions in the country.

Nearing the close of his second term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his cabinet passed the Women's Reservation Bill, a landmark legislation aimed at reserving one-third of seats in the Parliament, state assemblies, and the Delhi Assembly for women. The bill presented the opportunity for a historic shift toward gender parity in Indian politics, with both the BJP and Congress initially competing to claim credit for initiating this long-overdue

reform. But, the firm belief in its immediate implementation remains absent. The electoral outcomes following its passage reveal the gap between legislative promises and political action.

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections, held after the bill's passage, saw only 74 women elected to the 18th Lok Sabha—just 13.6 percent of the total seats. This marked a decline from the 17th Lok Sabha, where women occupied 14.4 percent of seats. This number falls significantly short of the promised 33 percent quota, which will only come into effect after the next delimitation exercise, making its actual implementation uncertain in the near future. If major political parties were truly committed to women's representation, they would have proactively increased the number of women candidates in both national and state elections—including Delhi.

In the 17th Lok Sabha proceedings, two Members of Parliament (Asaduddin Owaisi and Imtiaz Jaleel from AIMIM) voted against the Women's Reservation Bill, due to the lack of OBC sub-categorisation in the bill. Owaisi argued that the bill, inevitably, would only set aside seats for Savarna women, while women from backward classes and Muslim communities would not benefit under any quota.

The Delhi Assembly elections perfectly exemplified this concern. None of the five elected women to the Delhi

assembly belonged to a marginalised or minority community. There was no woman victor in any of the twelve seats reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates.

Thus, as the Delhi Assembly elections have demonstrated, major political parties continue to struggle with actively considering and presenting women as viable electoral candidates. When they are elected, there is no representation from marginalised communities.

Legally, the promise of a 33 percent reservation for women is now embedded within the constitutional framework, but the timing of its implementation remains uncertain, tied to the yet-to-be-determined delimitation process. The effectiveness of the law will ultimately depend on political will—whether parties genuinely commit to ensuring representation beyond tokenism. Unless systemic barriers such as internal party biases, financial constraints, and patriarchal gatekeeping are addressed, women's political participation will remain largely symbolic.

For gender parity in Indian politics to transition from law to life, it would be essential to improve women's qualitative representation in electoral politics - by candidate selection processes, actively promoting women in leadership roles, and ensuring that marginalised women are not excluded from the structures of power. (IPA Service)

Effective methods for facial hair removal

By: Shahnaz Husain

All women have light coloured body and facial hair, but some of it is thicker and grows faster than others. Generally, around 10% of women battle the problem of extensive, coarse and dark facial hair growth.

The unwanted hair growth in females is mainly caused due to hormonal or genetic disorder, stress, prescription drugs, higher than normal levels of male hormones in the body or a combination of various such factors.

Every woman wants to look beautiful, soft and smooth without any dark hair on face or other parts of body skin. The various products available in the market to get rid of thick facial hair can be expensive and irritate skin due to harsh chemicals.

There are many easy and safe methods to remove facial hairs though it

growth over a period of time.

Mix a tablespoon of honey, lemon juice each with five tablespoons of potato juice. Meanwhile, grind the lentils (soaked overnight) to a smooth paste. Add all the ingredients and apply the mixture for about 20 minutes on the affected area. Wash it off once it is completely dry. This paste makes a thin crust that helps in hair removal. Plus, potatoes help in bleaching the hair, making them less visible.

An effective and common facial hair removal method is threading. It is useful for shaping the eyebrows and also for removal of facial hair on areas like the upper lip and chin. There may be slight redness after threading, which reduces in a day. It is a popular method of hair removal. Tweezing is another method, where one hair is removed at a time. It is a suitable method for shaping the eyebrows, or to remove solitary hairs from the chin area, or eyebrows. However, a word of caution - hair from a mole must not be removed without consulting a doctor.

Waxing can also be used for facial hair removal. Soft, strip waxing is useful. Roll on waxing kits are also available. It is said to be a breakthrough technology that may be used for facial hair. It is becoming popular as it is easy to use

and also more hygienic. The results are also said to be longer lasting. This relatively new method has a roll-on applicator, which is placed in a device that heats the product, but at a low temperature. It is then rolled on the area and removed with a strip. It is said to be useful in removal of short facial hair.

Hair removal by laser is becoming increasingly popular as a permanent method. Laser produces an intense beam of light, which is absorbed by the hair follicles. The laser disables the hair follicle's ability to produce hair. The heat produced by the laser light is controlled by the operator. A strong laser light leads to more heat. That is why cooling devices are used to prevent damage to the rest of the skin. The advantage of a laser is that the laser light can scan broader areas. Therefore, fewer sessions may be required. It should be done under supervision of a doctor. The temporary known side effects are redness, swelling and itching. The main risk in laser treatment is the possibility of skin burns, due to excessive heat of the laser light. Regrowth occurs in some cases, but is slower and scantier. It is very important to find a good laser clinic. So, before choosing the clinic, it is essential to find out its reputation, by making enquiries and talking to people who have been through the treatment. It is an expensive procedure and one should also discuss the approximate number of sessions that may be needed.

Laser can be used to remove hair from the entire face, or from particular areas, like upper lips, chin or cheeks. The time taken for the actual treatment is not much. As re-growth may occur, one may have to repeat the treatment after four or five months. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)

A New Era or a Political Token? Rekha Gupta and the legacy of women CMs in Delhi

By: Dipak Kurmi

The appointment of first-time MLA Rekha Gupta as the Chief Minister of Delhi has not only been a surprising political move but has also reignited discussions on the role of women in Indian politics. With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) presenting this decision as a testament to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on 'Nari Shakti' (women's empowerment), the elevation of Rekha Gupta is being positioned as both a reward for female voters and a symbolic stride toward greater gender representation in governance. However, this decision also highlights the broader and more complex landscape of women in Indian politics—one where gender representation remains scarce and dynastic politics continues to dominate.

The Dismal Reality of Women's Representation

Despite comprising nearly 50% of the voting population, women remain significantly underrepresented in Indian politics, particularly in leadership positions. Rekha Gupta is only the second woman CM from the BJP since 2014, after Anandiben Patel in Gujarat, and currently the only woman heading a government among the 20 BJP/NDAs-ruled states and Union Territories. This dismal record stands in contrast to India's early strides in women's political leadership, exemplified by Indira Gandhi's rise as Prime Minister in 1966—a milestone that predated similar advancements in many Western democracies. Yet,

over the decades, the broader narrative of women in power has remained largely limited to elite, anglicized figures with privileged access to political corridors, rather than an inclusive representation across socioeconomic classes.

The Political Transformation of Women Leaders

While gender has played a significant role in shaping political narratives, it has often been intertwined with dynastic politics. A cursory look at the women MLAs and MPs in India reveals a disproportionately high number of dynastic politicians, suggesting that working-class women still struggle for equitable access to political power. Nevertheless, women leaders who have managed to break through the ranks have left an indelible mark on India's political landscape.

Sheila Dikshit's tenure as Delhi's longest-serving Chief Minister remains a testament to the transformative potential of women leaders. When Sonia Gandhi took over the Congress presidency in 1998, she was in desperate need of a strategy to restore confidence within the party, which had suffered electoral setbacks under Sitaram Kesri. The Delhi Congress unit was in disarray, and choosing Sheila Dikshit as the CM candidate was a bold move. Her governance—centered on urban development, infrastructure expansion, and public welfare—reshaped Delhi into a modern metropolis. She successfully led Congress to three consecutive victories, only to be unseated in 2013 by the rise of Arvind Ke-

jriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

Similarly, Sushma Swaraj's brief tenure as Delhi's CM in 1998 was marked by the BJP's efforts to regain political ground, though she was unable to withstand the political wave driven by soaring onion prices and Sheila Dikshit's middle-class appeal. Later, Atishi's elevation within AAP signaled another attempt to capitalize on women's representation, but her political ascent was overshadowed by Kejriwal's dominance within the party. These instances illustrate a recurring pattern—women leaders being positioned strategically but often lacking full autonomy to shape political trajectories.

Rekha Gupta's Challenge: Symbolism or Substance?

Rekha Gupta's rise to the position of CM, despite her being a first-time MLA, raises pertinent questions about whether this move is purely symbolic or whether she can carve a substantive leadership legacy. Her appointment undoubtedly strengthens the BJP's narrative on women's empowerment, but the real challenge lies in governance. She inherits a city grappling with severe pollution, an ailing Yamuna River, and growing infrastructural demands. Unlike Sheila Dikshit, who had the advantage of a strong political foundation and administrative experience, Rekha Gupta faces the daunting task of establishing credibility while contending with Delhi's deeply entrenched political battles.

Her trajectory could follow multiple paths. She might struggle,

much like Sushma Swaraj and Atishi, whose leadership was either too short-lived or overshadowed by party hierarchies. Alternatively, she could emerge as a transformative figure akin to Sheila Dikshit, proving that her appointment was not just a political maneuver but a genuine effort to foster competent female leadership in Indian politics.

The Road Ahead: Breaking the Glass Ceiling

Despite India's historical precedence in electing women to powerful positions, systemic barriers remain firmly in place. Women in politics still battle structural inequalities, tokenism, and the challenge of breaking free from the shadows of male political heavyweights. The key to lasting change lies in moving beyond mere symbolic appointments and fostering an environment where competent female leaders have genuine agency and decision-making power.

For Rekha Gupta, the challenge is clear—will she be remembered as a mere political placeholder, or will she rise to leave a legacy akin to Sheila Dikshit? The answer will not be determined by her gender alone but by the policies she implements, the governance she delivers, and the trust she builds with Delhi's citizens. In a political landscape still dominated by men, her tenure will serve as a litmus test for whether India is truly ready to embrace more women in positions of power beyond just optics and electoral convenience. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)



may take some time to show results. Natural treatments are best remedies in removing unwanted facial hairs. Coarse and thick growth of hair, especially on the face, presents quite a problem, where beauty is concerned. All women are troubled by it, because it detracts from femininity.

Where removal of facial hair is concerned, it falls into two categories - temporary and permanent. The method should be chosen according to the quantity or thickness of hair, its location and rate of growth. It is also essential to get information about the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods. Temporary hair removal, as the term suggests, requires repeat treatments, as and when there is re-growth. Methods such as depilation, shaving, tweezing, threading, waxing, epilation, come under the temporary category. Several hair removal creams are available, which contain chemical ingredients to dissolve hair. However, chemical hair removal creams can sometimes cause skin discoloration (dark patches) and should preferably be avoided on the face, especially on the "upper lip" area, which is particularly sensitive. Needless to say, a hair removing cream should be patch-tested before use. This is done by applying it on the inner arm. If there is a reaction within 10 to 15 minutes, it should not be used.

Home remedies do not remove hair, but may lessen growth over a period of time. Make a thick paste of sugar, lemon juice and water and apply it in the direction of hair growth. Wash off when it dries. Apply it once or twice a week. Or, 3 teaspoons of powdered barley can be mixed with one teaspoon cold milk and 2 to 3 teaspoons lemon juice. Apply and leave on for 20 minutes and then rinse off with water. Do this two to three times a week. It is said to discourage hair

An important change in education is the increasing number of women teachers

By: Priyanka Saurabh

According to the UDISE+ 2023-24 report, women now comprise 53.34 percent of Indian school teachers, reflecting their growing role in education. In higher education, only 43% of faculty are women, with their representation in leadership roles even lower. Gender equality in academia is still hindered by ingrained biases, professional barriers, and institutional constraints. Increasing the percentage of women in India's teaching workforce represents a paradigm shift in the quality of education, inclusiveness, and social equality. Gender biases in pedagogy are challenged, inclusive education is promoted, and female teachers increase the number of female students. To ensure wider student participation, female teachers encourage greater classroom participation and gender-sensitive teaching. According to a 2022 UNESCO report, inclusive participation is 20% higher in classrooms run by women. By addressing social barriers and safety concerns, the presence of female teachers enhances educational opportunities for girls. The increase in the number of female teachers led to a significant increase in female enrollment in Bihar's Kanya Uththan Yojana. By normalizing conversations about gender roles, child marriage, and menstrual hygiene, female teachers promote equality. Under the Udaan scheme, adolescent girls are encouraged to seek guidance from female teachers. Female teachers are more likely to provide emotional support, improving student well-being.

Significant gender disparities in higher education faculty positions are due to the low representation of female faculty members. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education, despite a higher number of men holding teaching positions, women constitute only 43% of higher education faculty. Women faculty representation in IITs and NITs is still less than 20%, reflecting gender disparities in elite universities. Women's role in academic leadership is limited to the associate professor and profes-

sor level, where their percentage drops sharply. Less than 25% of full professors in public universities are women, which limits their ability to influence decisions. Less than 10% of vice-chancellors in India's top 50 universities are women. Due to socio-cultural barriers, women's participation is higher in southern states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, while it is lower in rural and north Indian universities. More than half of the professors in Kerala's public universities are women, while the percentage is less than 30% in Bihar and Rajasthan. Women are less likely to take up leadership roles due to unconscious biases in appointments and promotions. Academic women often lack the mentorship and strong professional networks necessary for research opportunities and career advancement. Many women take career breaks due to the dual responsibility of household chores, which impacts their advancement and research prospects.

Ensuring equal career advancement opportunities, establishing gender quotas, ensuring fairness of selection committees, and implementing clear promotion standards by mandating 40 percent female representation on academic appointment committees, Germany's DFG program encourages more women to enroll in higher education. Increasing women in academia's access to mentorship and networking opportunities: Establishing formal mentorship programs to connect female faculty members with senior academics, advising on funding opportunities, research, and leadership development. As evidence of the value of focused mentorship and support networks, the US "Women in Science and Engineering" program has been instrumental in increasing the number of women in leadership roles. Promoting work-life balance, providing on-campus child care services, increasing paid maternity leave, and implementing flexible tenure paths helps female faculty members continue their research careers by providing a one-year tenure extension after maternity. Providing special funding to improve the

administrative and academic visibility of women and running leadership development courses for them, India's "Women Scientists Scheme" helps women researchers return to academia after a career break by providing funding. Women make up only 43% of higher education faculty, limiting their influence outside the classroom. The percentage of women faculty in IITs and IIMs is less than 20%.

UGC's Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) program encourages women faculty to take up leadership positions. Establish equal pay guidelines, enforce labor laws more stringently, and regularize contract teachers. Strong enforcement of the Equal Remuneration Act 1976 is essential in private education. Improve campus safety protocols, transport options, and grievance procedures. The establishment of women's safety measures in educational institutions has been funded by the Nirbhaya Fund (2013). A gender-balanced teaching staff will reduce feminization in early education and normalize caregiving responsibilities. In early childhood education, Finland and Sweden aggressively encourage the recruitment of men. Establish anonymous grievance redressal procedures, ensure that internal complaints committees (ICCs) are functional, and implement stringent anti-harassment policies in all universities. ICCs are mandatory in universities as per the UGC's 2023 directive; however, there are still gaps in implementation, especially in smaller and rural institutions. Strong mentoring programs, inclusive hiring practices, institutional change, and multi-pronged strategies are needed to reduce the gender gap in academia. Promoting family-friendly workplaces, guaranteeing transparent promotions, and strengthening anti-discrimination laws can help empower women in higher education. A paradigm shift toward gender-sensitive, merit-based policies will improve representation and strengthen India's economy. (The author is a Research Scholar in Political Science, poet, freelance journalist, and columnist)

I do not need to describe the grave nature of the threats that we face, von der Leyen

EU ponders 800 billion euro plan to beef up defences to counter possible US disengagement

BRUSSELS, March 4: The chief of the European Union's executive on Tuesday proposed an 800 billion-euro (USD 841 billion) plan to beef up the defences of EU nations, aiming to lessen the impact of potential US disengagement and provide Ukraine with military muscle to negotiate with Russia following the freeze of US aid to the embattled nation.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the massive "REARM Europe" package will be put to the 27 EU leaders. They are holding an emergency meeting in Brussels on Thursday following a week of increasing political uncertainty from Washington, where President Donald Trump questioned both his alliance to the continent and the defence of Ukraine.

"I do not need to describe the grave nature of the threats that we face," von der Leyen said. Her plan had already been in the works before Trump's decision early Tuesday to pause military aid to Ukraine. Key to the quandary of EU nations has been an unwillingness to spend much on defence over the past decades as they hid under the US nuclear umbrella and were hurt by a sluggish economy, which creates challenges for a quick ramp-up of such spending.

It increasingly has left them on the world's diplomatic sidelines.

How it would work

Most of the money Von der Leyen is talking about, would come from loosening the fiscal constraints the EU puts on budgetary spending to "allow member states to significantly increase their defense expenditures without triggering" punishing rules aimed at keeping deficits from going too far into the red.

It would help member states to spend on defense without being forced to cut into social spending purely to keep within EU rules.

"So if member states would increase their defense spending by 1.5 per cent of GDP on average, this could create fiscal space of close to 650 billion euros (USD 683 billion) over a period of four years," von der Leyen said.

This would be topped up by a loans programme, controversially backed by the common EU budget, of 150 billion euros (USD 157 billion) to allow member states to invest in defence.

She said military equipment that needs to be improved includes air and missile defence, artillery systems, missiles and ammunition, drones and anti-drone systems and cyber preparedness.

Such a plan will force many EU member states to greatly increase their military spending, which is still below 2 per cent of gross domestic product. NATO Secretary-



General Mark Rutte has told the member states they need to move to more than 3 per cent as quickly as possible. The plan will now be the blueprint for Thursday's summit, although immediate decisions beyond strong commitments were unlikely.

Von der Leyen hopes her plan will aid Ukraine

Von der Leyen said her plan would also help Ukraine as it struggles now, especially with any joint purchase of military materiel. "With this equipment, member states can massively step up their support to Ukraine," she said.

Such measures are all the more essential since President Donald Trump directed a "pause" to US assistance to Ukraine as he seeks

to pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to engage in negotiations to end the war with Russia.

In sharp contrast, the EU has always said that it wants Zelenskyy to negotiate from a position of strength, necessitating more arms for Kyiv, rather than less.

Washington's move came just days after a disastrous Oval Office meeting in which Trump tore into Zelenskyy for what he perceived as insufficient gratitude for the more than USD 180 billion the US has appropriated for military aid and other assistance to Kyiv since the start of Russia's invasion on February 24, 2022.

In Europe, Trump's move was also seen as yet more proof it could

no longer count on the trans-Atlantic alliance that has been the bedrock of geopolitics since World War II.

"Some of our fundamental assumptions are being undermined to their very core," von der Leyen wrote to EU leaders ahead of Thursday's summit. "The pace of change is disconcerting and increasingly alarming."

EU leaders hope Hungary won't scuttle agreement.

Within the EU, unanimity is often necessary for agreements on international affairs and Ukraine, and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has often kept the 26 other member states back.

Over the weekend, Orbán already indicated in a letter that he would oppose draft conclusions that centre on the defence of Ukraine and its place at the negotiating table. But summit host and EU Council President Antonio Costa is hopeful that on common defense, Orbán will not play the spoiler.

In a letter to Budapest, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, Costa wrote that "Regarding European defence, I welcome the fact that no objections are raised in your letter. There appears to be broad agreement on the need for Europe to become more sovereign, more capable and better equipped." (AP)

China seeks to scale up ties with EU amid Zelenskyy-Trump row over Ukraine

BEIJING, March 4: China seeks to scale up its ties with the European Union following the deepening divide between the US and the EU over ending the Ukraine war, particularly after President Donald Trump's stormy meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

China is willing to work with the 27-member EU against unilateralism, Lou Qinjian, the spokesperson of China's parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC), told a media briefing here on Tuesday.

"Over the past 50 years, facts have proven again and again that there are no fundamental clashes of interest or geopolitical conflicts between China and Europe; rather, they are partners that contribute to each other's success," Lou said.

China wants to scale up its ties with the EU, which it regards as a lucrative market for Chinese products, particularly its AI-compatible e-vehicles and batteries.

The EU has clamped hefty tariffs on Chinese e-vehicles to protect the indigenous models.

China is also looking to cash in on the sharp turnaround in strategic alliances after the recent disastrous meeting between Zelenskyy and Trump, casting a shadow over the close US-EU ties.

The EU leaders rallied behind

Zelenskyy after his tempestuous meeting with Trump, following which he was asked to leave the White House.

The meeting videos were played up heavily by the state-run Chinese media outlets. "China-Europe relations are not targeted at, dependent on, nor subject to any third party," Lou said in a veiled reference to the US-EU ties. The Trump-Zelenskyy fallout was a tricky moment for China as while pressuring Ukraine to settle for ending the war, the US President is also warming up to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, a close ally of Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

There is lingering concern in Beijing over the emerging rapprochement between Trump and Putin over ending the Ukraine war.

Xi and Putin share a close alliance built over the years to ward off threats from the US and its allies. On March 1, Putin dispatched his top security official Sergei Shoigu to Beijing to brief Xi about Moscow's current talks with Washington to end the Ukraine war.

In his talk with Shoigu, Xi has underlined the need to carry on the core spirit governing China-Russia relations in the new era featuring lasting good-neighbourliness, comprehensive strategic coordination, and mutually beneficial cooperation for win-win results. (PTI)

Ukrainians wake up to Trump's pause on all military aid

KYIV, March 4: Ukrainians woke up on Tuesday to news that the Trump administration has paused military aid for their fight against Russia's invasion, days after a disastrous Oval Office row that has deepened a rift between Kyiv and the White House.

US President Donald Trump directed the US to pause all assistance to Ukraine as he seeks to pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to engage in peace talks with Russia.

The decision appears to halt arms deliveries approved under the Biden administration, but it was not clear whether deliveries of ammunition for weapons systems already in Ukraine would be affected.

"I feel betrayed, but this feeling is not really deep for some reason. I was expecting something like that from Trump's side," said a Ukrainian soldier fighting in Russia's Kursk region, where Ukraine launched a daring military incursion in August 2024 to improve its hand in negotiations.

The soldier spoke on condition of anonymity to speak freely about his thoughts as he was not authorised to speak to the press.

Other said the move has left even greater confusion about Donald Trump's intentions.

"The problem is that it's unclear what Trump wants and what the purpose of his actions is," said Oleksandr Merezhko, Ukrainian lawmaker and chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

"As of today, it appears that he is increasingly siding with Russia and trying to pressure Ukraine into accepting Russia's demands."

"This looks terrible — forcing the weaker side to accept the terms of the stronger aggressor," he told The Associated Press.

Kyiv has feared the possibility of aid being stopped to Ukraine ever since Trump took office, and the US-Ukraine relationship has taken a downturn in recent weeks as Trump's team launched bilateral talks with Russia over the war in Ukraine and Trump's demeanour toward Zelenskyy has become increasingly dismissive.

Russia's state RIA Novosti news agency quoted Andrei Kartapolov, a retired general who chairs the defence committee in the lower house of Russian parliament, predicting that Ukraine would exhaust its current ammunition reserves within months. "We need to keep up the pressure and continue to target their bases and depots with long-range precision weapons to destroy the stockpiles," he said.

Trump said on Monday that he is still interested in signing a deal that would hand over a share of Ukraine's minerals to the United States, an agreement that Zelenskyy has also said he is ready to sign. "By abruptly halting military assistance to Ukraine, President Trump is hanging Ukrainians out to dry and giving Russia the green light to continue marching west," said Razom for Ukraine, a Ukrainian advocacy group.

"Razom for Ukraine urges the White House to immediately reverse course, resume military aid and pressure Putin to end his horrific invasion." (AP)

US tariffs on Canada, Mexico take effect as China takes aim at US farm exports

WASHINGTON, March 4: President Donald Trump's long-threatened tariffs against Canada and Mexico went into effect Tuesday, putting global markets on edge and setting up costly retaliations by the United States' North American allies.

Starting just past midnight, imports from Canada and Mexico are now to be taxed at 25 per cent, with Canadian energy products subject to 10 per cent import duties.

The 10 per cent tariff that Trump placed on Chinese imports in February was doubled to 20 per cent, and Beijing retaliated Tuesday with tariffs of up to 15 per cent on a wide array of US farm exports.

It also expanded the number of US companies subject to export controls and other restrictions by about two dozen.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his country would slap tariffs on more than USD 100 billion of American goods over the course of 21 days. Mexico didn't immediately detail any retaliatory measures.

The US president's moves raised fears of higher inflation and the prospect of a devastating trade war even as he promised the American public that taxes on imports are the easiest path to national prosperity. He has shown a willingness to buck the warnings of mainstream economists and put his own public approval on the line, believing that tariffs can fix what ails the country.

"It's a very powerful weapon that politicians haven't used because they were either dishonest, stupid or paid off in some other form," Trump said Monday at the White House. "And now we're using them."

The Canada and Mexico tariffs were supposed to begin in February, but Trump agreed to a 30-day suspension to negotiate further with the two largest US trading partners.

The stated reason for the tariffs is to address drug trafficking and illegal immigration, and both countries say they've made progress on those issues. But Trump has also said the tariffs will only come down if the US trade imbalance closes, a process unlikely to be settled on a political timeline.

The tariffs may be short-lived if the US economy suffers. But Trump could also impose more tariffs on the European Union, India, computer chips, autos and pharmaceutical drugs.

The American president has injected a disorienting volatility into the world economy, leaving it off balance as people wonder what he'll do next.



"It's chaotic, especially compared to the way we saw tariffs rolled out in the first (Trump) administration," said Michael House, co-chair of the international trade practice at the Perkins Coie law firm. "It's unpredictable. We don't know, in fact, what the president will do."

Democratic lawmakers were quick to criticize the tariffs, and even some Republican senators raised alarms.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she's "very concerned" about the tariffs going into effect because of her state's proximity to Canada.

"Maine and Canada's economy are integrated," Collins said, explaining that much of the state's lobsters and blueberries are processed in Canada and then sent back to the US.

The world economy is now caught in the fog of what appears to be a trade war.

Even after Trump announced Monday that the tariffs were going forward, Canadian officials were still in touch with their US counterparts.

"The dialogue will continue, but we are ready to respond," Canadian Defence Minister Bill Blair said in Ottawa as he went into a special Cabinet meeting on US-Canada relations. "There are still discussions taking place."

Shortly after Blair spoke, Trudeau said Canada would impose 25 per cent tariffs on USD 155 billion Canadian (USD 107 billion US) worth of American goods, starting with tariffs on USD 30 billion Canadian (USD 21 billion US) worth of goods immediately and on the remaining amount on American products in three weeks.

"Our tariffs will remain in place until the US trade action is withdrawn, and should US tariffs not cease, we are in active and ongoing discussions with provinces and territories to pursue several non-tariff measures," Trudeau said. (AP)

Economy, AI likely to be among top issues for China's legislature

BEIJING, March 4: Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence and shoring up the economy are among the issues expected to top the agenda when China's legislature meets Wednesday in Beijing.

Almost 2,900 delegates have arrived in Beijing for the annual session of the largely rubber-stamp parliament, the National People's Congress.

Concomitantly, an advisory body of business leaders, athletes and academics, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, convened Tuesday. The two bodies' concurrent meetings are known as the Two Sessions. The week-long parliamentary session, though largely ceremonial, helps to signal government priorities for the year.

Premier Li Qiang is expected to announce an economic growth target of around 5 per cent, in line with the past couple of years.

The meetings come as China's economy struggles with sluggish consumption, a lengthy property crisis, ballooning government debt and a possible renewed trade war with the United States. On Tuesday, Beijing announced additional tariffs of up to 15 per cent on imports on US farm products including chicken, pork, soy and beef. The move came in retaliation for an increase in flat US tariffs on Chinese products — from 10 per cent to 20 per cent — that came in effect at the same time.

"Undoubtedly, the adverse impacts brought by the external environment have deepened, and China's economy still faces some difficulties and challenges," said Lou Qinjian, spokesman for the National People's Congress in a news conference ahead of the session.

"Internationally, rising economic and political uncertainties make it harder to stabilise external demand. Domestically, demand is insufficient, and some enterprises are experiencing operational difficulties," he added.

The government is expected to announce some measures to boost consumption such as increasing the deficit ratio from 3 per cent to 4 per cent, though massive stimulus is unlikely.

Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence may also feature in policy announcements. Lou described China's breakthrough DeepSeek AI model, unveiled earlier this year, as an example of the country's "innovative and inclusive approach to technology." (AP)

Uber teams up with Waymo to start selling driverless rides in Austin, Texas

WASHINGTON, March 4: Uber will shift into a new gear in Austin, Texas, on Tuesday when its ride-hailing service will begin dispatching self-driving cars to pick up passengers.

The autonomous option is being provided through a partnership that brings together Uber and robotaxi pioneer Waymo, which already sells self-driving vehicle rides through its own app in Phoenix, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Waymo is now trying to expand into more cities by teaming up with Uber — an alliance that was announced last September.

The partnership begins in Austin and will, later this year, expand to offer robotaxi rides in Atlanta.

Waymo's robotaxis will be hitting the streets of Austin ahead of Tesla CEO Elon Musk's goal of launching a fleet of electric self-driving cars later this year.

Uber's network of human-driven cars will continue to give rides in Austin, too, but tapping into Waymo's robotaxis will give it another selling point that could be popular among passengers eager to try out a cutting-edge technology.

"With Waymo's technology and



Uber's proven platform, we're ready to bring you the ride of the future, today," Uber crowed about the robotaxis coming to Austin.

Although there is no way passengers can guarantee that a ride ordered through Uber's app in Austin will be provided by one of Waymo's robotaxis, they can increase their chances of getting a self-driven car by going into their settings and turning on the autonomous vehicle preference.

When it sends a Waymo car to pick up a passenger, Uber's app will send a notification that the ride



years ago, and was convicted for drunken driving. He had also been investigated for a hate speech offense on Facebook in 2018, for which he was fined, prosecutors said without giving further details.

Investigators are also looking into the possibility that the driver may suffer from psychological problems. Cars have been used as deadly weapons in several acts of violence in recent months in Germany. Police said earlier that "indications of a second perpetrator cannot be confirmed at this stage of the investigation". They said there was no more danger to the public.

Police spokesperson Stefan Wilhelm said a vehicle drove into people on Paradeplatz, a pedestrian street downtown, around noon, when workers come out for lunch-breaks. Local media reported a carnival market was taking place, meaning more visitors than usual in Mannheim, which has a population of 326,000. Mannheim University Hospital said they were treating three people, two adults and a child, dpa reported. The other wounded people were taken to different hospitals in the region.

Images from the scene showed parts of the downtown area cor-

doned off, with a heavy police presence. Officers gathered round a badly damaged black car.

Friedrich Merz, who likely will become Germany's next chancellor, wrote on X that "the incident — as well as the terrible acts of the past few months — is an urgent reminder that we must do everything we can to prevent such acts".

Outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz wrote on X that "we mourn with the families of the victims of a senseless act of violence".

Last month, a 2-year-old girl and her mother died two days after they were injured in a car-ramming attack on a union demonstration in Munich. A 24-year-old Afghan man who came to Germany as an asylum-seeker was arrested, and prosecutors said he appeared to have an Islamic extremist motive.

Last year, six people were killed and more than 200 injured when a car slammed into a Christmas market in the eastern city of Magdeburg. The suspect, who was arrested, is a 50-year-old doctor originally from Saudi Arabia who had expressed anti-Muslim views and support for the far-right, anti-immigrant Alternative For Germany party. (AP)

the Mountain View, California, company that owns Google as well as Waymo.

After expanding into Austin and Atlanta this year as part of the Uber partnership, Waymo also plans to begin offering rides in Miami next year through its own app, mirroring how it already runs its service in Phoenix, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Waymo, so far, has avoided a major traffic accident or other safety problems that might give regulators second thoughts about allowing its robotaxis to remain on the road.

Automaker General Motors tried to compete against Waymo in San Francisco with a robotaxi service operated by its Cruise subsidiary, but had its California license suspended in October 2023 after one of its self-driving cars dragged an injured pedestrian about 20 feet before coming to a stop.

Uber also struck a deal last year to eventually deploy Cruise's robotaxis in cities that were never identified before General Motors pulled the plug on its fleet of self-driving cars. (AP)

Allocates 75pc more in flagship scheme

Mizoram govt presents ₹15,198 cr budget



AIZAWL, March 4: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Tuesday presented a ₹ 15,198.76 crore budget for 2025-2026 and announced a 75 per cent increase in fund allocation for the flagship 'Bana Kaih' (Handholding) scheme, a financial assistance programme for farmers and small entrepreneurs.

He said the government will introduce a scheme from April to provide health insurance of up to ₹ 5 lakh cover per year to beneficiaries.

The chief minister, who also holds the finance portfolio, also presented supplementary demands for grants for the current fiscal (2024-25) amounting to ₹ 3,512.33 crore.

There was no proposal for levying new taxes in the budget.

Presenting the annual budget and supplementary demands in the assembly, Lalduhoma said the government gives priority to the state's flagship programme "Bana Kaih" scheme and allocated ₹ 350 crore for the 2025-26 fiscal, a 75 per cent increase from ₹ 200 crore earmarked in the current fiscal.

The Bana Kaih scheme was launched in September last year and aimed at providing financial assistance and support primarily to entrepreneurs

and farmers ("progress partners") through targeted programmes designed to promote economic growth and self-sufficiency.

One of the key components of the scheme is handholding to progress partners (beneficiaries), under which the government provides financial support and offers loans up to ₹ 50 lakh to beneficiaries through partner banks.

Under this scheme, the state government introduced support prices for key crops - ginger, turmeric, Mizo chilli and broomsticks.

Lalduhoma said that his government would continue to purchase the four agricultural crops from the farmers in the next financial year.

He said that the government also prioritise the health sector and will introduce a universal scheme from April to provide health insurance of up to ₹ 5 lakh cover per year to beneficiaries.

The CM said that ₹ 50 crore has been allocated for the implementation of the proposed scheme and other healthcare-related infrastructure.

In his second budget speech after the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) came to power in December 2023, Lalduhoma said that Mizoram aims to capitalise on the opportunities arising

from the country's rapid ascent and grow alongside the nation towards the goal of 'viksit Bharat' and 'viksit Mizoram'.

"The total amount projected under revenue receipt and capital receipt for the financial year 2025-2026 is ₹ 15,198.76 crore, out of which ₹ 2,616.33 crore is expected from the state's own tax revenues and non-tax revenues and ₹ 10,331.28 crore from the Centre in the forms of share of taxes, revenue deficit grant, CSS and other grants," Lalduhoma said.

He said that the revenue expenditure for 2025-26 is estimated at ₹ 12,540.20, which is 82.51 per cent of the total budget and 4.88 per cent higher than the current fiscal estimate of ₹ 1,1957 crore.

The total fund earmarked for capital expenditure is ₹ 2,658.56 crore and it accounts for 17.49 per cent of the total estimated expenditure with an 8.29 per cent increase as compared to the current fiscal estimate of ₹ 2,455 crore, he said.

While capital expenditure is meant mainly for the creation of assets and infrastructures for the public, enhancing productivity, employment generation and investment, the revenue expenditure

covers mainly salaries and wages, pension expenses, interest payments and power purchases, among others.

On the size of the state economy, Lalduhoma said that the GSDP is estimated to touch ₹ 36,088.82 crore during the next financial year against ₹ 34,003.27 crore in the 2024-25 fiscal.

He said that the government adopted a more realistic approach to calculate GSDP figures after recognising issues arising out of over-projected GSDP in the past.

With the new method of calculation, the GSDP for 2024-25 in Revised Estimate (RE) now stands at ₹ 34,003.27 crore, reflecting a ₹ 14,034.25 crore decrease from ₹ 48,037.52 crore Budget Estimate (BE), he said.

"Although there is a significant decline in the projected GSDP figure, it does not mean that the economy is stalled and the state economy is projected to grow at 10.21 per cent in the next financial year," Lalduhoma also told a press conference after presenting the budget.

He said that the government would prioritise projects and infrastructure development plans funded by the Centre, which require a low share by the state. (PTI)

NTPC provides ambulances, hearse vans to Mon dist hospital

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, March 4: The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) under its corporate social responsibility initiative provided two advanced life support ambulances and two hearse vans to district hospital Mon to enhance healthcare services in Nagaland's remote Mon district bordering Myanmar.

Mon DC Ajit Kumar Verma received the vehicles from the head of project, NTPC Bongaigaon, Arnab Maitra in an event held at the hospital on Tuesday, marking a milestone in the district's health infrastructure.

In his address, Verma said the longstanding necessity for hearse vans in the hospital will now enable dignified and respectful transportation of the deceased.

He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the NTPC team for their valuable contribution to the health sector in the district.

Maitra expressed his happiness for being part of this noble initiative.

Expressing deep appreciation to the NTPC for its role in uplifting healthcare facilities in the district, Mon chief medical officer Dr Supongmengla Walling acknowledged the relentless efforts of the district administration, especially the DC, whose networking skill played a crucial role in bringing this valuable assistance to the district.

Arunachal legislative assembly session from March 6

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, March 4: The fourth session of the eighth legislative assembly would begin from March 6 to 12.

Thereafter the budget for the current year will be placed on March 10, informed Speaker Tesam Pongte.

The Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly (APLA) Speaker Tesam Pongte while speaking to media informed that the session would begin on March 6 and the session would function as usually unlike other days.

While wishing a meaningful and suc-

cessful proceeding and session to the all the members, the Speaker said that the house would function till March 12, he said.

There will question hour, sort duration discussion, private member resolution, discussion on government bills, there shall be starred and unstirred question, he further said.

The speaker further said that members would have an important discussion related to strengthening the education department.

Referring to the Arunachal Pradesh

Freedom of Religious Act-1978 (APFRA), the Speaker informed that there was no such agenda finalized during the session.

"All the agendas with regards to Bills, questions and answers, private members resolution will take place from March 6 and on March 9 onward there will be discussion on the budget and it will be put for approval. There may be misconception and there is nothing about the APFRA to be tabled and discussion in the upcoming assembly," Speaker Tesam Pongte added.

Manipur Govt urged for discontinuation of re-engagement of retired government officials

IMPHAL, March 4: The Manipur Ex-MLA Welfare Association has urged the Manipur Governor for discontinuation of re-engagement of retired government officials in the state.

Drawing the attention of the Governor regarding the issue of re-employment/re-engagement of retired employees, association working president Dr Nimaichand Luwang, in a letter to the former on Monday, stated that the Manipur government Services Federation raised the issue with the Chief Secretary of the state requesting for a complete discontinuance of such re-employment practices.

The request of the federation was published in the media and it is now in the public domain, it informed.

As a matter of policy, it is understandable that re-engagement of retired officials may be done for certain selected and specialised persons, and that although re-employment may be made in general principle, they are typically governed by specific rules and regulations, the letter noted.

It maintained that these rules should aim at balancing the need for experienced personnel with the need to ensure fairness and prevent any potential conflicts of interest.

The letter emphasised that the re-engagement of retired government employees, while sometimes seen as a way to retain valuable expertise, does have several potential demerits like hindrance to youth em-

ployment, and can limit the opportunities for younger, potentially more innovative individuals to enter the workforce.

"This can lead to stagnation and a lack of fresh perspectives within government departments, and reduced opportunities for promotion," it said.

When retired employees are re-hired, it can limit the upward mobility of existing, younger employees and this can negatively impact morale and create a sense of unfairness and potential for stagnation, it reiterated. The overriding principle is that any extension or re-employment must demonstrably serve the public interest in specific conditions such as the lack of suitable successors, if there's a shortage of qualified personnel or if no suitable successor is readily available to take over the retiring officer's responsibilities, it maintained.

Extension, re-employment, re-engagement of the retired officials as currently being practiced in the government organisations in Manipur are rampant and arbitrary and have been done without any basis, the letter observed.

"It is a very clear example of corruption, bribery, embezzlement, fraud, influence peddling, nepotism, maladministration/mismanagement, abuse of power, lack of transparency, lack of accountability, obstruction of justice etc. It can be concluded as being in conflict to public interest," it further observed. (NNN)

15 days ultimatum to Arunachal govt



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, March 4: The All Arunachal Pradesh Workers Union (AAPWU) on Tuesday afternoon has served 16 days ultimatum to state government on their various 10 point charter of demand served to the state governmental on various occasions. The labour organisation has threatened to hit the streets if the government did not listen to their genuine grievances.

Speaking to newperson here at Arunachal Press Club (APC) in city on Tuesday afternoon, the AAPWU President Tadar Chai informed, "Time and again we have served several memorandum and representation to the state government but to no avail. The nature of our demands are very genuine and directly and indirectly related to life and security of the thousands of contingency and casual workers working in various department in Arunachal Pradesh."

Nagaland to take action against its employees engaged in private sector

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, March 4: The Nagaland government on Tuesday said the government employees engaging in private sector employment or trade, directly or indirectly, or found to be actively canvassing or promoting such trade without the prior approval/sanction of the appropriate authority, will be considered as violating the Nagaland Government Servants Conduct Rules, 1968, and will attract disciplinary action as per rules.

The personnel and administrative reforms department issued the notice following reports that several government employees are engaging in private sector employment.

The department also said it was also found

that the official government designations and the names of the employees are also being publicly advertised in print and social media promoting their association with private enterprises.

The department drew attention to Section 15(1) of the Nagaland Government Servants Conduct Rules, 1968, which states "no government servant, except with the previous sanction of the government, should engage in any trade or undertake any employment other than his public duties or carry on directly or indirectly any business or undertaking or use his position as a government servant to help such business or undertaking".

It added that the notice has been issued for strict compliance by all government employees.

Meghalaya identifies over 70,000 springsheds, 792 to be rejuvenated

SHILLONG, March 4: Over 70,000 springsheds have been identified of which 55,000 are mapped across Meghalaya and steps are being taken to rejuvenate 792 critical water bodies on a war footing.

Water related projects worth over ₹ 4000 crore are being implemented in the state.

This was informed by Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma while replying to a question raised by a VPP legislator from Mawryngkneng Heavingstone Khapran in the Assembly today.

"We have approximately 70,000 springsheds identified till now out of which 55,000 have been mapped and rejuvenation is ongoing," Sangma said.

"After study is being conducted, we found that 792 out of the 55,000 mapped springsheds are in a very critical phase (as water is completely dried up) and these are providing water sources to projects under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). Accordingly, the soil and water conservation has come up with a ₹ 32 crore project and 67 springshed will be rejuvenated at a war footing in order to bring back life to these springs," he added.

He informed that 1601 springshed have been constructed in the last five years at a cost of ₹ 46.62 crore under the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

"All the 1601 springshed are success stories in itself," Sangma said while informing that the village employment councils (VECs), people and the community are monitoring and looking after these different assets that have been created. (NNN)

IN THE COURT OF PRINCIPAL JUDGE FAMILY COURT DIMAPUR: NAGALAND SUMMON FOR SETTLEMENT OF ISSUE (ORDER-V, RULE-1,5,20)

CASE NO. Divorce 55/2024

PETITIONER Smti. Dipti Momin

RESPONDENT Shri. Rahul Basumatary

To,

Shri. Rahul Basumatary

S/o. Kashiram Basumatary

R/o. Loboghat, Kanaighat,

Near NLR Township, Dist- Golaghat 785699, Assam

Whereas the above named petitioner has instituted a case against you for U/S 13 (1) (i) a) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Court in person or by pleader duly instructed and able to answer all materials questions relating to the case on 28th April 2025 at 10: 30 AM without fail.

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the date mentioned the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Court, this 28th day of February 2025.

Sd/-
PRINCIPAL JUDGE
FAMILY COURT
DIMAPUR; NAGALAND

Forwarded to:-

1. The Plaintiff for Service
2. The defendants for Service
3.

No. DMCH/MRU/24- DENGUE-P/2025/1192

INTERVIEW NOTICE FOR RESEARCH SCIENTIST-B IN A MULTI-CENTRIC PROJECT UNDER MRU. DMCH

With reference to the advertisement number DMCH/MRU/24-09 Dated 16-01-2025 and corrigendum number DMCH/MRU/DENGUE-P/2025/181/1558 Dated 29-01-2025 is for the information of all concerned eligible candidates that the walk-in-interview/written test for recruitment of Research Scientist B on contractual basis for a Project posts under Multi-Disciplinary Research Unit, Diphu Medical College and Hospital is scheduled in the following date and Time as shown below. Further the list of accepted and rejected candidates are listed in the website of Diphu Medical College and Hospital, Diphu. Candidates are requested to bring all testimonials/certificates in original.

Sl. No.	Name of Posts	Date of Document Verification, Written Test and Interview	Reporting Time and Venue
1	Research Scientist - B	11-03-2025	9:15 AM Academic Block, Diphu Medical College and Hospital Candidates are advised to report to the venue in time.
Sd/- Principal-cum-chief-Superintendent Diphu Medical College and Hospital, Diphu			

Janasanyog /D/13234/ 24/5-Mar-25

No. TDB/15th FC/106/2024-25/1668

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NO- 17/2024-25

Date 04/03/2025

Sealed tenders with a validity period of 90 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 15th ASFC during the financial year 2024-25 and will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 2:00 PM on 25/03/2025 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	Construction of community toilet at Hablang Chowk Barbelbari under 15 th FC (Tied Grant) for the year 2023-24 during 2024-25	BTC/FC-Cell (15 th FC-T)-182/2024/ Pt-1/129, Dated: 20/11/2024	11,00,000/-	10,47,960/-	2% in case of Gen. and 1% in case of ST/SC	90 Days
2	Tamulpur Dev. Block	Construction of community toilet at Amayapur Chowk under 15 th FC (Tied Grant) for the year 2023-24 during 2024-25	BTC/FC-Cell (15 th FC-T)-182/2024/ Pt-1/130, Dated: 20/11/2024	11,00,000/-	10,47,960/-	2% in case of Gen. and 1% in case of ST/SC	90 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 03/03/2025 to 25/03/2025 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/2024-25/1570

HOLI SPECIAL TRAINS					
To clear extra rush during Holi 2025, it has been decided to run following TOD special trains. The details of the special trains are given below.					
Train No. 05633 Narangi-Gorakhpur Holi Special from 06-03-2025 to 27-03-2025 (Thursday) = 04 trips			Train No. 05634 Gorakhpur-Narangi Holi Special from 07-03-2025 to 28-03-2025 (Friday) = 04 trips		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	13:20	Narangi	23:10	---	
13:45	14:00	Guwahati	22:35	22:50	
15:05	15:10	Rangiya Jn.	20:10	20:15	
17:03	17:13	New Bongaigaon	18:10	18:20	
21:35	21:45	New Jalpaiguri	13:35	13:45	
01:20	01:30	Katihar	10:20	10:30	
07:15	07:20	Hajipur	01:32	01:37	
13:00	---	Gorakhpur Jn.	---	20:55	
Other Stoppages : Kamakhya, Kokrajhar, New Coochbehar, Aluabari Road, Kishanganj, Barsoi, Naugachia, Mansi Jn., Khagaria Jn., Begusarai, Barauni Jn., Sahapur Patoree, Sonpur, Chhapra Gramin, Chhapra, Siwan Jn. & Deoria Sadar.					
Composition : AC-2 tier (One), Sleeper class (Eighteen), General Second Class (Two), GSLR/D (Two)= 23 ICF Coaches.					
Train No. 05734 Katihar-Amritsar Holi Special from 06-03-2025 to 27-03-2025 (Thursday) = 04 trips			Train No. 05733 Amritsar-Katihar Holi Special from 08-03-2025 to 29-03-2025 (Saturday) = 04 trips		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	11:40	Katihar	15:00	---	
13:15	13:17	Mansi Jn.	11:17	11:19	
14:40	14:50	Barauni Jn.	10:05	10:15	
23:15	23:25	Gorakhpur	03:55	04:05	
04:15	04:25	Lucknow	22:10	22:20	
15:05	15:07	Muzaffarnagar	11:23	11:25	
00:10	---	Amritsar	---	04:20	
Other Stoppages : Naugachia, Thana Bihpur Jn., Khagaria Jn., Begusarai, Hajipur Jn., Sonpur, Chhapra Gramin, Chhapra, Siwan, Deoria Sadar, Basti, Gonda, Barabanki Jn., Kanpur Central, Etawah, Aligarh Jn., Khurja Jn., Hapur, Meerut City, Saharanpur Jn., Ambala Cantt, Sanahwal, Ludhiana, Jalandhar City & Beas.					
Composition : AC-2 tier (One), AC-3 tier (Three), Sleeper class (Five), Second Class (Four), LWLRM (One), LSLRD (One)= 15 LHB Coaches.					
General Manager (Operations), Maligaon					
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY					

EC's clarification on duplicate voter ID numbers a cover-up: TMC

NEW DELHI, March 4: The Trinamool Congress on Tuesday dismissed the Election Commission's clarifications on duplicate voter ID numbers as a "cover-up" and cited the poll panel's own guidelines to assert that two cards cannot have identical numbers.

The TMC on Monday called the duplication in EPIC (Electronic Electoral Photo Identity Card) numbers an "epic scam" and gave the poll panel a 24-hour deadline to "accept its mistake".

Party's Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale on Tuesday shared on X excerpts from the 'Handbook For Electoral Registration Officers' to counter the poll panel's clarifications on the issue, which was first raised by TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

"Yesterday, the All India Trinamool Congress had given Election Commission of India 24 hours to admit and accept their blunder on the duplicate voter ID fraud issue. Clearly, the ECI, which has been exposed, wants to brazen it out," Gokhale said.

"The 'clarification' given by ECI (on Sunday) in response to CM Mamata Banerjee is actually a cover-up. They have admitted there's something wrong but are re-



fusing to accept it. The false 'clarification' given by the ECI contradicts its own rules and guidelines," he said.

He said the process of issuing the photo ID cards is laid down in the ECI's 'Handbook For Electoral Registration Officers'.

While the EC said photo ID cards with the same numbers were issued to multiple voters due to certain states using the same "alphanumeric series", Gokhale shared excerpts from the handbook and said it was impossible to do so as the Functional Unique Serial Numbers (FUSN) are different for every Assembly constituency.

"EPIC card numbers are an alphanumeric sequence of three letters and seven digits. The ECI handbook clearly states that the three letters, known as a Functional

Unique Serial Number (FUSN), are different for every Assembly constituency," he said.

"Therefore, it is impossible for voters in two different assembly constituencies (even in the same state) to have the same first 3 letters on their EPIC. How is it then that the same EPIC numbers as voters in West Bengal have been allotted to random people in Haryana, Gujarat, and other states?" he said.

Countering the EC's clarification that even with two people having the same EPIC number, they can only vote in their respective constituency where they are enrolled, he said the voter is linked to his photo by the EPIC number.

"In photo electoral rolls, the elector is linked to his photo by the EPIC number. Therefore, when a

voter in Bengal goes to cast their vote, their photo on the electoral roll will be different if the same EPIC number has been allotted to a person in another state.

"This will lead to the refusal of voting due to a photo mismatch. By allotting the same EPIC numbers in different states, voting can be denied to those who are likely to vote for non-BJP parties due to photo mismatch," he said.

He stressed that the EC rules mandate that the software used for issuing the photo ID cards keeps track of every used and unused number to ensure that the same EPIC number is not allotted to multiple people. Also, EPIC number links the details of voters with their photo and it is considered to be a "permanent unique ID", he said.

"Therefore, it is impossible that any 'error' can lead to the same EPIC numbers being allotted to multiple people in different states. Also, since the EPIC number is linked to voter details, a duplicate EPIC number will lead to denial of voting," he said.

"This clearly reeks of a conspiracy to conduct voter suppression in favour of the BJP, where voters in non-BJP areas are being targeted by issuing their EPIC numbers to people in other states," he said. (PTI)

Punjab: Many SKM leaders 'detained' ahead of planned Chandigarh sit-in

LUDHIANA/HOSHIARPUR, March 4: Several leaders of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) were "detained" or put under "house arrest" after early Tuesday morning "raids" at their residences by the Punjab police ahead of their planned protest in Chandigarh on March 5.

Farmer leaders and opposition parties criticised the AAP government for the police action, which came a day after a meeting between Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and SKM leaders ended abruptly with the CM walking out. "The government cannot stifle the voice of farmers with such steps," Bharti Kisan Union (Lakhovall) general secretary Harinder Singh Lakhovall.

Apprehending police action, several farmer leaders have gone "underground", according to SKM members.

In Ludhiana, SKM leaders including Balbir Singh Rajewal, Harjit Singh Giaspura, Balwant Singh Khimra, Avtar Singh Mahlo, Manmohan Singh Deol and Dilbag Singh were allegedly detained.

Ludhiana Deputy Commissioner Police Jaskaran Singh Teja said six farmer leaders were "detained".

Meanwhile, farmer leaders called upon the protesters to head towards Chandigarh as part of the SKM's call for a week-long



'dharma' at the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana.

The SKM, which had led the 2020 agitation against the now-repealed three farm laws, is demanding the withdrawal of the Centre's draft of the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing, a legal guarantee on minimum support price as per the Swaminathan Commission report, implementing the state's agricultural policy and purchase of six crops at MSP by the state government.

Lakhovall claimed that the Punjab police conducted "raids" at the residences of SKM leaders early this morning. He said police personnel are also deployed at his residence.

"We are fighting in support of various farmers' demands. It is

our right to hold protests. We warn the state government not to indulge in such police actions," Lakhovall said as he called upon farmers to reach Chandigarh in large numbers.

In Hoshiarpur, Doaba Kisan Committee president Jangveer Singh Chauhan condemned the police action against farmer leaders. Chauhan alleged that at around 4:30 am, he was taken to the police station from his residence in Rasulpur village.

Later, his supporters reached the police station and compelled the authorities to release him and drop him back at his residence.

He claimed that he had been placed under "house arrest", with at least three police personnel still deployed outside his house. (PTI)

SP MLA Azmi's remarks on Aurangzeb rock legislature



MUMBAI, March 4: The issue of SP MLA Abu Asim Azmi's remarks eulogising Mughal emperor Aurangzeb rocked both houses of the Maharashtra legislature on Tuesday, with members of the ruling Mahayuti demanding his suspension and charging him with treason.

Both the houses were adjourned over the issue.

The development came on a day when the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi planned to corner the government over the resignation of NCP minister Dhananjay Munde.

As proceedings of both the houses began, the Mahayuti members started raising slogans seeking action against Azmi, who is the Samajwadi Party's state president.

They claimed Azmi was a descendant of Aurangzeb, who tortured Maratha king Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and brutally killed him.

Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena head Eknath Shinde led the attack on Azmi both in the legislative council and assembly.

In the council, the former CM said Azmi also made objectionable statements in the past against Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

"Abu Azmi is purposely insulting Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and (his son) Chhatrapati Sambhaji. Sambhaji's Maharaj's bravery and Aurangzeb's cruelty will give goosebumps to people," Shinde said in the council.

Aurangzeb tortured Sambhaji Maharaj in an inhuman way. Abu Azmi referred to Aurangzeb as an able administrator who built temples but he razed Kashi

Vishveshwar temple, Shinde said.

The Mughal emperor not only killed Hindus but also people from other religions, the deputy CM said.

"Aurangzeb lost even after he won, but Sambhaji, through his bravery, won even after his sacrifice. He (Aurangzeb) is a demon. Even a true Muslim will not forgive the progeny of traitors. It is wrong to eulogise Aurangzeb," Shinde said.

He also demanded that Azmi's membership of the legislative assembly be revoked.

No one will tolerate the act of eulogising Aurangzeb, the Shiv Sena leader said.

In the assembly, Shinde dubbed Azmi a "traitor" and said had no right to sit in the House.

He asked SP MLA Raees Shaikh to watch the recent Hindi film 'Chhaava', which has documented the bravery and sacrifice of Sambhaji Maharaj.

"See the torture Sambhaji Maharaj endured for 40 days. Aurangzeb asked him to change his religion," he said.

Praising Aurangzeb is an insult of the country's national heroes, Shinde said.

Sambhaji Maharaj won 70 battles in nine years, he said, adding that Aurangzeb demolished temples and killed his own family.

Industries Minister Uday Samant (Shiv Sena) reiterated the demand that Azmi be suspended from the House and be booked for treason.

"We cannot tolerate praise of a person who harassed Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and tortured Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj," he said. (PTI)

Oppn can stoop down to any level in bid to 'eradicate' Sanatan Dharma: BJP

NEW DELHI, March 4: The BJP on Tuesday slammed the Congress and other opposition parties over Maharashtra Samajwadi Party (SP) president Abu Azmi's remarks about Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and said they could stoop down to any level in their bid to "eradicate" Sanatan Dharma.

The BJP's reaction came amid a row over the Maharashtra SP leader allegedly eulogising Aurangzeb in his recent remarks. He said during the Mughal emperor's reign, India's border reached Afghanistan and Burma (Myanmar), and the country was then called a golden sparrow with its GDP then accounting for 24 per cent of the world GDP.

Asked about the fight between Aurangzeb and Sambhaji Maharaj, Azmi, an MLA from the Mankhurd Shivaji Nagar constituency in Mumbai, termed it a political battle. BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also termed Azmi's remarks an "insult to the entire Indian society" and alleged that the opposition INDIA bloc constituents are engaged in a "cut-throat competition" with each other to prove themselves anti-Hindu for minority votes.

"This unwarranted and unwanted glorification of Aurangzeb, who was one of the most cruel and tyrannical rulers in history, is an insult to Indian society. This is an



old tendency of the Congress and 'INDI alliance'. Earlier their Rajya Sabha MP Imran Pratapgarhi had visited Aurangzeb's tomb and prayed," Trivedi told PTI Videos when asked for comment.

This makes it clear that they can "cross any limit and stoop down to any level" to carry forward their campaign to eradicate Sanatan Dharma, he charged. "This also shows how much they hate Indian traditions and culture," Trivedi, also a Rajya Sabha MP, said. (PTI)

NC MLA slams J&K admin for ignoring PM Modi's directive

JAMMU, March 4: National Conference MLA from Bani, Rameshwar Singh, on Tuesday criticized the Jammu and Kashmir administration for its inefficiency, accusing the officials of failing to implement even the promises of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The issue resulted in brief verbal sparring between the ruling members and the opposition BJP.

"The way the administration is functioning in Jammu and Kashmir is the worst. I have seen it. God forbid, please do not show me such a time again. Forget about us, they have not even listened to the prime minister and the lieutenant governor," he said in the Assembly.

Speaking during the debate on the motion of the lieutenant governor's address, the National Conference (NC) MLA cited the example of a minor girl, who had raised concerns about the lack of a school

building in her area.

"A minor girl raised her voice demanding the construction of a school building. It reached the prime minister," he said.

The National Conference leader said Prime Minister Modi acknowledged it in his 'Mann Ki Baat' program and promised that a school would be built.

"The prime minister promised that the school will be constructed. After hearing him, the entire administration rushed to the area with a promise to build a school there. Even after two years, that school is still a distant dream. It has not been constructed yet," he said.

Taking a dig at the administration, he said, "If the administration can ignore a promise made by the prime minister himself, what hope does the common man have?"

The National Conference leader's remarks led to a heated exchange in the Jammu and Kashmir

Assembly, with the BJP members challenging him on what his own party had achieved in the past four months.

"At the very least, you should have honoured the prime minister's promise by constructing just a single room. If you couldn't, rest assured it will be built under our rule," Singh said in a sharp counter-attack. As the House concluded for the day, the chief minister and others parted the member.

Seerat Naaz, studying in Class 3, urged Prime Minister Modi in a video message in April 2023 to ensure basic facilities at her school in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district.

The schoolgirl, hailing from Lohai-Malhar village in Kathua district, was unhappy with her dilapidated school building and made a video that was shared on social media and subsequently went viral. (PTI)

PM Modi hails 'Vantara', asks people to focus on kindness towards animals

NEW DELHI, March 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday lauded the unique wildlife conservation, rescue and rehabilitation initiative 'Vantara', which he visited this week, and urged people to focus on kindness towards animals.

Modi on Sunday visited Vantara, the animal rescue, conservation and rehabilitation centre in Gujarat's Jamnagar district.

Spread over 3,000 acres, Vantara is located at Reliance Industries' Jamnagar refinery complex. It is a rescue centre dedicated to the welfare of captive elephants and wildlife, providing sanctuary, rehabilitation and medical care to animals rescued from abuse and exploitation.

Modi said in a post on X, "Inaugurated Vantara, a unique wildlife conservation, rescue and rehabilitation initiative, which provides a safe haven for animals while promoting ecological sus-

tainability and wildlife welfare. I commend Anant Ambani and his entire team for this very compassionate effort."

"An effort like Vantara is truly commendable, a vibrant example of our centuries-old ethos of protecting those we share our planet with," he said, sharing pictures from his visit.

At Vantara, Modi said he saw an elephant which was the victim of an acid attack.

"The elephant was being treated with utmost care. There were other elephants, too, which were blinded and that, too, ironically by their mahout. Another elephant was hit by a speeding truck. This underscores an important question -- how can people be so careless and cruel?" he said.

"Let us put an end to such irresponsibility and focus on kindness towards animals," he added.

There were other instances, too, Modi said and added that a lioness



suffered severe spinal injuries after it was hit by a vehicle.

"She was getting proper care. A leopard cub abandoned by her family got a new lease of life, with proper nutritional care. I compliment the team at Vantara for the care given to several

such animals," the prime minister said.

Vantara is home to more than 2,000 species and over 1.5 lakh rescued, endangered and threatened animals. Modi explored various facilities at the centre and closely inter-

acted with the various species of animals rehabilitated there.

Vantara said in a statement, "The prime minister patted an okapi, came face to face with chimpanzees in open who were kept as pets, hugged and lovingly played with orangutan who were earlier kept in an overcrowded facility, saw up close a hippopotamus which was under water, saw crocodiles, undertook a walk in between zebras, fed a giraffe and a rhino calf."

Modi also saw a large python, a unique two-headed snake, a two-headed turtle, tapirs, leopard cubs which were left in an agricultural field and later spotted by villagers and rescued, giant otters, bongos (antelope), and seals. He saw elephants in their jacuzzi.

With a glass partition in between, Modi sat face to face with snow tigers, white lion and a snow leopard. (PTI)

Post-Independence, Cong formed a self-imposed govt: Khattar

PATNA, March 4: Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday asserted that the Congress, upon Independence, had formed a government in the country that was "self-imposed and not democratically elected". The senior BJP leader also claimed that the Jana Sangh, the party's previous avatar, was formed to prevent the Congress from enjoying "unbridled" power, alleging that the Emergency imposed by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had put a "question mark" on democracy.

"After Independence, the Congress did not form a democratically elected government. The government was self-imposed. In 1951, a year ahead of the first general elections, our ideological forefathers formed the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The idea was to ensure that power does not become unbridled," Khattar said.

The Union minister was addressing the state council meeting organised by the BJP's Bihar unit, in which Dilip Jaiswal was unanimously elected as the provincial president.

Khattar, who is a former Haryana chief minister, also recalled having travelled to Delhi to attend a rally of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan, who had risen up in revolt against the then Congress government headed by Indira Gandhi. (PTI)

Bandh in parts of Beed after photos linked to sarpanch's murder go viral

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, March 4: A 'bandh' was observed in parts of Maharashtra's Beed district on Tuesday after gory photographs related to the killing of sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh surfaced on social media.

While Kej and Patoda in the district observed a total shutdown, some other parts witnessed partial bandhs, police said.

The development came on the day Maharashtra minister and NCP leader Dhananjay Munde resigned from the state cabinet, days after his close aide Walmik Karad was named as the mastermind in the sarpanch murder case.

"A bandh was observed in various parts of Beed. Patoda and Kej areas of the district saw a complete bandh. The police have deployed eight riot control units in sensitive areas of the district," a police official said.

"There is no additional force deployed in Massajog village (the native place of sarpanch Deshmukh). So far, nobody has been detained or arrested in connection with the bandh," he said.

Banners carrying the photographs of Dhananjay Munde were burnt in Kej with the protesters shouting slogans against the minister, the official said.

Deshmukh was abducted, tortured and murdered on December 9, last year, allegedly for attempting to stop an extortion bid targeting an energy company in the district.

The state Crime Investigation Department (CID) on February 27 filed a more than 1,200-page chargesheet at a court in Beed in Deshmukh's murder and two related cases.

As Deshmukh was tortured and killed, his assailants recorded 15 videos, clicked eight photos and even made two video calls. The videos and the photos are part of the chargesheet submitted by the CID before a court.

After these photographs surfaced on social media, various organisations gave a call for bandh to be observed on Tuesday.

Minister Munde's resignation followed a vociferous demand by the opposition for his removal from the cabinet. The demand intensified after gory photos and court chargesheet details related to the killing of Deshmukh surfaced, revealing the brutalities committed before the murder.

Three separate cases - murder of sarpanch, bid to extort money from Avaada company and assault on security guard of the firm - were registered at the Kej police station.

Seven persons have been arrested so far in the murder case and the police have invoked stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) against them. One of the accused is still at large. (PTI)

Belgium offers Indian businesses strategic access to EU market: Princess Astrid

NEW DELHI, March 4: Belgium recognises India's growing strategic role and fully supports its aspirations for a balanced and inclusive global order, Belgian Princess Astrid said, calling for deeper bilateral engagement in sectors such as clean energy technology and defence.

Astrid is in India leading a high-level economic mission that is aimed at significantly shoring up bilateral trade and investment co-operation.

As the gateway to Europe, we offer Indian businesses strategic access to the EU market, while India's growing economy presents exciting opportunities for Belgian companies in key sectors such as renewable energy, port logistics, high-technology, defence and life sciences, she said.

The Princess said at an event on Monday night that India's modernisation is more than economic growth as it is about "embracing the future" while preserving its identity.

"Belgium and Europe are proud to support this transformation, offering expertise and collaboration



in sustainability, technology, and innovation," she said.

"Belgium recognises India's growing strategic role and fully supports its aspirations for a balanced and inclusive global order," she added.

Astrid said "Belgium is here not only as a loyal partner" but also as part of a broader European vision.

Strengthening the ties between the European Union and India is crucial, she noted.

"A trade and cooperation agreement will bring long-term prosper-

ity, and Belgium fully supports this process," she said referring to the proposed India-EU free trade pact.

"Beyond trade, we must foster talent exchange. Scientists, students, and entrepreneurs should collaborate more to drive innovation," she said.

Princess Astrid also recalled her visit to India in 2013.

"This visit is special for me, as it marks my return to India for a second Belgian economic mission."

"My first visit in 2013 left me a

lasting impression, and since then, I have followed the remarkable evolution of our nations," she said.

Noting that Belgium and India share a dynamic relationship, built on trade, innovation, and a common vision for the future, she said her country, though small in size, is a nation of "openness and expertise".

"I encourage all of you to strengthen ties, build new opportunities, and shape the future together," Astrid told the audience comprising top diplomats, business honchos and academics from both countries.

"Let us work together, with trust and ambition, towards a new horizon of opportunity. Let us be fellow travellers! This is the spirit of our mission," she said.

The princess also referred to historical connections between India and Belgium.

"India's wisdom has also influenced global thinking. Your Emperor Ashoka, after witnessing the devastations of war, chose peace over conflict, replacing the sound of the war drum with the sound of Dharma." (PTI)

Favouritism plays crucial role in Railways promotion: Vaishnav

NEW DELHI, March 4: The Indian Railway Signal and Telecom Maintainers' Union (IRSTMU) has alleged that promotion in Railways comes with almost mandatory transfer and favouritism plays a crucial role in it. The IRSTMU, in a letter dated February 27 and written to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, highlighted these anomalies and suggested that employees should be allowed to give their preferences for vacant positions and decisions should be taken keeping that in mind.

IRSTMU general secretary Alok Chandra Prakash in the letter said though promotion norms are well-settled in railways, a lot of employees refuse to get promoted because they are aware that they would be transferred to far off places and undesirable destinations.

"Only those who are in the good books of their seniors get desirable places while the rest are sent to distant places which disturb and sometimes destroy their family lives," Prakash told PTI. The IRSTMU believed that the employees who suffer mental and physical pain due to such postings fail to give their 100 per cent to the organisation and often work half-heartedly. (PTI)

The latest avalanche has once again brought into focus the "failure" of authorities to learn from past experiences, said social activist Mangala Kothiyal.

"On April 22-23, 2021, a BRO camp at Rimkhim in the Niti Valley area was hit by an avalanche, killing eight labourers. This time, it was the Mana Valley's turn. The victims once again were BRO workers. We are not learning lessons from our past experiences," Kothiyal said.

Avalanches occur more during winters in the valleys of the upper Himalayan region where Badrinath and Mana are situated, but they can occur in any season in the snow-clad mountains.

Surveyors or mountaineers visiting these areas stay alert about such disasters. It is also true of the army and paramilitary forces. Winter defence posts are built at such places where the danger of avalanches is less, Kothiyal said. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, March 4: The Supreme Court has held using terms such as "miyan-tiyan" and "Pakistani" was not an offence of hurting religious sentiments though made in poor taste.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma therefore discharged a man in a criminal case filed by an Urdu translator and acting clerk Right to Information (RTI) in the sub-divisional office, Chas in Jharkhand.

The February 11 court order said, "The appellant is accused of hurting the religious feelings of the informant by calling him 'miyan-tiyan' and 'Pakistani'. Undoubtedly, the statements made are poor taste. However, it does not amount to hurting the religious sentiments of the informant. Hence, we are of the opinion that the appellant shall also be discharged under Section 298 IPC."

Section 298 of IPC deals with words or gestures made with a deliberate intent to wound religious feelings.

It came on record that accused, Hari Nandan Singh, sought information under the RTI Act from additional collector-cum-first appellate authority, Bokaro, and the information was dispatched to him.

However, he filed an appeal before the appellate authority, allegedly after manipulating the documents sent to him by the office through the registered post

Protests continue over JU incident Minister calls up injured students' family to express regret



KOLKATA, March 4: Protests continued for the second consecutive day on Tuesday over alleged assaults on students of Jadavpur University, demanding resignation of West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu and withdrawal of police complaints against them.

Amid the unrest, Basu personally reached out to the family of injured student Indranuj Roy and expressed regret over the incident.

"The education minister called me. He is remorseful and has expressed regret. He wished for Indranuj's speedy recovery. He said that he and his wife are deeply distressed. He also said that Indranuj is like his son," Amit Roy, the student's father, told reporters.

The protests erupted following campus violence on March 1, when two students, including Indranuj, were injured after a car in Basu's convoy allegedly grazed past them during a melee.

The incident occurred as Left-leaning students attempted to prevent the minister from leaving the campus, demanding discussions on the conduct of student union elections which were not held for several years.

Basu himself sustained injuries when his car's windshield was damaged during the protest.

Following a General Body meeting on Monday night, students set a 24-hour deadline for Vice-Chancellor Bhaskar Gupta to return to campus and address their demands, warning of intensified protests if he fails to do so.

They also insisted that the university bear the full cost of medical treatment for the injured students and that a formal police complaint be filed against Basu.

Gupta, however, has not yet returned to campus.

Sources said he is unwell, with fluctuating blood pressure, and has been advised to rest at home.

The vice-chancellor had visited injured students in the hospital on Saturday night but faced protests from students, during which his shirt was reportedly torn, aggravating his health complications.

He said he would return to the university once he received doctor clearance.

Despite the protests, some university departments continued with semester examinations, including first-year and lateral engineering courses.

While some departments voluntarily suspended classes, others proceeded with scheduled tests.

Several ultra-left student organisations, including the Democratic Students' Federation (DSF), have called for protests on both Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Students' Federation of India (SFI), the student wing of the CPI(M), did not participate in Tuesday's strike but organised separate demonstrations across the state.

On Monday, SFI called for a statewide student strike, affecting the functioning of institutions such as Calcutta University and Presidency University in the city.

The All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) also staged protests.

The Left-TMC confrontation escalated further as violent clashes broke out between SFI activists and members of the BJP-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) at the university's entrance.

Allegations surfaced that ABVP activists tore down posters related to the SFI-led strike.

A security guard was injured during the scuffle, and five individuals were detained by the police.

Meanwhile, the West Bengal College and University Professors' Association (WBCUPA), aligned with the TMC, held a press conference on Monday, claiming that the attack on Basu was premeditated.

Basu was injured on Saturday when protesters damaged his car's windshield. During the chaos, one student, Indranuj Roy, was allegedly hit by a vehicle from the minister's convoy, while another student sustained injuries after a car belonging to TMC-affiliated professor Om Prakash Mishra allegedly ran over his foot.

SFI reiterated its demand for Basu's resignation, accusing the ruling Trinamool Congress's student wing (TMCPU) and ABVP of instigating violence. (PTI)

Calling someone 'miyan-tiyan', 'Pakistani' not offence of hurting religious sentiments, SC holds

NEW DELHI, March 4: The Supreme Court has held using terms such as "miyan-tiyan" and "Pakistani" was not an offence of hurting religious sentiments though made in poor taste.

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However, he filed an appeal before the appellate authority, allegedly after manipulating the documents sent to him by the office through the registered post

and making false allegations of manipulation in the documents.

The appellate authority directed the translator to personally serve the information to the appellant.

On November 18, 2020, the informant, accompanied by the messenger of the sub-divisional office, Chas, went to the accused's home to hand over the information.

The accused initially refused to accept the documents but upon insistence by the informant, accepted it.

It was alleged that he abused the informant while referring to his faith and used criminal force against him.

The matter prompted the translator to an FIR registered against the accused.

Following an investigation, the trial court ordered framing of charges against the accused also under Sections 353 (assault or criminal force on a public servant) and 504 (intentional insult) of IPC.

The Jharkhand High Court dismissed the accused's plea for quashing the proceedings.

While hearing the man's plea against the high court order, the bench discharged him of the offence of intentional insult observing "no act on his part that could have provoked a breach of peace" apart from Section 353. (PTI)

HC stays order directing FIR against ex-Sebi chief Buch, 5 others

MUMBAI, March 4: The Bombay High Court on Tuesday stayed for four weeks a special court's order directing FIR against former Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and five other officials for alleged stock market fraud and regulatory violations, noting it was passed mechanically.

A single bench of Justice Shivkumar Dige said the special court order of March 1 also did not attribute any specific role to the accused in the matter.

"After hearing all the parties concerned and after going through the order of the special court, it appears that the order is passed mechanically without going into details and without attributing any specific role to the applicants (Buch and others)," Justice Dige said.

"Hence, the order is stayed till next date. Four weeks time is given to the complainant in the case (Sapan Shrivastava) to file his affidavit in reply to the petitions," the court said.

The HC's judgement came on petitions filed by Buch, three current whole-time Sebi directors Ashwani Bhatia, Ananth Narayan G and Kamlesh Chandra Varshney, Bombay Stock Exchange's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Sundararaman Ramamurthy and its former chairman and public interest director Pramod Agarwal.

The pleas sought quashing of the order passed by the special court directing the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to register an FIR against them pertaining to certain allegations of fraud committed in



1994 while listing a company on the BSE.

The pleas said the order was illegal and arbitrary.

The special court had passed the order on the complaint filed by Sapan Shrivastava, a media reporter, seeking investigation into the alleged offences committed by the accused, involving large scale financial fraud, regulatory violations and corruption.

Solicitor General of India, Tushar Mehta, appearing for the three Sebi officials, said there has been complete non-application of mind by the special court in passing the order.

"Based on a vague and vexatious complaint, the special court has ordered an FIR. For something allegedly done in the year 1994, how can the current members of Sebi be held responsible," Mehta argued.

He claimed that complainant Shrivastava was an extortionist who was working under the garb of being a public spirited person.

Senior counsel Amit Desai, appearing for Ramamurthy and Agarwal, said to take such an action against senior members of the BSE was an "attack on the economy itself" especially on such frivolous allegations. (PTI)

Liquor shops near religious places in Uttarakhand to be shut down under new policy

DEHRADUN, March 4: The Uttarakhand government has approved a new excise policy for 2025-26 under which all liquor shops located near religious places in the state will be shut down.

Officials said licences granted earlier to liquor shops will be reviewed in the light of the new excise policy.

The state cabinet approved the new excise policy at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday.

It has been decided to cancel the liquor licences of shops near religious places and exercise more control on the sale of liquor, according to paramount importance to public sensitivities, Secretary (home) Shailesh Bagauli said. The new policy makes the process for allotment of liquor shops more transparent and beneficial for local people by giving them self-employment opportunities in the sector, he said.

An effort has also been made in the new policy to provide local farmers with an additional platform to sell their produce to the distilleries. (PTI)

Need to prevent conflict or ensure decisive victory if thrust upon us, says former IAF chief

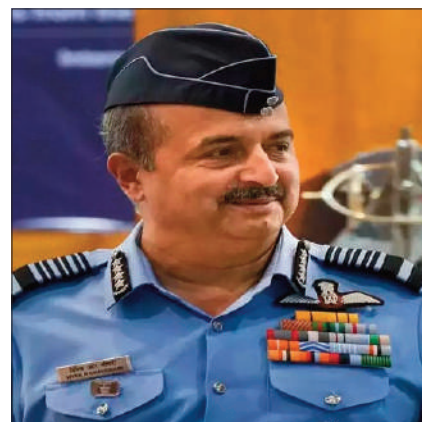
NEW DELHI, March 4: Indian military needs to capitalise on newer technologies to achieve superiority in all domains, and there is a need to prevent conflict or ensure "decisive victory" through the utilisation of drones, space-based assets and integrated air defence measures if a conflict is "thrust upon us", former IAF chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari (ret) said on Tuesday.

He said this in response to a question from the audience during an event held at Subroto Park here.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A P Singh also attended the 16th 'Jumbo' Majumdar International Seminar themed on 'Evolving Dynamics of Aerospace Power'.

Three speakers delivered presentations on subjects ranging from integrated air space management to drones and other unmanned low-flying machines and how they will impact warfare in the future.

After the presentations, during an interactive session with the audience, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari was asked if the evolution of air power and the advent and advancement in disruptive technologies such



as AI, and machine learning will also decide the outcome of a war in the future vis-a-vis a conventional school of military thought that irrespective of the domain in which a war takes place, victory or defeat will be decided on land only.

The former IAF chief replied that the "notion of victories" is really different in each circumstance, and said the answer could not

be in binary.

"Really, so it is very difficult to now categorise as to what air power and these other newer domains can achieve. But, suffices to say, yes, we are here to stay. We need to capitalise on these newer technologies, to be able to gain superiority in all domains, and need to not only prevent conflict, but if a conflict is thrust upon us, to ensure decisive victory through the utilisation of drones, space-based assets and integrated air defence measures," he said.

The presentations and discussions also emphasised the changing nature of warfare with the space, outer space, and cyberspace domains evolving and space becoming more and more contested.

General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command, Lt Gen M K Katiyar, in his address at an investiture ceremony here in January had said that irrespective of the domain in which a war takes place, victory or defeat will be decided on land only, and the Russia-Ukraine war has again proved it.

He also emphasised that technology was changing the nature of warfare, and today

this change is happening at a "very fast rate", and it is imperative that "we also change our mindset".

"We should learn from previous wars and prepare for future wars. We should be prepared for future wars. The change in the nature of warfare has also changed the scope of warfare. The area of operation is expanding. Future wars will not be limited to battlefields. Its impact will be beyond the battlefield," the Army commander had said.

Domains of war have also grown, and besides, sea, land, air, and space, wars will take place in cyber, electronic and network domains too, he had said.

Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari, who chaired the inaugural session, in his opening remarks said, the advent of advanced air mobility services and air power management in battlespaces are going to be a "challenge" going forward.

He also underlined that India needs to leapfrog much faster in the technology race rather than growing with conventional gradual speed. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, March 4: The Oscars this year had an India connect that few knew about -- Mumbai-based Double Negative (DNEG) played a critical role in creating the VFX for "Dune: Part Two", which won an Academy Award for Visual Effects. And this, says CEO Namit Malhotra, is one more evidence of India's growing power in the sector.

"The country that does most of the visual effects, more than any other country, is India. There are more Indians working (on VFX) in any major Hollywood film than there are in Indian films. That is a unique reality we are already in," Malhotra told PTI on Monday shortly after the Academy Awards were announced in Los Angeles.

Paul Lambert, Stephen James, Rhys Salcombe and Gerd Nefzer won the Oscar in the category for the Denis Villeneuve-directed sci-fi classic. Lambert, in his speech, acknowledged VFX vendors DNEG and Wylie Co, who helped make the land of Arrakis, a fictional desert planet in which the film is set, a reality.

Malhotra, whose company has worked on the VFX of Oscar winners such as "Ex

Machina", "Blade Runner 2049", "First Man" and "Tenet" in the category, hopes Indian films open up in a big way in the area.

"Our artists and our capabilities are already ahead of what Indian filmmakers are using... We don't have enough big visual led effects projects here and that is where we are hoping to get to the next level."

Malhotra is hopeful there will soon be a time when Indian audiences and filmmakers "start to make visual effects a big part of their storytelling and vision".

"It's a matter of time... We will find that opportunity very soon."

The Academy Award win for "Dune: Part Two" brought a feeling of validation because it comes from a "competitive group of the people who all have done incredible work", he said.

"To win these awards is pretty complicated. It's a feeling of relief and excitement because we have been validated yet again. There is a lot of joy and positive feeling among the teams across the world."

Malhotra said he holds Villeneuve in high regard. They have earlier collaborated with

the director in films, including the first part of "Dune".

"We also worked very closely with him on 'Blade Runner' that also got us an Oscar on his film. And when he went on to make 'Dune'... from the first initial phase itself, we collaborated very closely and really sort of took his vision on board and the world he was trying to create," he said, adding that his job is to align the talent and technologies with the vision of the filmmaker.

Asked about Lambert's shout out to DNEG at the Oscars on Sunday, Malhotra said he and the artist go back a long way.

"When he got the Oscar (for 'Blade Runner') he was a DNEG representative and he worked with

VFX Oscar win for 'Dune: Part Two': Huge validation, says CEO of VFX firm Namit Malhotra



us for few years and we have done some incredible work including films like 'First Man'... He continues to amaze in terms of his imagination and ability to execute these very diverse types of projects in absolute high quality outcomes."

Discussing the AI impact on the industry, Malhotra said it is just another type of technology that is going to power up applications and tech in the way we have done it in the past.

"We see AI as an opportunity because we believe that the ability to create greater efficiency or outcome faster," he said.

Asked about the trouble faced by Technicolour group that led to job losses in the Indian VFX branch of the company, Malhotra said he would not like to comment on their problems but would acknowledge the "artistry and talent".

"From their standpoint, I am sure they had some issues with pandemic and strikes that happened which have caused some issue just between them, their investors and their backers. As far as DNEG is concerned, our prime focus is a relentless pursuit of what we do on day to day basis."

"Developing new talent, investing in new technology. It's going to be 30 years since I have started this. You have to play the marathon and if you train for marathon, you will go much longer and build yourself better. Having a great group of people that you can trust and rely on is critical to the success of any business and any sport. That obviously shows the way our company has been able to navigate all these challenges and been successful at that ride," he said. (PTI)

Poorna Jagannathan on facing 'intense ageism' in Hindi cinema: They couldn't ever cast me

NEW DELHI, March 4: Actor Poorna Jagannathan, known for "The Night Of" and "Never Have I Ever", says she would have loved to work in more Hindi films post her debut with "Delhi Belly" but the intense ageism that she encountered left her feeling "underestimated".

The industry landscape has overhauled now due to the arrival of streaming services but when Jagannathan was in India, she said the filmmakers just couldn't place her in the right roles. "I felt like they couldn't ever cast me... When I landed in India, I was 40 years old, I had a child and they had no idea what to do with me or how to place me. The streaming culture has really affected who gets to tell stories now, but there was a very particular type of actress that would play different roles. And my Hindi is not great, so there was a language barrier," Jagannathan told PTI in an interview.

The only full-fledged movie she did in India was Abhinav Deo's 2011 film "Delhi Belly", a dark comedy which became popular for its edgy and adult humour.

The movie, which had a mix of English and Hindi, starred Imran Khan, Kunaal Roy Kapur and Vir Das as three struggling roommates who find themselves being hunted by a ruthless gangster. Despite the film's success, the actor said she found it difficult to get roles.

"I did 'Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani' but I just felt underestimated. There was just no role for me. There was intense ageism in the industry when I was there. Things have really shifted. Priyanka, Deepika and all these people are really shifting what it means to be a woman in their forties, but not when I was there. I felt like I would've loved to have worked more, but it just didn't happen," Jagannathan said.

Jagannathan found critical acclaim in Hollywood with her role of Safar Khan, a Pakistani-American whose son (Riz Ahmed) is jailed in a murder case. The success of the show led to roles in "The Blacklist", "Better Call Saul", "Ramy", "Big Little Lies" and "Never Have I Ever". She was most recently seen in the George Clooney and Brad Pitt-starrer crime

comedy "Wolfs".

Her latest series is "Deli Boys", a comedy about two Pakistani-American brothers (Asif Ali and Saagar Shaikh) who unexpectedly inherit their father's illegal empire after his sudden death. "It's like 'Deli Boys' and 'Delhi Belly' have some crossover in terms of their humour and sensibility. It's both very absurd. It's very dark, it is very physical. And that is completely my sense of humour."

"When I read 'Deli Boys', I was like, 'Absolutely 1000%' and just by reading the first episode... Very few scripts are written for jokes nowadays. 'Deli Boys' just writes for comedy. It's a vehicle for the audiences to laugh their a**es off. So, I loved getting a script like this."

She plays the role of Lucky, who can "cook biryani and cocaine with equal talent".

"Imagine playing a gangster and a cocaine drug lord at 52. It's like a fantasy. I always say I have a teenage son and you have to out-gangster them every morning when you wake up," she added. And there is a fun story behind how she found the character in a Parsi woman she met at a restaurant in Toronto.

"I was with my mother and this Parsi lady was there with her two grown sons. And just the way she spoke to us, the Parsis are so wonderful and so delicate, but when she wiped the food off hers, like a 28-year-old son, I was like, 'This is it. I have found her in a Parsi lady in Toronto'," Jagannathan said.

"Deli Boys" blends crime, comedy, and family drama while also exploring themes of identity, the immigrant experience, and the allure of the American Dream from a South Asian perspective. Asked about the changes she has seen in the portrayal of South Asian immigrants in the west, Jagannathan said her career in Hollywood can be a case study.

"I can really do the trajectory of my career on the evolution of the writing and the characters. I'd play only very stereotypical characters in the beginning, only like a couple of lines as a nurse or a doctor, down to having the privilege of playing Lucky now," the actor said. (PTI)

Manju Warrier, Nayanthara were considered for 'Sacred Games', says Anurag Kashyap

MUMBAI, March 4: Director Anurag Kashyap says he had initially reached out to Malayalam star Manju Warrier, known for films such as "Rani Padmini", "Ennum Eppozhum", and "Odiyan", to play the role of RAW agent Kusum Devi Yadav in Netflix's "Sacred Games".

The filmmaker, who serves as Hindi version presenter of Warrier's 2024 Malayalam movie "Footage", said he also suggested Tamil star Nayanthara's name to the streamer for the two-part web series.

Eventually, Amruta Subhash essayed the role in the second season of "Sacred Games", which premiered in 2019.

"We were trying to get her (Warrier) for Amrita Subhash's role... Different language actor... We were auditioning for 'Sacred Games'. We gave them (Netflix) 3 options. We gave them an option of her, Nayanthara and one more person," Kashyap told reporters during a roundtable interview here.

"At that time Netflix didn't have an India office. So, everything was going to the US. And at that time OTT's were not really looking at South films. They were not looking at the South market. They wanted an actress to be picked up from where their market is. It was limited to Maharashtra or anywhere. Their choices are always based on algorithms where they are getting subscribers," he added.

An avid admirer of Malayalam cinema, Kashyap said Warrier approached him for his feedback on "Footage" as she was planning to release the film in the Hindi market.

"Manju and I, we go (way) back... We first met in 2011-2013... We have common friends between us, Geetu Mohandas and Rajeev Ravi (couple, 'Moothon' director and cinematographer, respectively). And we (Warrier and Kashyap) share the same birthday."

Directed by first-time filmmaker Saiju

Sreedharan, who has worked as an editor on the National Award-winning film "Maheshinte Prathikaaram" and "Kumbalangi Nights" and "Anweshippin Kandethum", "Footage" is a story of Vishak and Gayatri, a couple known for their captivating YouTube vlogs exploring peculiar mysteries. "Trapped indoors during the COVID-19 pandemic, they become intrigued by the story of their maid's mute employer who resides in the same complex," reads the synopsis.

Kashyap, who has acted in Tamil titles "Maharaja", "Imaikka Nodigal" and Malayalam film "Rifle Club", said he prefers watching south films with subtitles because "dubs are very bad".

"With this ('Footage') also I reached out to a (dubbing) agency. I said, 'You know what? Treat it like a Hindi film'. It should not look like a Malayalam film being dubbed in Hindi. We took the same post production process. Treat it like a Hindi film. 'But professionals do not treat it like a dubbed film. That is why we took time. You have to give them respect. They dub so badly. The reason I can't see 'Maharaja' is because it's so (bad)'" he added.

The filmmaker, who recently said that he is moving to the South from Mumbai, said unnecessary crowding outside his home by unknown people prompted him to take the decision.

"I want to read. My daughter's got married. I want to spend more time on myself. Have you seen it? The difference in two months. My health has become so much better. Everybody knows my house. People just walk in. There used to be a line of people..."

"Everybody wants to tell everybody else that 'this is his house'. My house is full of cameras... It's just difficult. I have made it a fortress now. You can't even ring the doorbell. There is no doorbell," he said. (PTI)

Looking forward to working with Anurag Kashyap in a Hindi film: Manju Warrier

MUMBAI, March 4: Malayalam star Manju Warrier says she is waiting to work in a Hindi film and hopes it's directed by Anurag Kashyap.

Warrier has roped in Kashyap to serve as a presenter on the Hindi version of her Malayalam film "Footage", which will hit the screens on March 7.

"I am really looking forward to working in Hindi with Anurag sir. It depends on Anurag sir. If he does a film with me... I have to wait for it," Warrier told reporters during a roundtable interview here.

The actor, also known for films such as "Theoval Kotaram", "Sallapam", "Ee Puzhayum Kadannu" and "Aaram Thampuran", said she almost starred in a Hindi film with R Madhavan.

"We shot half of the film. But then it was during COVID. I was working on a film with Madhavan. We had to wrap the shoot when Madhavan got COVID. Later, he was busy with post-production and release of 'Rocketry' (his directorial debut). So, we couldn't finish the shoot of the film. For various reasons, we couldn't resume the shoot," she added.

Warrier said she is honoured that Kashyap came on board to present "Footage" in Hindi. It's a found-footage genre film directed by debutant Saiju Sreedharan.

"He sweetly agreed to present the film which meant the world to us. There is no other name that can be associated with the film because Anurag sir's films have always been different from the usual... Now that this film is releasing in Hindi, we are excited that it is going to be viewed by a wider audience which is any day the happiest thing that we can ask for."

"Footage" also stars "Emergency" actor Vishak Nair and Gayathri Ashok of "Star" fame. (PTI)

ADARSH GOURAV TO STAR IN TELUGU FILM



NEW DELHI, March 4: Actor Adarsh Gourav, who recently starred in "Superboys of Malegaon", is set to make his south debut with a Telugu film.

Billed as a psychological thriller, the currently untitled movie will be headlined by Jahnvi, daughter of "RRR" producer D.V.V. Danayya.

According to a press release issued on Tuesday, the upcoming film will be directed by Baba Shashank and is slated to be released in 2025. Gourav said it's the biggest thrill "to explore diverse narratives across industries".

"The South film industry has consistently delivered some of the most compelling and innovative films, and I'm excited to finally be a part of it. This project, in particular, is unlike anything I've never done, the psychological horror genre and it has a gripping story that immediately drew me in."

"Collaborating with a visionary director and making my Telugu debut with Jahnvi's production is truly special. I can't wait for audiences to see what we're creating," the actor said in a statement.

Gourav is also known for films such as "The White Tiger", "Kho Gaye Hum Kahan", and web series "Guns & Gulaabs". (PTI)

Big Boss18 winner Karan Veer Mehra inaugurates 150th Gym of Anytime Fitness in Greater Noida

GREATER NOIDA (UTTAR PRADESH), March 4: Anytime Fitness, the world's largest and fastest-growing gym chain, has achieved a significant milestone with the grand inauguration of its 150th gym at Golden I, Greater Noida (West). This landmark event was nothing short of spectacular, bringing together fitness enthusiasts, industry leaders, and celebrities who share a passion for health and wellness. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was led by Bigg Boss 18 winner Karan Veer Mehra, joined by Bollywood personalities Shahbaz Khan, Puneet Issar, Upasana Singh, Vinu Dara Singh, Miss India Asia Pacific 2013, Srishti Rana, (Arjun) Feroz Khan and Anil George. The stars celebrated the occasion & shared personal insights into their fitness journeys, inspiring the audience to prioritise their health. The event also highlighted Anytime Fitness' "Train Anywhere" feature, which allows members to work out at any club across the country, making it one of the most accessible gym chains in India. The excitement was palpable as Mr. Vikas Jain, Managing Director, Mr. Vishal Kwatra, Director, and Mr. Navendu Jain, Director, Anytime Fitness, addressed the gathering. "Hitting the 150-gym mark is a reflection of our mission to make fitness more accessible across the country. From our first gym to the 150th, the journey has been about creating a space where people feel welcomed, supported, and motivated to work on their health. Seeing so many incredible guests here today reaffirms that fitness is for everyone, and we're only getting started," they stated. The Trio also emphasised the brand's aggressive expansion plans, adding, "We aim to expand into new cities and communities, opening more doors to fitness across India. Our goal is to establish 200+ gyms nationwide by 2026, making health and wellness accessible to more people than ever before." Karan Veer Mehra, the popular actor and fitness enthusiast, expressed his excitement about being part of this milestone event. "Fitness is a lot more than mere good looks. It is about feeling strong, confident, and capable. Anytime Fitness stands out because it makes working out convenient and enjoyable, no matter where you are. I'm honoured to be here, celebrating a growing movement that's changing lives," he shared. (PTI)

Defiant Usha says ad-hoc panel for boxing needed as BFI failed in 'fundamental' duties

NEW DELHI, March 4: Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chief P T Usha on Tuesday defended her decision to appoint an ad-hoc committee for boxing, saying the national federation failed to fulfil its "fundamental responsibilities" in the last one year and her action was necessary to "restore order and ensure proper governance".

Her statement came in response to IOA vice president Gagan Narang's letter on February 28 in which the former Olympic bronze-winner accused her of issuing "arbitrary" orders and undermining athletes' welfare.

Usha's steadfast position is de-

spite the Delhi High Court's stay on the IOA's order. The court issued notice, seeking IOA's response to a petition filed by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI).

"...there is no truth in your (Narang) assertion that athletes are suffering due to this decision or any alleged arbitrary actions on my part. The decision to appoint an ad-hoc Committee was not arbitrary but a necessary step to restore order, ensure proper governance, and prioritize athlete development," Usha said in her reply to Narang, who is also a member of the IOA's Executive Council.

"The unfortunate reality is that



BFI has failed in fulfilling its fundamental responsibilities, including conducting national championships in the last year. "With the 2026 Asian Games fast approaching, there has been

little to no effort to identify fresh talent, select promising boxers, and implement structured training programs to enhance India's medal prospects."

Usha, who has been at logger-

heads with the Executive Council members over several issues, accused them of showing "disproportionate preoccupation" with issues of "personal preferences" rather than the overall good of Indian sports.

Narang wrote to her seeking a withdrawal of her "arbitrary" act of forming an ad-hoc committee to run the affairs of BFI. He had said that "due to such arbitrary order, our athletes are suffering and we are getting a bad name domestically and internationally". On February 24, the IOA constituted a five-member ad-hoc committee to oversee the affairs of boxing in the country on the ground that the sport's na-

tional federation failed to hold elections on time. The BFI termed the IOA's decision as "illegal" and filed a petition in the Delhi High Court to quash the order. Narang also claimed that Usha's decision to form the ad-hoc committee to run BFI was done "without consultation and/or approval of EC of IOA".

He had urged Usha to recall the order and call an emergency meeting of EC to discuss various pressing matters.

Hitting back at Narang, the IOA president said she has made several attempts over the past year to convene Executive Council meetings to discuss key issues. "Unfortunately, these ef-

orts have been thwarted time and again by members -- including yourself -- who have consistently blocked meaningful discussions," she alleged.

"I struggle to recall any instance where the EC has actively engaged in discussions about improving athlete performance or implementing measures to enhance India's medal-winning potential. "The persistent reluctance to address these critical matters raises serious concerns about the priorities of some within the IOA," she said.

The IOA has been a divided house ever since Usha appointed Raghuram Iyer as the CEO in January 2024. (PTI)

EYEING PLAY-OFFS BERTH, ODISHA FC MEET JAMSHEDPUR FC



JAMSHEDPUR, March 4: Odisha FC will play Jamshedpur FC in their Indian Super League match here Wednesday, hoping to collect full points as the race for the last play-offs spot has gained steam. Jamshedpur FC have already qualified for the play-

offs and are fourth in the table with 38 points from 22 games on the back of 12 wins and two draws. Odisha FC are preparing for their final league fixture, placed seventh with 30 points from 23 outings thus far. A win against Jamshedpur FC will see them reach 33

points. If the sixth-placed Mumbai City FC lose both their remaining games, the Islanders will also be on 33 points at the end of the league phase. In that case, the equation will come down to goal difference, which still gives Odisha FC a lot to

play for, with just one vacant play-offs spot left now.

Odisha FC's goal difference is six right now, better than Mumbai City FC (0). The Khalid Jamil-coached side will want form by their side going into the play-offs, since they have won and drawn twice

each in their last five games. Odisha FC have failed to score in each of their last two ISL matches, having gone on a longer goalless streak only twice before.

Interestingly, they are the fourth-highest scoring team this season with 41 strikes to their name.

Odisha FC have permitted opponents an average of 9.9 shots from inside the box per game since the start of 2025, with only Mohammedan SC (11.1) and Hyderabad FC (10.4) conceding more.

They have kept the third-least clean sheets (4) in ISL 2024-25.

Jamshedpur FC have played 46.1% of their passes forward in the current campaign, the second-highest share among all teams. However, they have completed just 52.5% of them - the second lowest in the league. It reflects a lack of neatness on this front, but also highlights that they have embraced risk-taking options offensively.

Jamshedpur FC's goalkeeper Albino Gomes has made a league-high 83 saves this season, which shows that the team has a reliable presence between the sticks to stop shots from going in even if they end up conceding open spaces in their defensive third. (PTI)

Prague Masters: Pragg to take on Shankland after lone rest day



PRAGUE (CZECH REPUBLIC) March 4: With a career-high world ranking of No.8 as per the latest published list, Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa will take on American Sam Shankland in the sixth round of the Prague Masters after a rest day on Tuesday.

Tied at the top spot with compatriot and friend Aravindh Chithambaram, Praggnanandhaa tried to break the defences of his fellow countryman for a long time but only ended up with a draw.

The two are now on 3.5 points each out of a possible five. Aravindh was surprised after his second win in the tournament.

"I don't know what's happening to me here," said Aravindh, who has also beaten top seed Wei Yi of China in the tournament.

The Indian, who has arrived big time in the elite circles, now will have to tackle the experienced Quang Leim Le of Vietnam in the next round. The two Indians are followed by a pack of four players having 2.5 points each.

The most dangerous of the lot is Wei Yi who started with two losses in the first three rounds and then won two in a row to send warning signals to his competitors.

Anish Giri and Quang Leim hold the dubious distinction of drawing all the five games thus far while Vincent Keymer has lost two, drawn one and won two out of his five games. Aravindh has been the pick of the tournament so far, as not many had given him a chance. The former national champion has been working very hard and this is the first time he has got a real platform

to showcase his real skill-set against the top GMs.

Praggnanandhaa has been exceptional in his two victories thus far, against Keymer and Nguyen Thai Dai Van. But his white pieces are not necessarily giving him any serious advantage.

It is well known that he makes up for it with his superior calculation skills, and much will depend on it especially against Shankland who also leaves no stone unturned in trying to carve out a niche for himself. Following the contest against Shankland, Praggnanandhaa will have white pieces against Quang Leim and Wei Yi while in the last round he is pitted against the super-solid Giri.

For Aravindh, the road could be slightly easier as he has only the bottom field to compete against. In the seventh round, the Indian will play Giri, followed by David Navara of the Czech Republic before finally taking on Gurel Ediz of Turkey in his last round.

In the Challengers section, the lone Indian, Divya Deshmukh has got 1.5 points. She will try to gain some important rating points in the last four rounds, which will help her regain some confidence after the losses in the Tata Steel tournament earlier this month.

Pairings (Round 6): Sam Shankland (USA, 2) vs R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3.5); Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind, 3.5) vs Quang Leim Le (Vie, 2.5); Wei Yi (Chn, 2.5) vs Gurel Ediz (Tur, 2); Nguyen Thai Dai Van (Cze, 2) vs David Navara (Cze, 2); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 2.5) vs Anish Giri (Ned, 2.5). (PTI)

ASEB Sports Club beat Dima United FC 3-2 in 70th Bordoloi Trophy



HT Bureau GUWAHATI, March 4: The 70th Bharat Ratna Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Trophy is being held at Judges' Field, here, from March 2 to March 13.

The tournament is organised by the Guwahati Sports Association with support from the Department of Sports and Youth Welfare, Assam, and various District Sports Associations.

On Tuesday, ASEB Sports Club

won a close match against Dima United FC with a 3-2 scoreline. Dima United FC started strong, with Henry Thanglalmuan scoring in the 25th minute.

However, ASEB Sports Club fought back in the second half, as Dwijoraj Boro scored twice in the 49th and 66th minutes, and Rahan Brahma added another goal in the 61st minute. Dima United FC's Lalminghlu Vanlal scored in injury time (90+3').

The match saw several yellow cards bookings with Sujalal Brahma, Akash Basumatary, and Rahan Brahma from ASEB Sports Club receiving warnings, while Samuel Larle and Joydon Naidang from Dima United FC were also booked.

Dwijoraj Boro was named Player of the Match for his excellent performance. He received the award from Dr. Bishnu Ram Nunisa, Honorary General Secretary of the Assam Sepak Takraw Association.

Dutch legend Taekema to work with Indian women dragflickers

NEW DELHI, March 4: India has roped in Dutch legend Taekema to work with the national women's hockey team dragflickers on a short-term basis till the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Taekema had conducted a seven-day camp from February 10 to 16 ahead of India's FIH Pro League campaign in Bhubaneswar last month, where the hosts competed against England, Germany, Netherlands, and Spain. The seven-day camp was attended by the likes of Deepika, Manisha Chauhan, Sonam, and Annu, along with a few junior players. The focus of the camp was on honing technical skills and improving dragflick accuracy under Taekema's guidance.

Indian women's team chief coach Harendra Singh said the camp has been very beneficial for the players and Taekema will continue to work with the side on a short-term basis till Los Angeles Games.

"Taekema is one of the greatest legends in dragflicking, and I requested Hockey India to bring him in to help us improve in this area. He has been working with the team on refining technique and ensuring a smoother dragflicking process."

"Dragflicking is a highly-specialised skill, and Taekema will continue to work with us in future camps as well," Harendra said. Harendra also acknowledged the improvements in Deepika's performance.

"We've seen definite progress with Deepika, particularly during the recent Pro League matches. However, successful penalty-corner conversions rely on three key components -- the injector, stopper, and dragflicker."

"Unfortunately, we faced some challenges with the injection and stopping during some matches, which affected our conversion rate. But Deepika's tactical approach is improving with each game," he said. (PTI)

High-altitude Kenyan town Iten adapts as Olympic champions and amateurs flock to rarefied air

ITEN (KENYA), March 4: As dawn breaks over the sleepy town of Iten, its dusty tracks come alive with packs of runners keeping rhythm, often followed by cheerful children headed to school.

Some of the athletes are elite Kenyans. Others travel from farther afield.

All are here because this unassuming little town lies at about 2,400 meters (8,000 feet) above sea-level and has produced some of the best long-distance runners in the world.

To cater to the ever-growing interest from both professional and amateur athletes, hotels, lodges and short-stay rental apartments continue to spring up around the town, located 350 kilometers (217 miles) northwest of Nairobi.

"I came to Kenya to feel this elite running community here," said Ryan Mex of Malta.

Mex, a semi-professional runner and coach, brought three athletes with him to get a

competitive edge ahead of Malta's marathon season.

It's his first time here. "Next time I want to come with a larger group since we really like the training environment here," Mex said. "This is the best place in the world to come for a training camp."

Iten is home to some 42,000 people, mostly subsistence farmers, and it has also been a temporary home to plenty of world champions, including two-time Olympic gold medalists Eliud Kipchoge (marathon) and David Rudisha (800 meters), both of Kenya. British four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah would train in Iten for months at a time. The town was declared a World Athletics Heritage Landmark in 2019 and proudly calls itself the "Home of Champions."

Lornah Kiplagat, a Kenyan-born three-time Olympian for the Netherlands, attended high school in Iten and now runs a training center here for runners who want to up their game.



"If you train at 2,400 meters, your lungs expand, your red blood cells increase, and so when you go to low altitude you feel like you are flying," explained Kiplagat, the 2008 world half-marathon champion.

Amanal Petros, a top marathoner from Germany, spends six months at Kiplagat's center every year. Born in the Eritrean highlands, he was accus-

tomed to running at high altitude but Iten's elevation isn't the only reason why he keeps coming back.

"I've trained in many places in the USA and Europe," he said. "Organizing a training partner in Europe is not easy. But in Iten, the home of champions, wherever you go you find a lot of athletes who can train with you."

Jean Paul Fourier opened the

Kerio View Hotel in 2002 starting with a just few rooms. It now has capacity for 50 guests and includes a fitness center.

"I made a small investment and it has really grown," he said.

The main season runs from April to September.

"We see many foreigners flocking to not only my hotel but also neighboring hotels. There are many hotels springing up around the area, but we still get our share of visitors," he said.

One man here still remembers what Iten was like before all this happened: Brother Colm O'Connell, former headmaster at St. Patrick's High School, whose alumni include Rudisha, Vivian Cheruiyot, Matthew Birir and Brimin Kipruto.

O'Connell first came to Iten to teach in 1976.

"It was just a scattering of houses and a school called St. Patrick's," he said. "That was really the starting point of what Iten eventually became, what we see today." (AP)

India booked for Champion's Trophy final on March 9

Kohli's master-class steers India towards 4-wicket win over Aussies

DUBAI, March 4: Virat Kohli did not finish the chase for once but his measured 84-run knock steered India into their fifth Champions Trophy final with a clinical four-wicket win over an under-strength and profligate Australia in the first last-four clash here on Wednesday.

The Indian triumph ensures that the final of the eight-team competition will now be held here instead of Lahore, the original host of the marquee clash, as Rohit Sharma's men will not travel there owing to security concerns.

Player of the match Kohli (84, 98 balls, 5x4) was the fulcrum of Indian batting as they scaled down 265 in 48.1 overs after Steve Smith (73) and Alex Carey (61) led the Aussies to 264.

Now, India will await the winner of the second semifinal between South Africa and New Zealand at Lahore on Wednesday.

Kohli had wonderful support from Shreyas Iyer (45) with whom he realised 91 runs for the third wicket, and steadied the ship after the early departures of skipper Rohit Sharma (28) and Shubman Gill (9).

Australia were weakened by the absence of some of their premier stars, but India had not beaten them in the knockouts of an ICC tournament since the quarterfinal of the 2011 World Cup.

However, Kohli was determined to correct that anomaly. The pitch used for the semifinal was fresh but much smoother than the ones on which

the previous matches were played.

Kohli does not need a second invitation to exploit such conditions and a near-perfect control helped him keep pace with the asking rate.

Kohli's struggle point in an ODI innings is his inability to force the pace against spinners, but here the champion batter negated leg-spinner Adam Zampa, who had his number on a few occasions in the past, quite effectively.

The 36-year-old used the pull and drives, two of his most productive shots, to optimum effect. He placed him in the wide arc between sweeper cover and mid-wicket for easy, risk-free runs.

He lost the company of both Iyer, who played some delectable shots, and Axar Patel (27) in rather quick succession but Kohli went past his 50 in 53 balls.

Glenn Maxwell dropped him on 51 off left-arm spinner Cooper Connolly, a perceived early signal of an inevitable Kohli hundred.

But it did not arrive as an ugly hit off Zampa ended in the hands of Ben Dwarshuis near long-on when India were 40 runs away from victory.

KL Rahul (42 not out) and Hardik Pandya (28) played some smart and aggressive cricket as India cantered home without much ado.

However, the Indian bowlers too deserve some credit as they kept the Aussies batting on a tight leash despite well-paced fifties from Smith and Carey.

Australian skipper Smith (73, 96b, 4x4, 1x6)



won a good toss, but the batters could not exploit fine batting conditions, throwing their wickets away through silly shots.

Throughout his stay, Smith was the pillar of Australian innings, and was involved in three 50

stands -- 52 with Travis Head for the second wicket, 56 for the third wicket with Marnus Labuschagne and 54 for the fifth wicket with Carey (61, 57b, 8x4, 1x6).

Australia would have been in a much better

position had two of those alliances bloomed into something more substantial.

Few batters have a higher fortune quotient than Head and his cameo of 39 had several slices of fortune -- a dropped catch by Mohammed Shami (3/48) off his own bowling in the first legal delivery of the match, a near run-out, and a couple of inside edges that missed the stumps by a whisker.

But Chakravarthy mitigated Hea's threat when the left-hander skied him to a running-in Gill in the deep.

Labuschagne played back and across to a straighter one from the impressive Ravindra Jadeja (2/40) to get trapped in front.

However, Smith chugged along nicely with excellent control and his thumping straight six off Jadeja was a work of art in timing and power.

However, a rather mindless charge at a full toss from Shami ended his stint, as the ball crashed onto the stumps.

Glenn Maxwell came in a perfect situation for him at 198 for five with 13 overs to spare, but an inexplicable back-foot punch off Axar curtailed his stay prematurely.

Carey carried on with determination at one end, and was engaged in a useful 34-run alliance with Dwarshuis for the seventh wicket to see them past the 250-run mark.

But the target was way too feeble to give any real test to this Indian batting unit. (PTI)

NZ, SA look to shed white-ball underachievers tag in Champions Trophy semifinal

LAHORE, March 4: Loaded with world-class talent but haunted by the underachievers' tag at ICC events, New Zealand and South Africa will square off in an evenly-matched second semifinal of the Champions Trophy here on Wednesday.

South Africa and New Zealand have won the Champions Trophy once each in 1998 and 2000 respectively but the tournament was called the ICC Knockout Trophy at that time and didn't carry the significance which it has now. While South Africa would look to shed their big tournament "chokers" tag, the Kiwis will also be desperate to lay their hands on a title after having finished second best twice in the ODI World Cup (2015 and 2019) and once in the T20 World Cup (2021). Led by Mitchell Santner, New Zealand finished behind India in Group A, while South Africa topped Group B ahead of Australia. But there is little to separate the two sides. Both are evenly-matched in most departments but the Proteas look to be slightly ahead on the bowling front because of variety.

The two teams have enough firepower in their batting line-ups and have quality fielders but the contest is expected to be decided by the spinners.

Although the pitches here are a bit on the slower side but they haven't spun as much as the surfaces in Dubai and it will be interesting to see how the spinners of both the teams fare. The 44-run loss to India in their last group match notwithstanding, New Zealand will take confidence from their win over South Africa in the tri-series here last month.

Recently, New Zealand successfully chased 305 against South Africa here and then went on to win the tri-series, beating Pakistan in the final, and senior batter Tom Latham feels those experiences will hold them in good stead. "Yeah, the (South Africa) team that we played potentially will be slightly different, they had a lot of guys that that weren't in that side. They were still playing in their SAT20 back in South Africa so will be slightly different. "But I guess from our point of view, we'll lean back on those experiences of Lahore in playing against South Africa," Latham had said. "We'll do everything that we do leading up to a game. It's obviously going to be a reasonably quick turnaround, but it is what it is. And, we'll be looking forward to the challenge of a semifinal," he added referring to the hectic travel schedule.

New Zealand were in Dubai on Sunday to play against India and headed to Lahore the next morning. Latham has been New Zealand's best batter so far with 187 runs from three matches, but Kane Williamson's return to form with a classy 81 against India also augurs well for the Kiwis. On the bowling front, Matt Henry stood out and is currently the highest wicket-taker with eight scalps and has good support from Will O'Rourke (six wickets). In skipper Mitchell Santner, Michael Bracewell, Rachin Ravindra, Glenn Phillips and Mark Chapman, New Zealand boast of a good spin attack. South Africa too are in red-hot form. The Proteas have fielded one of their most prolific squads in the tournament and have all their bases covered. With a century under his belt, Ryan Rickelton is in ominous form, while the likes of Temba Bavuma, Rassie van der Dussen and Aiden Markram have also contributed with the bat. South Africa's bowling also looks impressive with the likes of Wiaan Mulder, Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj and Tabraiz Shamsi in their ranks. While on-paper, South Africa look a formidable unit and have been the team to beat in recent ICC events, their overall form over the last one year or so doesn't inspire confidence as the Proteas have lost eight of their last 13 ODIs. (PTI)

South Africa have bit more class and power compared to NZ: Ponting ahead of CT semifinal

LAHORE, March 4: South Africa have a "bit more class and power" in their lineup, which makes them favourites in the Champions Trophy semifinal against New Zealand, feels Ricky Ponting, though the Australian great added that if someone like Kane Williamson comes to the party he could get the job done for the Black Caps. New Zealand are coming into the knockouts on the back of a big defeat against India in Dubai, while South Africa are on a roll following their massive seven-wicket win against England in the group stage.

While momentum could play a big role in the contest, Ponting said with a deep batting lineup, just like India, South Africa enjoy an edge.

"If I look at both the sides, I think there's that little bit more class in the South African lineup. They bat deep. I think they might have a little bit too much power for New Zealand," Ponting opined on ICC Review on Tuesday.

"I'm actually going with South Africa (to win the contest) as much as I've praised New Zealand," he added. The former Australian captain added that New Zealand top-order batter Williamson will have to play a leading role in the contest as every team relies on its big players to guide them in crunch games.

"Williamson, I think, needs to make runs for them in this game. Every team needs their big players standing up in big moments. Big games mean big names. It doesn't get bigger than the Champions Trophy semifinals. And, Williamson is a big-game player, he will under-



stand the enormity of his role going into the game and I won't be surprised if he gets the job done," Ponting said.

Williamson, after hardly making any contribution against Pakistan (1) and Bangladesh (5), struck a 120-ball 81 against India in the final

It's not size, but mental strength that matters: Gavaskar backs Rohit Sharma



DUBAI, March 4: Backing India captain Rohit Sharma, who was subjected to fat-shaming, cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar on Tuesday said that slim guys are for modeling and in cricket, mental strength is what matters, not physical size.

Addressing the unnecessary criticisms directed at India skipper in the middle of Champions Trophy by a politician, Gavaskar reminded how Mumbai's big-hitting Sarfaraz Khan also faced body shaming, but it didn't affect his performance at all.

"I have always said, if you want only slim guys, then you should go to a modelling competition and pick all the models. It's not about that," Gavaskar told India Today.

"It's about how well you can play cricket. We talked about Sarfaraz Khan, he was vilified for a long time because he was on the heavier side. But if he scores 150 for India in a Test match and follows it up with another two or three fifty-plus scores, then what's the issue?"

"I don't think size has anything to do with it. It's your mental strength whether you can last the distance that's the most important thing. Bat well, bat for long, and score runs."

Congress spokesperson Shama Mohamed called Rohit "fat for a sportsman" and described him as "the most unimpressive Captain India has ever had."

However, she faced backlash on social media for her unwarranted comment and was forced to delete her post from the 'X'.

Congress also distanced itself from Shama's comment and requested her to delete the post. (PTI)

Aaqib Javed to continue as Pakistan's head coach for tour of New Zealand

LAHORE, March 4: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has asked former pacer and national selector, Aaqib Javed, to continue as interim head coach for the white-ball tour of New Zealand.

A PCB official said due to time constraints between the Champions Trophy and New Zealand tour, Aaqib will continue as interim head coach.

"The PCB meanwhile has started the process of finding a new head coach for the national team and due process would be followed," he said. The official said Pakistan should have a new head coach when they begin their new cycle of the World Test Championship (WTC) in August.

Last year, the PCB had appointed Jason Gillespie and Gary Kirsten as the red ball and white ball coaches respectively, but both resigned within six to eight months of their appointment citing issues with the Pakistan board.

Aaqib, a senior selector, was then asked to take over as interim head coach of the white ball squad and



then also the red ball team for the Test series in South Africa and against West Indies at home.

He also continued in the post in the three-nation event in Pakistan

and the Champions Trophy from which the team bowed out without registering a win.

Former Pakistan captain, Mohammad Yousuf, will now work as

batting coach of the national side.

The PCB also said that it has appointed Salman Ali Agha as captain and Shadab Khan as vice-captain of the T20 squad keeping in mind the T20 World Cup next year.

"The decision to appoint Salman and Shadab as T20I captain and vice-captain, respectively, has been made with an eye on two major upcoming tournaments - the ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup 2025 (September 2025) and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 (February/March 2026)," the board said.

Salman has previously led Pakistan in a T20I series against Zimbabwe, winning it 2-1.

As part of preparations for the T20 World Cup, Pakistan are set to play a minimum of five T20Is in the Asia Cup 2025 and three T20Is each against West Indies (away in July), Afghanistan (home in August), Ireland (home in September), South Africa (home in September/October), Sri Lanka (home in November) and Australia (home in January 2026). (PTI)

Babar, Rizwan dropped from Pakistan's T20 squad

LAHORE, March 4: Captain Muhammad Rizwan and Babar Azam were on Tuesday dropped from the Pakistan squad for the five-match T20 series in New Zealand.

Salman Ali Agha replaced Rizwan as captain of the T20 outfit with all-rounder Shadab Khan being recalled and named his vice-captain.

Rizwan has been retained as captain of the ODI squad after the team's disappointing show in the Champions Trophy. The selectors have avoided an overhaul in the one-day squad and retained majority of the players who flopped in the ongoing ICC event.

Babar is also retained in the ODI squad but batters Saud

Shakil and Kamran Ghulam have been axed.

The selectors have also sidelined fast bowlers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf from the one-day squad.

Pakistan play five T20s and three ODIs in New Zealand starting March 16.

Pakistan will still be without dashing opener Saim Ayub, who is yet to recover from an ankle injury while opener, Fakhar Zaman has also been ruled out of the tour with an injury he sustained in the first match of the CT.

His injury came after making a comeback to the Pakistan squad last month in the three-nation event while Saim got injured while fielding during the Test series in South Africa earlier this

year.

Pakistan squads:
ODI: Muhammad Rizwan (captain), Salman Ali Agha (VC), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Akif Javed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Imam ul Haq, Khushdil Shah, Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Wasim junior, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Suyyan Muqeem, Tayyab Tahir.

T20: Salman Ali Agha (captain), Shadab Khan (VC), Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf, Hasan Nawaz, Jahandad Khan, Khushdil Shah, Muhammad Abbas Afridi, Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Haris, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Suyyan Muqeem, Usman Khan. (PTI)

India to host 2nd Asian Yogasana Championship

NEW DELHI, March 4: A total of 16 countries will participate in the second Asian Yogasana Championship, scheduled to be held at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here from March 29 to 31.

The championship, being organised in collaboration with the Sports Ministry and Yogasana Bharat, aims to showcase Yogasana at the international level while embracing its rich heritage and deep-rooted cultural significance.

The event, being supported by the Olympic Council of Asia, World Yogasana, Asian Yogasana and Yogasana Indraprastha, will also help create a roadmap towards inclusion of the discipline in the Olympic curriculum. (PTI)

SITUATION VACANT

Aturkimi Academy, Rukasen, Diphu, Karbi Anglong

1. Name of the Post--TGT(Mathematics)Required Qualifications --Msc/BSC (Mathematics) with B.Ed.

Minimum teaching Experience -2 years experience working as a Teacher in any Secondary School

2. Name of the Post-TGT (Social Science)Required Qualifications - MA/BA with BEd Minimum teaching Experience -2 years experience working as a Teacher in any Secondary School.

3.TGT(English)Required Qualifications - MA/BA(English)Minimum teaching Experience --2 years experience working as a Teacher in any Secondary School.

Interested Candidates may Send their resume through E-mail aturkimiacademy@rediffmail.com

Sd/-

Principal

Aturkimi Academy

Contact number -

9101386350/93650 19535/60030 61957