

6 WORLD

- Yemen Houthi rebels say US strikes kill 2
- 1 killed in Russian attack on Kyiv

7 NATION

- Murmu embarks on state visit to Portugal, Slovakia amid shifting global trade dynamics
- PM should allay fears of TN over delimitation exercise: Stalin

26 YEARS OF DEDICATED JOURNALISM

www.thehillstimes.in

THE HILLS TIMES

Voiced of the hills people

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

Vol .No. XXVI Issue No. 085

RNI-ASSENG/2000/12862

DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2025

PAGES 8 PRICE ₹ 8

'The BJP will serve the nation till sun and moon are there'

Weakening BJP will create hurdles in India's path to global leadership: Himanta

GUWAHATI, April 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said weakening the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will mean creating "innumerable obstacles" in India's path to attain the position of a global leader.

Addressing party workers on the occasion of the 46th foundation day of BJP here, Sarma also opined that the saffron party will serve the nation till the sun and moon will be there. "Weakening the BJP does not mean weakening any individual. It means weakening an ideology and national pride. Weakening the BJP means creating innumerable obstacles in the path to take India to the world stage," he said.

Sarma appealed to every party worker to take a pledge to make



India a global leader in the coming years. "The BJP will serve the nation till sun and moon are there, I wish the same. I appeal to all to

dedicate themselves to the service of the nation," he added.

Sarma said that many sections will try to weaken and defame the party in its march towards progress and strength in the coming period. "Social media can be used to defame and weaken the BJP. That is why, we must be strong in social media also so that we can take forward the positive things to the people," he added. The construction of the Ram temple is not only a simple temple-building process, but a bright example of freeing ourselves from the "500 years of slavery", Sarma asserted.

The CM further said that nation comes first than personal aspirations, and nothing comes ahead of the nation's interest.

"If there was no BJP, a landmark legislation like Waqf Bill would have not passed. Likewise, Section 370 would (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Centre not seeking control of Waqf Boards: Nadda

NEW DELHI, April 6: The Centre does not want to control Waqf Boards but ensure that they operate within the bounds of law so that their assets are used in promotion of education, healthcare and employment for the Muslim community, BJP president JP Nadda said on Sunday.

Addressing an event organised at the BJP headquarters here to mark the party's 46th foundation day, Nadda said governments in Turkey and many other Muslim countries have taken the Waqf properties under their control.

"We are only asking those operating (the Waqf Boards) to do it as per rules. You will have to do it as per rules," he said.

"We do not seek to control the Waqf Board. Our goal is to ensure that those managing it operate within the bounds of law and adhere to established rules. The properties and funds of the Waqf Board should be dedicated to promoting education, providing healthcare and employment opportunities for the Muslim community," the BJP chief said.

Before the address, Nadda hoisted the BJP flag at the party headquarters.

Several party leaders, including MPs and Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta, were present.

Revisiting the BJP's political journey that began with the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951, Nadda said today it has become the world's biggest political party and is in power in several states because it never deviated from its ideological foundation for votes, unlike the Congress which suffered a decline due to its "ideological dilution".

He also attributed the BJP's success to party stalwarts such as Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and I.K. Advani.

"Today, we have 240 members in Lok Sabha, 98 members in Rajya Sabha and more than 1,600 MLAs across the country. We have



just concluded our membership drive and the number of BJP members has crossed 13.5 crore. We have more than 10 lakh active party workers in the country," Nadda said.

He said BJP is the only political party that has witnessed a "scientific growth".

"Expanding the organisation and winning elections is an art and a science," he said, adding, "Though our opponents take jibes at us in Parliament, they also say we are the world's biggest party. Even our opponents recognise our strength."

Nadda said the BJP has always kept the nation first and made efforts to promote India's traditions, culture and history, and pointed out that a "magnificent" Ram temple was constructed in Ayodhya during the party's rule.

He said in the Shah Bano case, the Congress under the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi had succumbed to appeasement politics by "bowing" to pressure from certain sections of the Muslim community.

"Despite the Supreme Court calling for the emancipation of Muslim women, no one had the courage to take a decisive action," he said, adding that BJP under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi abolished triple talaq and liberated Muslim women. The BJP chief said the Modi government also gave citizenship (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

EU countries cautious on Brazil's push for new climate body

NEW DELHI, April 6: Brazil's idea to create a new multilateral body under the UN climate regime to fast-track implementation of COP decisions has triggered cautious responses from key developed countries, with Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden backing reform discussions but warning against weakening the core UN-FCCC process.

Brazil, which will host this year's UN climate conference or COP30 in Belem, has informally proposed setting up a "Climate Change Council" under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to improve how the world responds to climate change.

The idea is to speed up decision-making, coordinate efforts and improve implementation as many feel the current UN climate process is too slow and complicated.

While the Paris Agreement has helped lower projected warming since the start of the Industrial Revolution to around 2.1-2.8 degrees Celsius, the world is still off track for its 1.5 degrees Celsius goal. In fact, 2024 was the first year with global temperatures above 1.5 degrees Celsius for a full calendar year.

With climate impacts worsening and global action not keeping up, experts say real progress may now require a complete rethink of the Paris Agreement and how climate diplomacy works.

Part of a five-member delegation from EU countries that visited India last week, Germany's Deputy Special Envoy for International Climate Action Gerhard Schlaudraff told journalists that the idea was discussed at the Petersberg Climate Dialogue in Berlin in March.

He welcomed Brazil's move to start the conversation but warned against undermining the UNFCCC or the Paris Agreement.

"There is a general idea that the Brazilians put forward... but there's also the idea for everybody who was in the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

SL releases 14 Indian fishermen as a special gesture

COLOMBO, April 6: Sri Lanka on Sunday released 14 Indian fishermen as a special gesture, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched for resolving the vexed issue with a "humane approach".

The fishermen issue figured prominently during talks between Prime Minister Modi and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Saturday.

Fourteen Indian fishermen were released as a special gesture, people familiar with the matter said.

The fishermen issue is a contentious matter in India-Sri Lanka ties. There have been several alleged incidents in the past of Sri Lankan Navy personnel using force against Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait which is a narrow strip of water separating Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka. In his media statement after talks with the Sri Lankan (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Naga tribal chief urges Centre to scrap decision to fence Indo-Myanmar border

LONGWA (NAGALAND), April 6: A tribal chief in Nagaland's Mon district on Sunday urged the Centre to scrap the decision to fence the Indo-Myanmar border and to reduce the area of the Free Movement Regime (FMR).

Forty-nine-year-old chief of Angh ('king'), Tonyei Phawang claimed that people on both sides of the border in Mon district belong to the Konyak Naga tribes and they are inter-dependent as they have family members on both sides of the border.

"We do not want fencing of the Indo-Myanmar border," Phawang, the 10th generation chief of Angh told PTI at Longwa village in Mon district.

He claimed that there are 35 villages under him of which 30 are located on the other side of the international border and five are on this side.

"My own house which was originally constructed centuries ago with traditional thatch structure but reconstructed into a concrete structure at the original location in 2016 has been split into India and Myanmar by the boundary post India's independence," he said.

"Movement of our family members within the house is also international," he said.

Considering this simple fact, how is it possible for the Centre to fence the international border without

considering the ground realities, he wondered.

He also said that the Konyak villagers from the other side also come to this side for their household needs, as it is easier for them to reach Mon town for marketing and also their children come here to receive education in the five schools, including two state government-run institutes, instead of going to Myanmar side, which lacks such facilities.

He said if the Centre reduces the area under FMR and fences the Indo-Myanmar border then Konyak Nagas would suffer a lot.

He also expressed concern that his own family members would require a pass to move around within the house.

"All these would be very unfair and therefore as the Chief Angh, I hope the Centre would reconsider its decision and think for the welfare of the people at the ground," he said.

The Angh said instead of cutting down the existing 16-km Free Movement Regime (FMR) to 10 km, the Centre should consider expanding the area so that the Konyak Nagas can cross the border freely.

Phawang appreciated the Assam Rifles personnel posted in Longwa to man the international border and thwart any unwanted (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM to attend 2nd Karbi indigenous faith gathering at Taralungso on April 19



HT Bureau
DIPHU, April 6: The 2nd Karbi AronbarimArmuChingrum Amei', a gathering of indigenous faith practitioners of the Karbi community, will be held at the Karbi People's Hall, Taralungso, on

April 19, where Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is scheduled to grace the occasion as the chief guest.

Addressing a press conference at the Chief Executive Member (CEM) Guest House in Taralungso on Sunday, the

KAAC CEM Tuliran Ronghang said that the Karbis have a rich culture, language, and tradition. Since time immemorial, the Karbis have practiced their indigenous faith known as 'aronbarim,' which involves rituals including animal sacrifices.

"This traditional practice has been passed down through generations. To propagate and preserve this age-old belief, the 2nd Karbi AronbarimArmuChingrum Amei is being organized on April 19. Through this event, we aim to showcase the richness of our indigenous faith to the outside world and encourage fellow Karbis to continue practicing it. We have invited Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma as the chief guest," he added.

The CEM emphasised that the event is not intended to hurt the sentiments of other religions or to serve any political purpose. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Sonowal hoists party flag in Dibrugarh to mark BJP's 46th foundation day

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, April 6: Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) Sarbananda Sonowal hoisted the party flag to commemorate the 46th Foundation Day (Sthapana Divas) of the BJP at its office in Dibrugarh on Sunday.

"Today, on the auspicious occasion of our party's Sthapana Divas, we pay heartfelt tributes to the stalwarts who laid the ideological foundation of our party — Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee ji, Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya ji, Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, Lal Krishna Advani ji, and others whose sacrifices continue to inspire us," said Sonowal while speaking on the occasion.

He further said that under the decisive leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, the abrogation of Article 370 stands as a powerful fulfilment of Dr. Mookerjee's vision for 'One Nation, One



Constitution. One Flag.' Guided by our enduring philosophy of 'Nation First, Party Second, Self Last,' we rededicate ourselves to nation-building with integrity and unity. "This ethos is the very spirit that defines Bharat's emerging global identity," he added.

Highlighting the BJP government's good governance model, Sonowal opined that Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's visionary leadership has been the cornerstone of building a New India — one rooted in good governance and a strong national identity.

"From uplifting 25 crore people out of poverty and restoring peace in the Northeast, to championing the dignity of indigenous languages through the New Education Policy, guiding the nation through the COVID-19 pandemic, and elevating India's global stature with the spirit of 'VasudhaivaKutumbakam' — every milestone reflects PM Modi ji's unwavering commitment to an inclusive, empowered, and globally respected Bharat," he said.

Calling upon party workers to prepare for the upcoming Panchayat elections, Sonowal said (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

PM Modi inaugurates new Pamban bridge in TN, CM Stalin skips event

Built at a cost of over ₹ 550 crore, this is India's first vertical sea-lift bridge

RAMESWARAM (TAMIL NADU), April 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the Pamban sea bridge, providing rail link between Rameswaram island and the mainland and flagged off the new Rameswaram-Tambaram (Chennai) train service here.

The PM also flagged off a Coast Guard ship which passed under the bridge.

Chief Minister M K Stalin skipped the big ticket event and upped the ante on the delimitation issue and said he had already conveyed to the prime minister his inability to take part in the bridge inaugural since he had prior official commitment.

The CM was in the hill town Udhagamandalam to attend official engagements on Sunday.

PM Modi should allay the fears of people of Tamil Nadu surrounding the proposed delimitation exer-



cise, Stalin said.

The bridge is all set to improve connectivity to this spiritual destination flocked by devotees throughout the year from across the country. Built at a cost of over ₹ 550 crore, this is India's first vertical sea-lift bridge.

Spanning 2.08 kilometers, the bridge comprises 99 spans and a 72.5-meter-long vertical lift span that can be raised up to 17 meters, allowing the smooth passage of large ships while ensuring seamless train operations.

The bridge features stainless

steel reinforcement, high-grade paint, and fully welded joints, enhancing durability while reducing maintenance requirements.

Its foundation is supported by 333 piles and 101 pier/pile caps, designed for dual rail tracks and future expansion. The use of polysiloxane paint protects it from corrosion, ensuring longevity in the harsh marine environment. This bridge is a remarkable blend of tradition and technology.

In the train, school children proudly waved the tricolour and the Southern Railway has announced that select mail and express and passenger trains will now originate and terminate at Rameswaram as the new bridge has been commissioned.

According to officials, the new railway sea bridge between Mandapam railway station (mainland) and Rameswaram island is not just a (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Tendulkar bowled over by Meghalaya's scenic beauty, warm hospitality

SHILLONG, April 6: Sachin Tendulkar, who arrived in Meghalaya on Thursday, was bowled over by the state's beautiful weather, simplicity of its people and local cuisine, officials said on Sunday.

Tendulkar, who is on a family vacation with his wife, daughter and a few close acquaintances, explored some of Meghalaya's most picturesque spots.

He visited Sohra, known as the world's wettest place, during its driest season, and Mawlynnong, Asia's cleanest village, both located in the East Khasi Hills district.

"Wherever he went, fans lined up for a quick selfie and the master blaster was more than happy to pose. He was all smiles," an official close to his team told PTI.

"Sachin was bowled over by the climate of the state, the people and their hospitality and the food," he added, adding that the cricketer attracted a lot of fanfare, mostly local kids at Mawlynnong village.

Mawlynnong, which made headlines over a decade ago when it was named Asia's cleanest village, boasts a bamboo skywalk, lush orchards and traditional Khasi homes with tin roofs. A living root bridge in Nohwet adds to the village's charm.

Tendulkar also dined at the Marriott Hotel, where he savoured special dishes prepared by MasterChef India finalist Nambie Marak, showcasing the culinary delights of the Garo tribe.



She also shared her selfie with the cricket idol of yesteryears.

"Some moments are etched in your heart forever — this was one of them. I got the incredible honour of cooking for the legend, @sachintendulkar," she posted on her Instagram page.

"Like millions of others, I grew up watching him, cheering for him, holding my breath with every shot, and celebrating every time he brought home a victory for India," she said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Indian metal firms eye domestic growth, remain resilient to US tariffs

NEW DELHI, April 6: Indian metal companies are gearing up for significant expansions in the current fiscal, focusing on growing domestic demand, notwithstanding global trade headwinds.

While the United States has announced certain tariffs on metals, companies like Vedanta, JSW Steel, Hindustan Zinc, and NALCO are also betting on India's strong demand, the global race for critical minerals, and strategic geographic diversification to drive growth, analysts said.

Domestic steel demand is forecast to grow by 10 per cent annually over the next few years. Similarly, aluminium demand is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7.2 per cent till 2030.

Industry experts predict India's aluminium demand will double every

five years, supported by the Indian government's allocation of Rs 11.21 lakh crore for infrastructure development in the 2025-26 budget.

As other countries face higher tariffs, companies may look to diversify production into India, creating a positive spillover effect on domestic demand. Companies like Vedanta, Hindustan Zinc, and others with a strong domestic focus would thus be relatively insulated.

"The sharp fall in metal stocks across the board was a knee-jerk reaction. Going forward, the market will favour companies that derive the bulk of their revenues from domestic operations. Here, companies like Vedanta, Hindustan Zinc, and NALCO stand out since they are largely focused on the Indian market and their revenues

will be driven by India's growth story. We thus expect stocks of these companies to do better going forward," said an analyst at a leading domestic brokerage.

Vedanta Limited, the aluminium-toil conglomerate, has significant expansion plans for the fiscal year driven by growth in India's core sectors like infrastructure, railways, auto and defense. The company sells nearly 50 per cent of its total aluminium production in India. Vedanta's aluminium division is increasing production capacity to 3 million tonnes and has acquired one of Odisha's largest high-grade bauxite mines to support this expansion. The company said in its third-quarter earnings call that its BALCO smelter expansion is at an advanced stage, with commissioning tar-

geted in FY'26. Vedanta Aluminium aims to increase its share of value-added products to over 90 per cent, from the current 60 per cent, to capitalize on India's growing construction and electric vehicle markets.

Similarly, Vedanta's subsidiary, Hindustan Zinc Ltd. (HZL), has recently set up a 30,000 tonnes per annum zinc alloy plant in Rajasthan to cater to the growing domestic demand for value-added zinc alloys. Chairperson Priya Agarwal Hebbur recently said Hindustan Zinc has a vision of doubling its metal production to 2 million tonnes per annum within the next five years. Aluminium giant Hindalco said on its investors' day that it expects copper, e-waste recycling, and continuous copper cast rod projects to be commissioned this fiscal year. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Weakening BJP will create hurdles

have not been abolished or minority women would not have got justice from Triple talaq if there was no BJP. There would not be development in the Northeast without the BJP," he claimed. Sarma opined that the BJP has been able to leave a positive imprint in every sphere of life in Assam, and that is why it is ruling in every autonomous council, municipal council and panchayat bodies. "BJP is working to strengthen the Assamese society by uplifting the pride of the community," he added. Earlier in the morning, Sarma along with Assam BJP chief Dilip Saikia hoisted the party flag at its state headquarters in the presence of senior leaders and general members. "I pay my heartfelt tribute to the countless workers who dedicated their lives to nationalism. Under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, BJP has become a medium to fulfil the aspirations of every section of India and to re-establish the glory of India," Sarma said.

He claimed that the BJP has grown bigger than the Communist Party of China in terms of total membership. "Family-oriented politics has not entered our party so far. It has been a worker-led party and will remain so in the foreseeable future," he added. The way Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi "transformed Congress into a family-run party", the BJP will never do it and travel through that path because it is a party with a difference, Sarma claimed. (PTI)

Naga tribal chief urges Centre

movement of suspected anti-social elements for supporting the villagers in various ways, including free health services and medicines.

Asserting that there has been no untoward incident with people of both sides crossing the border but they exist peacefully and continue to uphold the age-old relationship, he urged the Centre to drop the concept of border fencing and to allow the free movement regime to continue without hindrance. "We do not want fencing of the border at any cost," he asserted.

The Nagaland government is also against the Centre's decision to fence the Indo-Myanmar and restrict the area of the FMR. (PTI)

Centre not seeking control

rights to those who came to India after facing "religious persecution" in Pakistan. "We said we will come out of the colonial mindset. Rajpath is now Kartavya Path. A statue of Subhash Chandra Bose was also installed (near India Gate). We also scrapped Article 370. We never compromised our ideological foundation," he said.

Nadda said the BJP is moving forward with the "ideological foundation" laid by B R Ambedkar who drafted the Constitution of India, while the Congress has made several attempts to hit at its "soul". He asked the party leaders and workers to reach out to people during Ambedkar Jayanti from April 14-25 and expose how the Congress tried to strike at the "fundamental spirit" of the Constitution. Nadda also asked them to spend at least one day in a booth and meet people, especially veteran party workers who were associated with Jan Sangh and the BJP in the early days.

The BJP chief later met 98-year-old Shakuntala Arya, a veteran BJP worker who served as Delhi Mayor in 1997, at her residence here.

The BJP Foundation Day was celebrated across several states including Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. In Uttar Pradesh, chief minister Yogi Adityanath hoisted the party flag atop the Hindu Sevashram building within the Goraknath temple premises. He also took a selfie with party officials in front of the flag.

In Maharashtra's Thane, district BJP president Sanjay Waghule said several workers from Shiv Sena, Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) joined the BJP in the foundation day celebrations. (PTI)

EU countries cautious on Brazil's

room that the UNFCCC is right now the best thing we have and we should not throw it away," Schlaudraff said. He said the UN climate process is an "expression of working multilateralism, where everybody has the same say at the table (and) every voice can be heard".

Schlaudraff also said that one should not expect from COPs or the UNFCCC process what it cannot deliver. "Every year, the expectation is that the COPs will solve the climate crisis and that's not realistic," he said. The German envoy said it's important to look at what works and what does not work. As the world moves towards implementation of commitments, it's very clear that what is inside the UNFCCC and what is outside need to be brought together. How exactly to do this is not easy, he admitted. (PTI)

Sonowal hoists party

as the world's largest democracy prepares for the general elections, with over 27,000 candidates expected to contest, it is time for every party worker to rise in unity. Under the visionary leadership of PM Modi ji, India's transformation — from global recognition by nations like the US, Japan, and European countries to developmental strides across sectors — must be shared with every citizen. "Let us strengthen grassroots outreach, earn public trust, and secure a resounding mandate. This will further catalyse India's journey towards becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047," he stated.

Sonowal was joined by Assam minister and Dibrugarh MLA Prashanta Phukan, BJP Dibrugarh district president Dulal Bora, Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation mayor Saikat Patra and deputy mayor Ujjal Phukan.

Also present were BJP Assam Pradesh spokesperson Subhash Dutta, senior party leader Hemprabha Barthakur, and Dibrugarh District Mahila Morcha president Mamun Gogoi Mitra, who reaffirmed their commitment to the party's ideals and public service.

CM to attend 2nd Karbi

"Keeping aside ideological differences, all believers of the indigenous faith are welcome to participate. We expect a gathering of nearly 2 lakh people from Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong. Karbis living outside these districts — in Dima Hasao, Silchar, Sonitpur, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh — are also expected to attend," he added.

The day will begin with 'bongkrokarmamekpu' — a ritual invoking deities by holding a bitter gourd — followed by the singing of the Karbi indigenous faith anthem. In the afternoon, the chief minister will address the gathering.

The CEM further informed that the KAAC has allotted 5,000 bighas of land at Langvoku, where ritual sites and other development initiatives related to the indigenous faith will be undertaken. Explaining the significance of the faith, the CEM said, "It is believed that performing rituals and offering animal sacrifices helps cure illnesses and diseases. With this belief, Karbis continue to uphold their ancestral practices." He also extended an invitation to members of other religious communities and tribes to witness the mega event and understand how the Karbi indigenous faith is practiced.

Former MLA and chief adviser Dhoromsing Teron stressed the importance of continuing the practice of aronbarim to preserve and strengthen Karbi culture and traditions. "If aronbarim is lost, our culture and traditions will be lost. It must be preserved and practiced," he said.

The press conference was also attended by MP Amarsing Tisso, MLA Darsing Ronghang — who is the president of the reception committee for the event — executive member of KAAC Lunsing Teron, and other dignitaries.

Modi inaugurates new Pamban

replacement for the old Pamban Bridge; it represents a colossal leap in India's engineering capabilities. The most notable feature of the new Pamban bridge is its state-of-the-art vertical lift mechanism, "an engineering marvel," making it the first vertical lift railway sea bridge in India.

The new bridge employs a vertical lift 72-meter central span that rises 22 meter above the water, allowing larger vessels to pass beneath with ease. Under rail traffic, the bridge remains simply supported at two ends thus ensuring absolute stability.

"While the new Pamban Bridge is India's first vertical lift sea bridge, it shares similarities with other globally recognized bridges known for their technological advancements and unique designs. These include the Golden Gate Bridge in the United States, Tower Bridge in London and the Oresund Bridge in Denmark-Sweden. Each of these iconic structures, though different in design and functionality, represents a pinnacle of engineering excellence. The new Pamban Bridge stands proudly in their company, combining cutting-edge technology with the challenges posed by India's coastal and seismic conditions," according to the Southern Railway. (PTI)

Tendulkar bowled over by

Nambie said Sachin was "So calm, kind, and humble," and that he also showed her how to take a better selfie. "To meet the man who gave us countless unforgettable memories on screen, and to cook for him, it still feels surreal. Some dreams do come true. This one came with goosebumps," she said. Tendulkar and his family also enjoyed a family picnic time on the outskirts of town near where they stayed at a private resort with a view of the scenic Umiam Lake.

The master blaster is expected to host a high tea with chief minister Conrad K Sangma at his resort before proceeding to the Kaziranga National Park in Assam and spending some time there. He is scheduled to return to Mumbai on April 9. (PTI)

SL releases 14 Indian

president, Modi called for adopting a "humane approach" on the matter. "We also discussed issues related to fishermen's livelihood. We agreed that we should proceed with a humane approach in this matter," Modi said in his media statement after meeting Dissanayake.

"We also emphasised on immediate release of the fishermen and their boats," he said. At a media briefing on Saturday, foreign secretary Vikram Misri said the fishermen issue was discussed in "considerable detail" between the two sides.

"As the prime minister said himself during his remarks, there was emphasis on the need to adopt a humanitarian and constructive approach to cooperation on these issues because these are ultimately issues that impact the livelihood of fishermen on both sides of the Palk Bay," he said.

"The prime minister emphasised that at the end of the day, it is a daily issue for the fishermen and that certain actions that have been taken in recent times could be reconsidered," Misri said. The foreign secretary said both sides also emphasised the need to intensify the institutional discussions on the issue. "Both sides are in touch with each other on the possibility of convening the next round of fishermen's association talks between Sri Lanka and India," he said. The prime minister concluded his three-day trip to Sri Lanka on Sunday. (PTI)

Women hold 39.2% of bank accounts in India, 42.2% in rural areas: Mospi

NEW DELHI, April 6: Women own 39.2 per cent of bank accounts in the country and the proportion is even higher at 42.2 per cent in rural areas, according to a government report.

The Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry (Mospi) released the 26th edition of its publication titled Women and Men in India 2024: Selected Indicators and Data on Sunday.

The publication offers a comprehensive overview of the gender landscape in India, presenting selected indicators and data across key areas like population, education, health, economic participation, and decision-making, all sourced from various Ministries/ Departments/Organizations.

A MOSPI statement said that the report highlights that women own 39.2 per cent of all bank accounts and contribute to 39.7 per cent of total deposits.

Their participation is the highest in rural areas, where they make up 42.2 per cent of account holders.

It stated that there is a rise in DEMAT accounts over the years, indicating growing participation in the stock market. From March 31, 2021, to November 30, 2024, the total number of DEMAT accounts increased from 33.26 million to 143.02 million, marking more than a fourfold rise.

Male account holders have consistently outnumbered female account holders, but female participation has also shown a growing trend.

The number of male accounts rose from 26.59 million in 2021 to 115.31 million in 2024, while female accounts increased from 6.67 million to 27.71 million during the same period.

International SOS Supply partners with healthcare Consultants International

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, April 6: International SOS Supply, a leading specialist in providing medical supplies and contributing to the overall improvement of health in the remotest corners of the world, has partnered with Healthcare Consultants International (HCI), a premier provider in the turnkey supply of medical equipment packages and related services. This strategic collaboration will see both parties working together to enhance healthcare provisions and improve patient services in select focus markets.

This partnership will enable International SOS Supply and Healthcare Consultants International to provide hospital projects with seamless and efficient support for the full planning and provision of medical equipment, including design, supply, installation, training, and maintenance.

The collaboration brings together the industry-leading strengths and expertise encompassing project management, design, procurement, logistics, commissioning, training, and maintenance. It will primarily be focused on

By combining our strengths, we are well-positioned to drive innovation and improve patient outcomes on a number of projects already in the pipeline, as well as enhancing future medical facilities and services. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration that will benefit both our organisations and the customers we serve."

Rob Whitty, CEO of Healthcare Consultants International, commented, "We are excited to embark on this partnership with International SOS. As part of our ecosystem of partners and equipment suppliers who want to have a positive impact on patients, we are delighted to partner with International SOS who share the same ethos. Our combined expertise and resources will undoubtedly lead to significant advancements in healthcare delivery and infrastructure in the regions we serve. Together, we are poised to make a meaningful impact on the lives of many."



RUNNING OF SUMMER SPECIAL TRAINS					
It has been decided to run 06559/06560 SMVT Bengaluru-Naranggi, 05932/05931 Dibrugarh-Kolkata & 05639/05640 Silchar-Kolkata special trains to clear extra rush of passengers during Summer season 2025. The details are as under:					
Train No. 06559 From SMVT Bengaluru from 08 th , 15 th , 22 nd , 29 th April 2025 = 04 Trips (Tuesday)			Train No. 06560 From Naranggi from 12 th , 19 th , 26 th April 2025 & 03 rd May 2025 = 04 Trips (Saturday)		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	23:40	SMVT Bengaluru	09:45	---	
18:45	18:50	Simhachalam North	14:40	14:45	
07:00	07:10	Kharagpur Jn.	02:55	03:05	
16:05	16:15	Malda Town	19:00	19:10	
19:55	20:05	New Jalpaiguri	14:25	14:35	
00:50	01:00	New Bongaigaon	09:45	09:55	
02:35	02:40	Rangliya	07:16	07:21	
04:10	04:12	Kamakhya	06:30	06:32	
04:25	04:40	Guwahati	06:00	06:15	
05:00	---	Naranggi	---	05:30	
Other Stoppages: Krishnarajapuram, Bangarapet, Jolarpettai, Katpadi Jn., Renigunta Jn., Gudur Jn., Ongole, Vijayawada Jn., Rajamundry, Duvvada, Kottavalasa, Vizianagram Jn., Srikakulam Road, Palasa, Brahmapur, Khurda Road Jn., Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bhadrakh, Balasore, Dankuni, Bolpur Shantiniketan, Rampur Hat, New Farakka Jn., Barsoi Jn., Kishanganj, Aluabari Road, Jalpaiguri Road, New Coochbehar, New Alipurduar & Barpeta Road.					
Composition: A/C 2-tier (Two), A/C 3-tier (Six), Sleeper Class (Eight), Second Class (Two), Brake, Luggage cum Generator Car (Two) = 20 Coaches.					
Train No. 05932 From Dibrugarh from 12-04-2025 to 28-06-2025 = 12 Trips (Saturday)			Train No. 05931 From Kolkata from 13-04-2025 to 29-06-2025 = 12 Trips (Sunday)		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	17:20	Dibrugarh	06:30	---	
19:38	19:40	North Lakhimpur	03:52	03:54	
23:13	23:15	Rangapar North	00:25	00:30	
01:50	02:15	Rangliya	21:00	21:25	
12:05	12:15	New Jalpaiguri	13:45	13:55	
17:10	17:20	Malda Town	09:10	09:20	
19:38	19:43	Azimganj	06:10	06:15	
00:30	---	Kolkata	---	02:30	
Other Stoppages: Dhemaji, Harmuti Jn., Viswanath Chariali, Udalguri, New Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, New Alipurduar, New Coochbehar, Aluabari Road, Kishanganj, Barsoi, New Farakka, Jangipur Road, Katwa, Nabadwip Dham, Bandel & Naihati Jn.					
Composition: A/C 2-tier (Two), A/C 3-tier (Six), Sleeper Class (Seven), Second Class (Four), Brake, Luggage cum Generator Car (One), LSLRD (One) = 21 LHB Coaches.					
Train No. 05639 From Silchar from 10-04-2025 to 26-06-2025 = 12 Trips (Thursday)			Train No. 05640 From Kolkata from 11-04-2025 to 27-06-2025 = 12 Trips (Friday)		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	05:00	Silchar	23:50	---	
08:32	08:34	New Haflong	19:27	19:29	
15:25	15:40	Guwahati	12:30	12:35	
19:10	19:15	New Bongaigaon	06:55	07:05	
00:30	00:40	New Jalpaiguri	01:45	01:55	
04:50	05:00	Malda Town	21:00	21:10	
10:06	10:08	Bandel	15:10	15:12	
12:05	---	Kolkata	---	13:15	
Other Stoppages: Badarpur, New Harangajao, Maibong, Lumding, Lanka, Hojai, Kamakhya, Goalpara Town, Kokrajhar, Gosaigaon Hat, New Alipurduar, New Coochbehar, Dhupguri, Aluabari Road, Kishanganj, Barsoi, Kumedpur, New Farakka, Jangipur Road, Azimganj Jn., Katwa, Nabadwip Dham, & Naihati Jn.					
Composition: A/C 2-tier (One), A/C 3-tier (Four), Sleeper Class (Thirteen), GSLR (Two) = 20 ICF Coaches.					
General Manager (Operations), Maligaon					
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY					

Admission Notice

Some seats are vacant for OBC non-creamy layer and Scheduled Caste students in class Balvatika-3 and class-1 in PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya Diphu. Interested parents can register offline in the school from 8 am to 1 pm from 08.04.2025 to 14.04.2025. The details of the vacancies are as follows-

Class	Number of vacant seats for OBC-NCL	Number of vacant seats for Schedule Cast	Age criteria for students as on 31.03.2025
Class- Balvatika-3	10	0	5 Years but less than 6 Years
Class-1	10	2	6 Years but less than 8 Years

For more information, parents can contact the school or log in to the school's website at <http://diphu.kvs.ac.in>.

Sd/-
Principal

LOST

I, Sony Hanse of Diphu, P.O. & P.S. Diphu, district Karbi Anglong, Assam, has lost my following documents viz. PAN Card (No. AZPH5339Q), Voter ID (No. HYG0571679), Aadhar Card (No. 991176594514) and driving license (N o . A S O 9 20210003401) on 30th March, 2025 in Diphu town, while I was travelling.

Litterateur Bhadreswar Rajkhuwa remembered

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, April 6: A special programme was organized on Sunday at the Kamaladevi Todi Bhawan, the Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha to commemorate the late Bhadreswar Rajkhuwa, a noted Assamese storyteller and literary figure from the Ramdhenru era.

The programme was presided over by Sarat Borkatoki, the president of the Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha while Rajib Kr Hazarika, secretary of Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha mentored the entire programme.

In his welcome address, Hojai District Commissioner and Rajkhuwa's son-in-law, Bidyut Bikash Bhagwati, spoke about Rajkhuwa's life and literary contributions.

Bhagwati said that Rajkhuwa's life was a reflection of his simplicity and humility. Despite being from a wealthy family, Rajkhuwa lived a simple life and was known for his friendly nature.

Bhagwati also highlighted Rajkhuwa's literary achievements, saying that his writings reflected the lives of ordinary people and their struggles.

The programme also saw the unveiling of a book titled "Jetuka Patat Dore", a collection of tributes to Rajkhuwa edited by Assamese scribe Pranjal Bordoloi. The book was unveiled by noted children's writer Trailokya Bhattacharya.

In his speech, Bhattacharya spoke about Rajkhuwa's literary contributions, saying that his writings were heart-touching and reflected the beauty of rural life. He also emphasized the importance of understanding children's psychology in writing children's literature.

100 Bathou Thansalis to receive financial support this HT: Himanta

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday attended the open session of the 32nd Annual Conference of the Dularai Bathou Goutham (All Bathou Mahasabha), held at Pathalokuchi in Tamulpur.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarma observed that the All Bathou Mahasabha, founded on May 15 in 1992 under the leadership of Rupnath Basumatary and Baneswar Basumatary, has had a significant impact upon the religious, spiritual, cultural, and linguistic consciousness of the Bodo community. He expressed respect for these founding figures and for all individuals who have remained associated with the Mahasabha since its establishment.

The CM observed that the customary practices, religious rites, and ceremonial traditions of Assam's indigenous communities, including those of the Bodo people, have contributed meaningfully to the cultural corpus of the state and to the wider ethnocultural landscape of the nation. He remarked that the acknowledgement, safeguarding, and systematic promotion of these cultural attributes constitute an immediate priority. In addressing this necessity, he stated that the Government of Assam has established a distinct administrative body - the Department of Indigenous and Tribal Faith and Culture - tasked with the sustained support, advancement, and conser-

Revered festival honours birth of Lord Rama, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu

Ram Navami celebration grips Tinsukia as devotees submerge into religious fervour



HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, April 6: More than 5000 people gathered to mark the auspicious festival of Ram Navami Utsav 2025 in Tinsukia on Sunday. This year's festivities reached unprecedented heights, blending timeless spiritual traditions with a breathtaking mass wedding ceremony that saw 32 couples embark on a new chapter of life together, making it a day to remember for the ages.

Ram Navami, the revered festi-

val honouring the birth of Lord Rama, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu and a timeless symbol of righteousness in Sanatan Dharma unfolded with unparalleled grandeur.

The Adivasi/Tea Tribes belonging to Hindu communities from Margherita, Dirok, Namdang Tea Estates and Lama Gaon, alongside the spirited residents of Margherita town, united in a spectacular showcase of devotion, culture, brotherhood and communal harmony.

The day kicked off with a jaw-dropping religious procession that swept through the region like a tidal wave of faith with over 5,000 devotees poured into the streets, their voices rising in unison with soul-stirring chants, accompanied by the rhythmic beats of traditional music and dazzling devotional displays as the air buzzed with energy as the procession painted the town in hues of spirituality, drawing onlookers into its magnetic embrace and

forging an unforgettable sense of togetherness said Sanjay Tanti one of the member of Ram Navami celebration committee.

But the true showstopper of the day came at the heart of the celebration a monumental mass wedding ceremony held at the same venue as in a scene straight out of a fairy tale, 32 couples exchanged vows under the blessings of Lord Rama, their unions symbolizing not just love, but the strength and solidarity of the community said Sanjay Tanti.

The sight of so many lives intertwining in one glorious moment added a layer of profound joy to the already electric atmosphere, leaving spectators in awe of the scale and significance of the event, from the rhythmic chants echoing through the playground to the radiant smiles of newlyweds, the Ram Navami festivities in Margherita were a testament to the power of tradition and the beauty of collective celebration, as organisers and attendees alike hailed the day as a triumph of faith and humanity, with the mass wedding standing out as a bold and heart-warming milestone for Margherita region said Binud Munda.

As the sun set on this historic Sunday, Margherita stood proud its streets still humming with the echoes of devotion and its people forever bonded by a day that blended the divine with the deeply human, as this wasn't just a festival it was a legacy in the making a story of love, faith and unity that will be told for generations to come, said Sanjay Tanti.

RPF recover contraband items worth more than ₹ 75 lakh



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 6: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway has recovered contraband goods worth more than ₹ 75 lakh during the month of March, 2025. RPF also apprehended 18 persons for alleged involvement in transportation of contraband/smuggled goods during this period. Moreover, RPF of N. F. Railway is regularly conducting drives to control the menace of touts. In recently conducted checks and drives over the zone during the month of March, 2025, RPF apprehended 7 touts and recovered 32 railway tickets worth above ₹ 99,000 from them.

In a recent incident on March 24, RPF of Dimapur conducted a routine checking at Dimapur railway station. During the checking RPF apprehended one person and recovered 10.85 grams of Brown

sugar worth ₹ 2.17 lakhs (approx). Later, the apprehended person along with the recovered Brown Sugar was handed over to OC/GRP/Dimapur for necessary legal action.

Moreover, in an incident on March 19, 2025, RPF, CPDS and CIB team of New Jalpaiguri jointly conducted a raid & search operation at PRS Kanki. During the raid, the team recovered 06 PRS Tickets worth around ₹ 24,365/- and apprehended one tout in this connection. A case was registered under section 143 of the Railways Act for further course of action.

It may be mentioned here that RPF of N F Railway are constantly on vigil towards activities related to smuggling and transportation of contraband items at railway stations & trains and unauthorized & illegal procurement of railway tickets.

Ram Navami procession in Dibrugarh

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, April 6: Dibrugarh Safron Army organised rally on the occasion of Ram Navami in Dibrugarh on Sunday.

Around thousand people participated in the rally with great enthusiasm.

The members chanted 'Jai Sri Ram' holding flags. The procession started from PN Road in Dibrugarh where youths participated in large numbers.

State cabinet minister and Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan and DMC Mayor Dr Saikat Patra participated in the Ram Navami procession.

Speaking to reporters, Prasanta Phukan said, "On the occasion of Ram Navami, a huge procession was taken out. We should spread the message of brotherhood and unity. Ram Navami has a religious significance and we should spread the message of Lord Ram."

DMC Mayor Saikat Patra congratulated the organising committee for organising the event.

"We should follow the path of Lord Ram and from today we should take pledge that we will be united. Many forces tried to divide us but we should remember that we are Hindus and we should be united at any cost," said Mithun Debnath, a Hindutva leader and social activist.

The procession passed through the main streets of Dibrugarh.



Female dancers participating in closing ceremony of Bihu Workshop called Hepahar Rongali at Janata Bhawan Field in Guwahati on Sunday. HT photo

RPP seeks list of beneficiaries for distribution of rice in Nagaland

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, April 6: The Rising People's Party (RPP) on Sunday urged the Nagaland food and civil supplies department to publicise the list of beneficiaries for distribution of rice under the tide-over category within 10 days in the interest of transparency and accountability. In a release, the party said the matter is serious as the issue pertains to the distribution of 3,17,563.04 MT of tide-over rice issued by the Union ministry of consumer affairs to the state between 2018 and (October) 2024.

Quoting RTI documents, it said it was surprising that the department claimed not to have the names of beneficiaries under the tide-over category. It said as per the ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution, letter no. F.NO.15-33/2015-NFSA dated

December 7, 2015, the states were directed to "digitize beneficiary database and upload in the state portal before the implementation of the NFSA, 2013".

Further, the RPP said, as per the ministry's letter no. F. No. 15-62/2022-NFSA dated 27/01/2023, "The state government shall place the list of the identified eligible households in the public domain and display it prominently." According to the party, in another strange claim, the department said "the distribution of rice is done by the stockiest themselves". "Be as it may, the stockiest/handling agents/ carriage contractors should be having the names of the beneficiaries," it said.

The party, therefore, urged commissioner and secretary of the department to upload these names in public domain, such as department website, state portal, etc.

Bihu workshop in North Guwahati

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 6: Under the initiative of the North Guwahati Students' Union and in collaboration with Rudraksha Cultural Art Niketan, a Bihu Dance and Dhol performance Workshop is being organized this year as well, just like every year.

Renowned instructors for the workshop include Internationally acclaimed Bihu artist Ritupan Kachari, actress and nationally recognised Bihu performer Kunwali Hazarika, National-level acclaimed dhol artist Dheeraj Gogoi, And popular Bihu performers Preeti Baishya, Simakshi Bora, and Dipasha Das.

The workshop will be held from April 6 to April 13 at North Guwahati Girls' High School.

'Humare Hanuman' to be organised from April 9

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 6: With the aim of connecting the youth generation with religion and spirituality along with social service, NGO Chetna Ladies Club is going to organise a motivational program called 'Humare Hanuman'.

President Asha Agarwal said that this grand motivational programme will be organised at Pragiyoti IITA Cultural Center in Machkhowa on April 9 and 10 from 3.30 pm onwards. Renowned motivational speaker Pandit Vijay Shankar Mehta will be present as the keynote speaker on this occasion. She further said that a motivational program called 'Humare Hanuman' is being organized for the first time in the Northeast under the banner of Chetna Ladies Club, which will be a unique and popular program in itself. Club Secretary Renu Mangalunia said that on the first day, the keynote speaker will specially guide the youth on the analysis of Sunderdand related to life management. On the second day, he will throw light on the spiritual and managerial perspective of Hanuman Chalisa.

Dhubri youths launch heartwarming initiative to quench thirst of street animals

Efforts culminated in the placement of these water-filled pots at ten strategic locations across the city



HT Correspondent

DHUBRI, April 6: A wave of compassion is sweeping through Dhubri town as a group of nature-loving youth has taken a remarkable step to alleviate the suffering of stray animals during the scorching heat. Spearheaded by prominent local youth icon, Dipankar Majumdar, the initiative involves providing readily accessible drinking water for free ranging animals like cows, dogs, and birds flying the region.

Driven by their own initiative and resources, the young volunteers procured essential items, including numerous earthen pots. Their efforts culminated in the placement of these water-filled pots at ten strategic locations across the city. This thoughtful gesture aims to provide much-needed relief to animals struggling with dehydration under the intense summer sun.

The initiative, led by Dipankar Majumdar, has garnered widespread appreciation from the

residents of Dhubri. Many men and women have lauded the youth for their empathy and proactive approach towards animal welfare. To successfully implement this program, was supported by Nitai Rajbanshi, Tanmoy Kundu, Gouranga Biswas, Rudraneel Ghosh, Poulomi Paul, Tapan Das, and Majumdar's senior associate Madhab Chandra Paul, Secretary of SBIPA, Dhubri Zone.

Furthermore, demonstrating a strong sense of community spirit, several individuals have voluntarily taken on the daily responsibility of refilling the earthen pots with fresh water, ensuring the animals have a constant supply.

The sight of these water-filled pots has become a talking point in Dhubri, with many citizens expressing their admiration for the young volunteers. Comments circulating amongst the public highlight the initiative as a "good sign for society," acknowledging the kindness and attention being paid to the basic needs of often overlooked street animals.

This selfless act by the youth of Dhubri is not only providing immediate relief to thirsty animals but also setting a commendable example of compassion and community engagement for others to follow. The initiative stands as a testament to the positive impact that a small group of dedicated individuals can have on their community and its voiceless inhabitants.

Protests in parts of Imphal Valley over Waqf Amendment Act

IMPHAL, April 6: Protests were held in different parts of Imphal Valley against the Waqf (Amendment) Act on Sunday.

Over 5,000 people participated in a rally that disrupted the traffic on NH 102 at Lilong in Thoubal district.



In some places, the protesters got engaged in a scuffle with the security forces, officials said.

One such incident happened at Irong Chesaba in Thoubal in the morning. The scuffle broke out after the demonstrators were stopped by the forces from moving forward.

The demonstrators raised slogans against the BJP-led government at the Centre, decriing the contentious Act.

"The Waqf Amendment Act is against the ethos of the Constitution. It is completely unacceptable

for the Muslim community," said Sakir Ahmed, a protester.

Protests were also held in Kshatri Awang Leikai, Kairang Muslim and Kiyamei Muslim areas in Imphal East, and Sora in Thoubal district, among other places.

Security has been strengthened in Muslim-dominated areas of the Valley, with additional forces deployed, officials said.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on Thursday, and by the Rajya Sabha in the early hours of Friday after marathon debates in both Houses of Parliament.

The Act aims to streamline the management of Waqf properties (assets permanently donated by Muslims for religious or charitable purposes) with provisions to safeguard heritage sites and promote social welfare. It also seeks to improve governance by enhancing transparency in property management, streamlining coordination between Waqf boards and local authorities and protecting stakeholders' rights. President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the bill on Saturday. (PTI)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The most effective way to do it, is to do it
-Amelia Earhart

US tariffs and future

On April 2, US President Donald Trump announced what amounts to a dramatic escalation of the trade war initiated during his first term. Addressing a crowd of auto union workers at a Rose Garden event at the White House, the president revealed the details of his plan to reset the United States' relationship with its trading partners, framing his tariffs as a "declaration of economic independence." The historical record, of course, begs to differ, though economic history does not seem to be Trump's forte. At one point during his address, the president opined that the United States was "proportionally the richest" between 1789 and 1913, when trade barriers were in place, and that the Great Depression of the 1930s would have not occurred as it had if the ultraprotectionist 1930 Smoot Hawley Tariff Act had stayed in place longer. Economic historians generally agree that the disastrous set of tariffs on over 20,000 imported goods worsened the Depression. And according to ad hoc estimates done by Evercore ISI, a prominent advisory firm for investment banks, the weighted average tariff rate of the "Liberation Day" measures were just under 30 percent, compared to the 20 percent of Smoot Hawley.

After his historical digression, the president produced a chart of countries with corresponding tariff rates and went through them one by one. Initial reports from the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg indicated that there would be a 10 percent blanket tariff on all imports. This turned out to be only part of the picture. The dollar slid sharply, and stock market futures and economic commentators were jolted by the revelation that most major trading partners would be subject to "reciprocal discounted tariffs" based on effective tariff rates that are claimed to account for nontariff barriers like value-added taxes and currency manipulation. Vietnam's tariff rate for the United States, for instance, is said to be 90 percent, based on which the United States would impose a reciprocal "discounted" (by 50 percent) rate of 45 percent. Other offenders include the European Union (20 percent), Japan (24 percent), and China (34 percent).

According to the text of the corresponding executive order, these reciprocal tariffs will be added to existing ones, yielding a rate of 54 percent for China. The United States' largest trading partners — those that were set to suffer the greatest economic hit, Canada and Mexico — are exempt from this reciprocal rate. Goods compliant with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement signed during Trump's first term, are not, it seems, subject to the 10 percent additional blanket tariff. The same will hold for goods that have already come under sectoral tariffs, such as autos and steel. The 25 percent tariffs on "foreign made" autos will come into effect at midnight on Thursday. These carve outs, though relieving, will be cold comfort for many across the border, since both Mexico and Canada are already facing the prospect of recessions induced by Trump's policies. While there are methods to quantify nontariff barriers, the numbers displayed by Trump are by all appearances made up.

Assam Panchayat elections 2025:
A crucial test for grassroots democracy

As Assam gears up for the Panchayat elections scheduled in two phases on May 2 and May 7, 2025, the state is set to witness an intense political atmosphere in the coming weeks. Though not as glamorous as Assembly or Parliamentary elections, these three-tier rural elections play a pivotal role in decentralizing power and bringing governance closer to the people. Over the years, Panchayat elections have evolved from being low-key affairs to politically charged events characterized by aggressive campaigning and high voter participation. This transformation underscores the increasing political consciousness among rural voters and their growing stake in governance and development.

The significance of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) lies in their potential to empower the rural populace, giving them direct involvement in decision-making processes. However, for these institutions to function effectively, it is imperative that they remain free from corruption, partisanship, and inefficiency. The challenge before the electorate is not just to vote wisely but also to actively monitor the performance of their elected representatives to ensure accountability.

The Election Framework and Schedule The Assam State Election Commission (ASEC) officially announced the Panchayat Election 2025 schedule on April 3, 2025. The elections will take place in two phases—May 2 and May 7—with counting scheduled for May 11. These elections will be held across 27 districts, excluding Sixth Schedule districts, which operate outside the Panchayati Raj framework. With the model code of conduct coming into immediate effect, political parties have intensified their campaigns, striving to secure victories in crucial constituencies.

According to the election timeline, the issue of the Notice of Election by district commissioners began on April 3, allowing candidates to file their nominations until April 11. Scrutiny of nomination papers was conducted on April 12, followed by a deadline for withdrawal of candidature on April 17. The final list of contesting candidates was published the same day.

The first phase of polling will be conducted in Upper Assam and Barak Valley districts, including Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Charaideo, Sivassagar, Majuli, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Biswanath, Cachar, Hailakandi, and Sribhumi. Any poll, if required, will take place on May 4. The second phase will be held in Lower and Middle Assam districts, including Dhubri, South Salmara-Mankachar, Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Bar-



peta, Bajali, Nalbari, Kamrup, Kamrup (Metro), Hojai, Nagaon, Morigaon, and Darrang, with a re-poll date set for May 9.

Polling hours are fixed from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM for both phases, and the elections will be conducted using paper ballots due to the unavailability of enough Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

Political Dynamics and the Role of the Opposition

Despite the importance of these elections, the Opposition has remained relatively passive in its approach. While the ruling BJP-led coalition has exhibited an aggressive electoral strategy, the Congress-led Opposition has yet to announce a clear alliance or strategy. Given its weak standing following multiple electoral setbacks, the Opposition's lack of preparedness could significantly impact the electoral outcome. Internal conflicts within opposition parties have further diluted their ability to present a united front against the ruling coalition.

For political parties, Panchayat elections serve as a crucial test of their grassroots support and influence. The BJP-led government, having implemented various rural development programs, is looking to consolidate its hold in rural Assam. Meanwhile, the Opposition's inability to mobilize effectively may further erode its standing, reducing its ability to challenge the ruling alliance in future electoral contests.

Voter Base and Electoral Infrastructure

The total number of registered voters for the 2025 Panchayat elections stands at 1,80,36,682, reflecting a 13.27% increase from the 2018 elections, which had

1,56,41,456 voters. This voter base consists of 9,071,264 male voters, 8,965,010 female voters, and 408 others. To facilitate the electoral process, 25,007 polling stations have been established across the participating districts.

The election will determine representatives for 21,920 Gaon Panchayat (GP) members, 2,192 Anchalik Panchayat members, and 397 Zilla Parishad members. Notably, the GP elections will be apolitical, meaning candidates will not be allowed to use party symbols, instead relying on free symbols designated by the ASEC. However, candidates contesting for Anchalik Panchayats and Zilla Parishads are permitted to use political party symbols.

Significantly, 50% of all seats across Panchayat levels are reserved for women, reinforcing efforts to ensure gender inclusivity in rural governance. Additional reservations exist for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) candidates, further promoting equitable representation.

Financial and Regulatory Aspects

To curb excessive expenditure and maintain fairness in the electoral process, the ASEC has set expenditure limits for candidates: ₹ 10 lakh for Zilla Parishad members, ₹ 2.5 lakh for Anchalik Panchayat members, and ₹ 25,000 for GP members. A toll-free complaint number will be available in each district to report violations of the model code of conduct.

Additionally, 88 election observers will oversee the election process to ensure compliance with electoral norms. The affidavits submitted by candidates contesting for Anchalik Panchayat and Zilla

Parishad positions will be made publicly accessible on the ASEC's website, enhancing transparency.

Unlike previous elections, no direct election will be held for the post of Gaon Panchayat president. Instead, the elected GP members will internally select a president from among themselves. Each GP consists of ten members, reinforcing a decentralized approach to leadership selection.

Challenges and the Way Forward

While the Panchayati Raj system was envisioned as a vehicle for grassroots empowerment and rural development, its effectiveness depends on the integrity and efficiency of its elected representatives. Corruption, political partisanship, and inefficiency remain key challenges. Without proper oversight, there is a risk that instead of decentralizing power and governance, the system may merely decentralize corruption and inefficiency.

It is imperative that voters not only exercise their franchise judiciously but also hold their representatives accountable post-election. The rural electorate has the power to influence the pace and direction of development by electing competent representatives and ensuring transparency in governance.

Moreover, the growing influence of social media in shaping public opinion presents both opportunities and challenges. While it can serve as a tool for political awareness and mobilization, it can also contribute to misinformation and communal polarization. Hence, responsible electoral participation, informed decision-making, and a commitment to democratic values are essential for strengthening the Panchayati Raj system.

The 2025 Assam Panchayat elections represent a crucial juncture for grassroots democracy in the state. With a growing voter base, increased political engagement, and reserved representation for marginalized groups, these elections have the potential to shape rural governance in significant ways. However, for the system to truly serve its intended purpose, both the electorate and the elected must prioritize accountability, transparency, and development over personal and political gains.

As Assam moves towards these elections, the responsibility lies with voters to make informed choices and with political leaders to uphold the spirit of democracy.

In doing so, the state can ensure that the Panchayati Raj Institutions remain a powerful instrument for grassroots empowerment and sustainable development. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com)

UNNATI 2024: A catalyst for Assam's economic renaissance

By: Shashanka Das

The Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme (UNNATI) 2024 emerges as a beacon of industrial resurgence in Assam, an initiative meticulously crafted to address economic imbalances and stimulate sustainable development. With a strategic framework that focuses on industrial expansion, employment generation, and infrastructural modernization, UNNATI 2024 aims to elevate Assam's economic landscape to new heights. The scheme's approach is designed not only to accelerate growth but also to create an inclusive and self-sustaining industrial ecosystem that caters to the state's unique socio-economic challenges.

One of the most commendable aspects of UNNATI 2024 is its targeted approach to bridging the developmental disparities between Assam and the more industrially advanced states of India. Historically, Assam has faced infrastructural deficits, logistical challenges, and limited industrial activity despite its rich natural resources and strategic location. Through substantial financial incentives, policy reforms, and the establishment of industrial corridors, UNNATI 2024 seeks to integrate Assam more effectively into India's broader economic framework. The scheme prioritizes inclusive development, ensuring that Assam's industries and small enterprises gain access to national and global markets, thereby fostering regional economic parity.

Industrialization is intrinsically linked to employment generation, and UNNATI 2024 recognizes this correlation. The scheme introduces structured policies to foster skill development, ensuring that Assam's workforce is equipped with industry-relevant expertise. By partnering with vocational training institutes and industrial training centers, the scheme creates an ecosystem where skilled labor becomes the backbone of industrial growth. Additionally, special incentives for women entrepreneurs and self-help groups serve to encourage greater participation in Assam's industrial workforce, further diversifying and strengthening the employment sector. By enabling individuals with specialized training and resources, the initiative enhances employability, reduces migration, and fosters a workforce that is competitive at both national and global levels.

Unlike traditional industrialization models that often overlook environmental sustainability, UNNATI 2024 embraces a green industrial framework. Assam, with its lush biodiversity and fragile ecosystem, stands to benefit immensely from this initiative. The scheme mandates the adoption of eco-friendly technologies, encourages renewable energy integration, and promotes sustainable production practices. By emphasizing low-carbon industrialization, UNNATI 2024 positions Assam as a hub for green industries, fostering long-term economic and ecological

balance. Industrial activities are carefully structured to minimize environmental degradation while maximizing resource efficiency, ensuring that growth does not come at the cost of ecological destruction.

A vital component of UNNATI 2024 is its emphasis on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which form the backbone of Assam's economy. The scheme introduces subsidies, low-interest credit facilities, and market linkages to empower local enterprises. By creating dedicated industrial clusters for sectors like Assam's world-famous tea industry, handloom, agro-processing, and organic farming, UNNATI 2024 strengthens indigenous industries while simultaneously integrating them with larger supply chains. The initiative ensures that local businesses thrive in a competitive market by providing infrastructural support and financial backing, enabling them to scale operations without the burden of excessive debt or market volatility.

A crucial impediment to industrial growth in Assam has been inadequate infrastructure. UNNATI 2024 tackles this issue head-on with a robust infrastructure development strategy, which includes upgraded transportation networks, including roads, railways, and inland waterways, crucial for Assam's connectivity to the rest of India and Southeast Asia. Industrial parks and special economic zones (SEZs), particularly in regions like Guwahati, Dibrugarh, and Tinsukia, are set to attract investors. Strengthened digital infrastructure fosters e-commerce and IT-based industries, facilitating seamless business operations and enhancing Assam's digital economy. By enhancing physical and digital connectivity, UNNATI 2024 effectively reduces logistical bottlenecks, making Assam a more attractive destination for investment.

Investment attraction is at the heart of UNNATI 2024's agenda. The scheme offers tax incentives, land subsidies, and simplified regulatory frameworks to draw both domestic and foreign investors to Assam. Additionally, the government's proactive stance in organizing global investor summits and trade fairs ensures that Assam gains prominence as a lucrative investment destination. The creation of single-window clearance mechanisms further streamlines bureaucratic processes, expediting industrial project approvals and reducing red tape. These investor-friendly policies are expected to catalyze a wave of industrial expansion, encouraging not only large-scale enterprises but also facilitating the growth of start-ups and emerging businesses.

Beyond its internal economic objectives, UNNATI 2024 aligns with India's Act East Policy, leveraging Assam's strategic location as the gateway to Southeast Asia. The development of border trade hubs in districts like Karimganj and Cachar, coupled with infrastructural projects linking Assam to Myan-

mar, Bangladesh, and beyond, positions the state as a pivotal player in India's global economic engagements. Enhanced connectivity through the Brahmaputra River's inland waterways further facilitates cross-border trade, making Assam a key node in regional commerce. The potential for increased exports and cross-border partnerships ensures that Assam is no longer a peripheral participant but a significant contributor to India's international trade ambitions.

Industrialization often raises concerns about cultural erosion and displacement. However, UNNATI 2024 integrates a socially responsible approach, ensuring that Assam's local communities are active participants in the growth narrative. Special provisions are in place to protect tribal rights, traditional craftsmanship, and local heritage industries like Assam silk production in Sualkuchi. Additionally, the scheme promotes corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, reinforcing sustainable community development and preserving Assam's rich cultural identity. A crucial aspect of this initiative is the emphasis on ensuring that industrial expansion does not come at the expense of marginalized communities, and rather, it actively empowers them by creating inclusive growth opportunities.

The implementation of UNNATI 2024 is set to redefine the economic trajectory of Assam. By fostering industrial growth, employment opportunities, sustainable practices, and infrastructural advancements, the scheme lays the foundation for a more prosperous and resilient regional economy. The initiative stands as a testament to the government's commitment to ensuring that Assam does not merely follow the trajectory of development set by other states but instead carves out a unique and sustainable growth path that leverages its own strengths. UNNATI 2024 is poised to be a game-changer, ensuring that Assam transforms from being a resource-rich but underutilized region to a thriving industrial powerhouse that contributes significantly to India's overall economic progress.

If implemented effectively, UNNATI 2024 has the potential to script a new chapter in Assam's economic history, turning the state into a beacon of progress, innovation, and sustainable industrialization. The scheme encapsulates a vision that extends beyond mere economic indicators—it represents a paradigm shift towards an empowered, self-reliant Assam, where industrialization coexists with ecological preservation, and progress is synonymous with inclusivity. The coming years will be a testament to the success of this ambitious initiative, shaping a future where Assam is no longer seen as a peripheral economic entity but as a central force in India's industrial and commercial resurgence. (The author can be reached at shashankadasnov1@gmail.com or [9706619975](tel:9706619975))

BJP to launch Gaon Chalo Yatra for four days from April 9 in Madhya Pradesh



By: L S Herdenia

Both BJP and Congress have decided to take several steps to streamline their organization. BJP has decided to launch "Gaon Chalo Abhiyan (Let us go to villages and communities)" from April 9 to April 12. April 6 is party's foundation day. On this day party's flag will be unfurl on party members house. On the same day party's one lakh active members will hold meetings in every booth. In the gaon chalo abhiyan every ordinary member has been asked between April 9 and April 12 will learn party's history, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Welfare Programme on April 14 party will celebrate Dr. Ambedkar's birthday.

The BJP which was cornered before the Lok Sabha election over the Constitution and after the statement of Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Parliament is going to organise various events on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti. The BJP will organise the recitation of the preamble of the Constitution on April 14. Along with this, there will be a discussion on various points of the speeches of Ambedkar whose statues will be decked up. Lectures on the works of Ambedkar will also be organised.

After a meeting with the senior leaders, BJP's state unit president VD Sharma said the party workers had been told to hold various events on Ambedkar Jayanti. The BJP has been trying to woo SC people after Shah's

State government has enforced total ban on the sale of liquor in 19 religious cities and areas. The ban has come into force from April 1. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav had announced the liquor ban decision and it was approved by the cabinet at its meeting held in Maheshwar town, a place closely associated with legendary meta-queen Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar, on January 24

statement in Parliament by focusing on Ambedkar. As part of the programme, all the public representatives will stay in villages at least for eight hours on the foundation of the party. A meeting was held in the BJP's state office for these programmes. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and other senior leaders were present at the meeting.

The party has decided to initiate massive campaign to draw young boys and girls to attend Schools. It has decided to name of Schools to Sandipar Ashram. At present they are known as Chief Minister Rise Schools. From the foundation day the party will ask the government to enhance the pensions of senior citizens, physically handicapped from ₹ 600 per month to ₹ 1500. Besides ₹ 337 crores have been

provided in Social Security Schemes.

As for the Congress, the party has decided to ask workers to gather in Delhi to apprise Rahul Gandhi with the factors which led to the party's total rout in the Lok Sabha elections in 2024.

Meanwhile, state government has enforced total ban on the sale of liquor in 19 religious cities and areas. The ban has come into force from April 1. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav had announced the liquor ban decision and it was approved by the cabinet at its meeting held in Maheshwar town, a place closely associated with legendary meta-queen Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar, on January 24. According to the decision, all liquor shops and bars will be closed down in the entire urban limits of Ujjain, Omkareshwar, Maheshwar, Mandleshwar, Orcha, Maihar, Chitrakoot, Datia, Panna, Mandla, Multai, Mandasaur and Amarkantak and in gram panchayat limits of Salkapur, Kundalpur, Bandakpur, Barmankal, Barmankhurd and Linga, the official said.

While announcing the ban, Yadav said his govt has taken a historic step towards de-addiction and cited "public faith and religious reverence" associated with these cities and rural areas as reasons for the move. The religious places where the liquor ban will take effect from Tuesday are spread across one municipal corporation, half a dozen municipal councils and an equal number of village panchayats.

There was total ban on the sale of liquor till 1963. The ban was lifted by D.P. Mishra the then Chief Minister of the state. The liquor sale was banned in the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh. The ban was imposed by the then Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao but it also failed to yield result and was finally lifted critics fact that the ban will result loss in revenue besides enormous finance to ensure the ban is enforced. (IPA Service)

How do doctors diagnose small cell lung cancer?

By: Charlotte Lillis

Small cell lung cancer (SCLC) is a fast-growing cancer that develops in cells within the lung. A range of medical tests and procedures are available to help doctors diagnose SCLC and create an appropriate treatment plan.

Lung cancer is a complex disease comprising various subtypes. A person who receives a diagnosis of SCLC may want to get a second opinion to confirm the diagnosis and offer reassurance about their proposed treatment plan.

A second opinion can also help a person gain access to clinical trials that may not be available elsewhere.

This article explains the ways doctors diagnose SCLC.

Imaging tests

According to the American Cancer Society, doctors may order one or more of the following imaging tests to diagnose or stage lung cancers.

Cancer staging is an important part of the diagnostic process for SCLC. It helps determine whether and to what extent the cancer has spread.

Chest X-ray

A chest X-ray is one of the first tests doctors order to check for abnormalities in the lungs. Areas that appear abnormal will prompt doctors to order further tests.

CT scan

A CT scan uses X-rays to take a series of cross-sectional images of the body. It then combines these images to produce a more detailed image.

A CT scan can help doctors detect lung tumors and determine their location, size, and shape. A CT scan can also help doctors detect enlarged lymph nodes and tumors in other parts of the body, either of which may indicate that the cancer has spread.

A CT scan is more effective at finding lung tumors than a routine chest X-ray.

MRI scan

MRI uses strong magnets and radio waves to produce detailed images of the body's soft tissues. Doctors often use MRIs to look for signs that a cancer has spread to other organs or tissues in the body.

PET/CT scan

A PET/CT scan involves injecting a slightly radioactive sugar into the blood and using CT scans to assess levels of

radioactivity in the body.

Because cancer cells tend to take up more sugar than normal cells, areas of high radioactivity on a CT scan may indicate the presence of cancer cells.

Doctors typically use PET/CT scans for cancer staging.

Needle biopsy
Doctors may use a needle biopsy to collect tissue or cells from a suspicious lung mass. After collecting these samples, they analyze them under a microscope to look for cancer cells.

There are three main types of needle biopsy for SCLC. These are outlined next.

Fine needle aspiration (FNA) biopsy

FNA biopsy involves inserting a very thin, hollow needle into the mass to withdraw cells or small fragments of tissue.

This type of needle biopsy can help doctors detect cancer in very small masses or in the lymph nodes surrounding the lungs.

Core biopsy

A core biopsy involves using a larger needle to remove one or more small cores of tissue from a suspicious mass. Surgeons may perform this type of biopsy during lung surgery.

Thoracentesis

Thoracentesis is the medical term for excess fluid in the pleural space, which is the fluid-filled space around the lungs. There are many potential causes of pleural effusion.

Thoracentesis is a procedure that doctors may use to determine whether pleural effusion is due to lung cancer spreading to the lining of the lungs or another condition.

This procedure involves inserting a hollow needle between the ribs to help drain excess fluid from the pleural space.

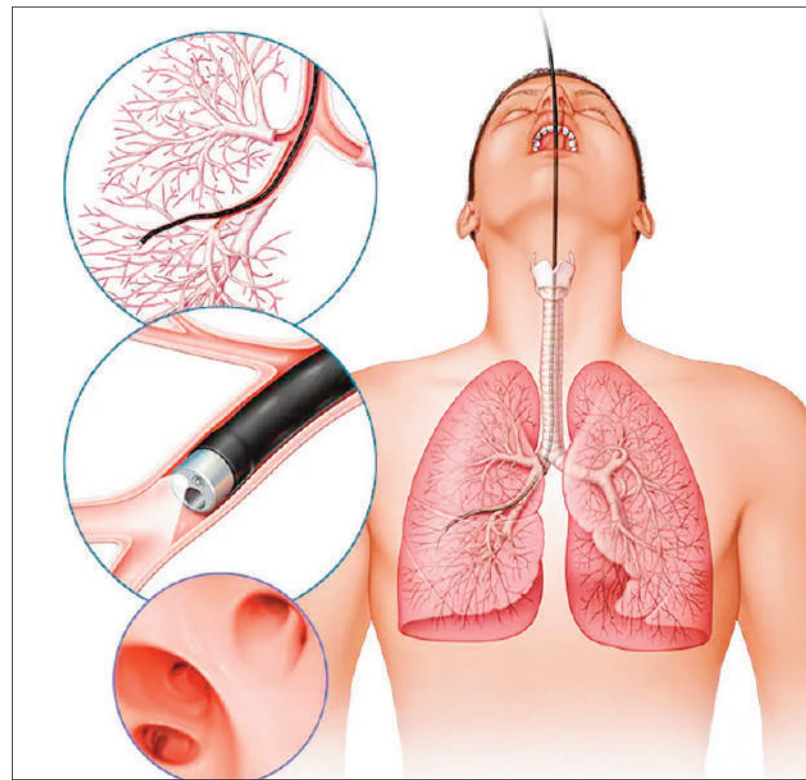
Endoscopy

An endoscopy is a procedure that allows doctors to see inside the body using a scope. The scope is a thin, flexible tube with a light and camera at one end.

Scopes also contain tiny instruments that allow doctors to take samples from any abnormal-looking tissues. Doctors can then analyze the samples under a microscope to check for cancer cells.

There are many types of endoscopies, including:

Bronchoscopy: Bronchoscopy in-



volves using a type of scope called a bronchoscope to look inside the lungs. A doctor inserts the bronchoscope through the mouth or nostril, down the windpipe, and into the airways of the lungs.

Thoracoscopy: Thoracoscopy allows doctors to investigate the pleural space, which is the space between the lungs and the chest wall. The procedure involves inserting a type of scope called a thoracoscope through a small cut beneath the shoulder blade and between the ribs.

Mediastinoscopy: Mediastinoscopy is a procedure that allows doctors to investigate the mediastinum, which is the area between the two lungs. It involves inserting a device called a mediastinoscope behind the breastbone and in front of the windpipe. Small instruments inside the mediastinoscope allow doctors to take tissue samples from the lymph nodes along the windpipe and major bronchial tube areas.

Laboratory tests

Disease specialists called pathologists analyze biopsy samples to determine whether a person has lung cancer and to establish the type.

Laboratory tests can also determine whether the cancer originated in the lungs or spread from elsewhere in the body. This is important, as treatments differ depending on where the cancer originated.

Molecular testing is a type of laboratory test that involves checking for specific gene changes in cancer cells. Identifying these changes can help doctors determine whether a cancer may be responsive to targeted drug therapies.

Once the pathologist has analyzed the samples, they write the results in a pathology report. This report is typically available within 1 week.

Staging SCLC

As the American Lung Association explains, lung cancer staging helps doctors determine the following:

- the location of the lung cancer cells
- the size of the lung cancer nodules
- whether and to what extent the cancer has spread

Lung cancer staging can also help doctors establish the most appropriate treatment options for a person's lung cancer. Staging may also offer insights on a person's outlook.

Staging systems

According to the American Cancer Society, doctors use the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) TNM staging system to describe the growth and spread of SCLC. The TNM acronym stands for:

- T (tumor): the size of the tumor and whether it has grown into nearby structures or organs
- N (nodes): whether the cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes
- M (metastases): whether the cancer has spread, or "metastasized," to distant organs or tissues

For treatment purposes, doctors typically use a staging system that groups SCLC into one of the following two stages:

- Limited stage: The cancer is confined to one side of the chest. The affected area is small enough that the person can receive radiation therapy in that one area. Around 33% of SCLCs are limited stage at the time of diagnosis.

- Extensive stage: The cancer has spread extensively throughout the lung or has spread outside of the lung where it originated. This may include the opposite lung or other organs and tissues in the body. Around 66% of SCLCs are extensive stage at the time of diagnosis.

Second opinions

People who have received a diagnosis of SCLC may benefit from seeking a second opinion about their diagnosis. A second opinion can help:

- confirm the diagnosis and provide reassurance about the proposed treatment plan
- provide insights into other potential treatment options that may be more effective or have fewer side effects
- open opportunities for participation in clinical trials that may not be available at other medical institutions

For individuals who want to seek a second opinion, the Lung Cancer Foundation of America advises finding a healthcare professional who specializes in lung cancer, such as a:

- thoracic oncologist
- medical oncologist
- radiation oncologist

The organization also advises bringing all relevant medical records to the initial consultation so that the doctor is better able to understand the specifics of the case and offer an informed opinion. Medical records to bring include:

- pathology reports
- imaging scans
- genomic testing results, sometimes called biomarker results

Frequently asked questions

How quickly does SCLC progress?
Doctors sometimes use "doubling time" to describe how quickly a cancer is growing. Doubling time describes the amount of time it takes for a single cell to divide or the amount of time it takes for a tumor to double in size. Lower doubling times indicate a faster-growing cancer.

SCLC is an aggressive disease with a short doubling time and a high risk of early spread. SCLC symptoms typically develop suddenly and often persist for 8 to 12 weeks before a person visits a doctor. Despite this relatively short time frame, most SCLC cases are extensive stage at the time of diagnosis.

What are the survival rates for SCLC?

The 5-year relative survival rate denotes the percentage of people who are alive 5 years after their initial diagnosis compared with people who do not have that diagnosis.

According to the American Cancer Society, the 5-year relative survival rates for SCLC are:

- Localized: 30%
- Regional: 18%
- Distant: 3%

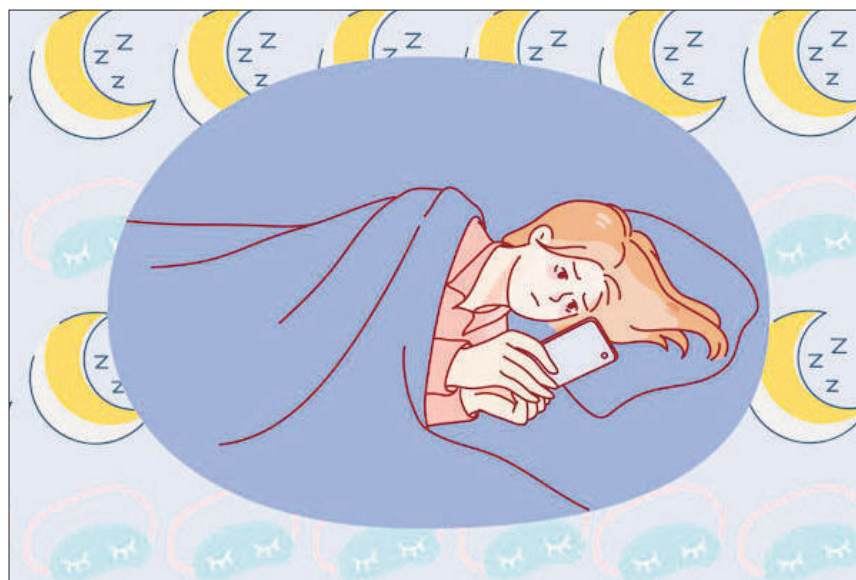
Summary

SCLC is an aggressive form of lung cancer that tends to grow and spread rapidly. For people with SCLC, receiving an accurate diagnosis is the first step toward receiving appropriate treatment. Doctors may use a range of diagnostic tests and procedures to diagnose and stage SCLC.

The first step is usually a chest X-ray. If this shows abnormalities within the lungs, doctors may order additional tests, such as other types of imaging scans, needle biopsies, or endoscopy. Laboratory tests of biopsy samples can confirm the diagnosis of SCLC.

Lung cancer is a complex disease. A person who receives a diagnosis of SCLC may want to seek a second opinion. A second opinion can help confirm the diagnosis and offer reassurance about a proposed treatment plan. It can also provide a person with access to clinical trials that may not be available at other medical facilities. (Courtesy: Medical News Today)

Six tips from a doctor on how to get a good night's sleep without medications



By: Julio Fernandez-Mendoza

About 10% of Americans say they have chronic insomnia, and millions of others report poor sleep quality. Ongoing research has found that bad sleep could lead to numerous health problems, including heart disease.

Dr Julio Fernandez-Mendoza is a professor of psychiatry and behavioral health, neuroscience and public health sciences at Penn State College of Medicine. He discusses the need for sleep, why teenagers require more sleep than adults, and how you can get a good night's sleep without medications.

The Conversation has collaborated with SciLine to bring you highlights from the discussion that have been edited for brevity and clarity.

How much sleep is enough for adults and for adolescents?

Julio Fernandez-Mendoza: Adults who report getting about seven to eight hours of sleep per night generally have the best health, in terms of both physical and mental health, and longevity.

But that recommendation changes with age. Adults over age 65 may need just six to seven hours of sleep per night. So older people, if otherwise healthy, should not feel anxious if they're getting just six hours. Young people need the most – at least nine hours – and some younger children may need more.

How can insufficient sleep harm our health?

Fernandez-Mendoza: Our team was the first to show that those complaining about insomnia – difficulty falling or staying asleep – were more likely to have high blood pressure and be at risk for heart disease.

In both teens and adults, we found that insomnia and shortened sleep may

lead to elevated stress, hormone levels and inflammation. These problems tend to show up before you develop heart disease.

What about people who have more serious sleep problems?

Fernandez-Mendoza: Good sleep hygiene habits include cutting down on caffeine and alcohol, quitting smoking and exercising regularly. I also recommend not skipping meals, not eating too late at night and not eating too much.

But people with a persistent sleep problem may need to make more behavioral changes. Research studies point to a set of six rules that can improve your sleep. You can follow these changes consistently in the short term, and then choose how to adapt them into your lifestyle down the road.

First, get up at the same time no matter what. No matter how much sleep you get. This will anchor your sleep/wake cycle, called your circadian rhythm.

Second, do not use your bed for anything except sleep and sexual activity.

Third, when you can't sleep, don't lie in bed awake. Instead, get out of bed, go into another room if you can, and do an activity that's enjoyable or relaxing. Go back to bed only when you're ready to sleep.

Fourth, get going with daily activities even after a poor night's sleep. Don't try to compensate for sleep loss. If you have chronic insomnia, don't nap, sleep in, or doze during the day or evening even after poor sleep the previous night.

Fifth, go to bed only when you're actually sleepy enough to fall asleep.

And sixth, start with the amount of sleep you're now getting – with the lowest limit at five hours – and then increase it weekly by 15 minutes.

These six rules are evidence-based

and go above and beyond simple sleep hygiene habits. If they don't work, see a provider who can help you.

Do you have advice specifically for adolescents?

Fernandez-Mendoza: Adolescence is a unique developmental period. It's not just the obvious physical, emotional and behavioral changes that occur during adolescence and puberty – there are changes in a teenager's brain that can alter their sleep patterns.

When an adolescent goes through puberty, their internal clock changes so that their sleep schedule shifts to later hours. While it's true that adolescents are more engaged at night because of their social relationships, there's also biology behind why they want to stay up late – their internal clocks have shifted. It's not just choice.

School start times for most adolescents are at odds with that biological shift. So they don't get enough sleep, which affects their performance in school. Research suggests that schools with later start times are more closely aligned with the science on child development and don't put adolescents at risk by making them wake up earlier than their bodies are biologically inclined to.

Parents can help their teens get better sleep. Set a time for kids to stop doing homework and put away electronics. Instead, they can watch TV with the family or read – something relaxing and enjoyable that will help them wind down before bed.

You can also gradually move back their wake-up time. Start on weekends, waking them up 30 minutes earlier every day, including school days, until the child reaches the desired wake-up time. Don't try to reshift them suddenly – for example, waking up a teenager at 5 a.m. like it's the military – because that doesn't work. They won't get used to it, since it's at odds with their internal clock. So, do it little by little. If that doesn't work, see a clinical provider.

What kind of treatments can a sleep clinician provide?

Fernandez-Mendoza: People should get help if they feel they sleep poorly, if they're fatigued during the day, or if they snore or grind their teeth. All these issues deserve attention.

Some people may think a sleep provider just prescribes expensive medication, but that's not true. There are behavioral, non-drug-based treatments that work. Cognitive behavioral therapy is the first-line treatment recommended for insomnia. Light therapy may also help, which is the use of a bright light therapy lamp at a given time during the day or evening, depending on the person's sleep problem. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

DBS works miracle for young-onset patient of Parkinson's Disease

By: Dr Rohit Bansal

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects the body movement. It has a gradual progression and usually starts with no symptoms or barely noticeable ones in either hand. Usually tremor in hands may be enough to justify the prevalence of Parkinson's but it can also be accompanied by stiffness or slowing down or reactive movements.

During the early stages, the face may show little or no expression, or arms may not swing when you walk, speech may become soft or slurred and the symptoms gets worse as the disease progresses. In such situations it is important to consult an experienced Neurosurgeon immediately.

How to identify the symptoms?
Depending upon the person the signs and symptoms may vary. Early signs may be mild and may go unnoticed. Symptoms often begin on one side of the body and usually remain worse on that side, even after symptoms begin to affect both sides.

Parkinson's signs and symptoms may include a tremor or shaking of a limb, slowed body movement, muscle stiffness restricting the range of motion, impaired posture and balance, loss of involuntary movements, speech or writing issues.

What causes PD?

In Parkinson's disease, certain nerve cells (neurons) in the brain gradually break down or die. Many of the symptoms are due to a loss of neurons that produce a chemical messenger in your brain called dopamine. When dopamine levels decrease, it causes abnormal brain activity, leading to signs of Parkinson's disease. The cause of Parkinson's disease is unknown, but several factors appear to play a role, including genetics, and environmental triggers like exposure to certain toxins.

How to diagnose?
It is best to get it tested from an experienced Neurosurgeon based on the medical history, physical examination and review of the sign and symptoms.

Imaging tests – such as MRI, ultrasound of the brain, SPECT and PET scans – may also be used to help rule out other disorders. Imaging tests aren't particularly helpful for diagnosing Parkinson's disease. Sometimes it takes time to diagnose Parkinson's disease. Doctors may recommend regular follow-up appointments with Neurosurgeons trained in movement disorders to evaluate your condition and symptoms over time and diagnose Parkinson's disease.

How to treat it?

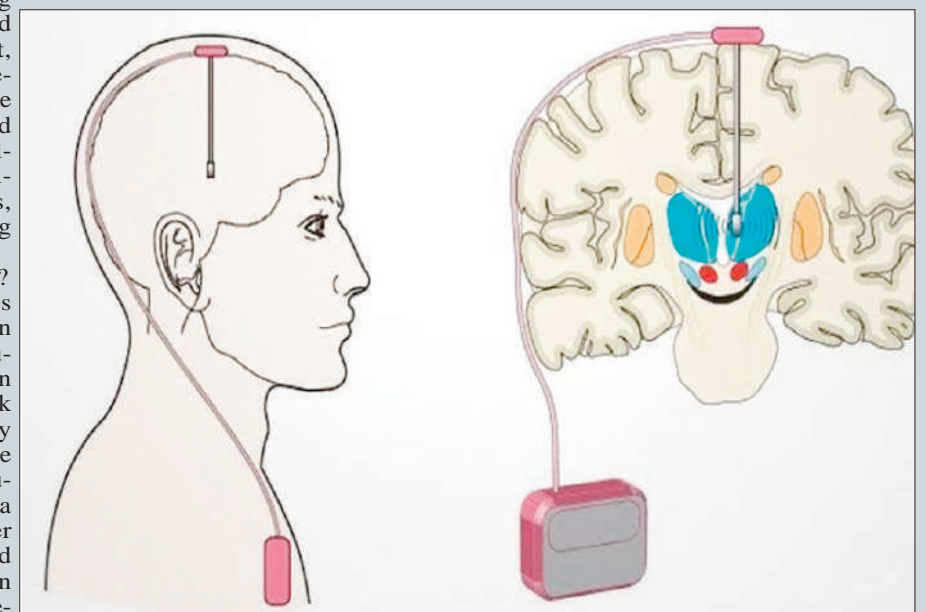
In deep brain stimulation (DBS), surgeons implant electrodes into a specific part of your brain. The electrodes are connected to a generator implanted in your chest near your collarbone that sends electrical pulses to your brain and may reduce your Parkinson's disease symptoms.

Deep brain stimulation is most often offered to people with advanced Parkinson's disease who have unstable medication responses. DBS can stabilize medication fluctuations, reduce or halt involuntary movements (dyskinesias), reduce tremor, reduce rigidity, and improve slowing of movement. DBS is effective in controlling erratic and fluctuating responses to medication for controlling dyskinesias that don't improve with medication adjustments.

However, DBS isn't helpful for problems that don't respond to medication therapy apart from tremor. A tremor may be controlled by DBS even if the tremor isn't very responsive to medication.

Why DBS is preferred over medications?

Medications are provided for temporary effect to subside the symptoms of PD. When a person is able



to enjoy the effect of the medicine, it is known as on-phase and when it subsides its known as off-phase. Over a period of time the effect of the medicines on the body tends to stop and hence the frequency of medicine intake increases. If a patient is prescribed to take the medicine thrice a day, then due to the loss of effect, they might need it more than 8 times a day. This affects their quality of life as they tend to get on and off that many times.

What DBS does is that it provides a constant effect to the patient for 24 hours. It avoids dyskinesia that is it prevents the halting of involuntary movements. Moreover DBS doesn't allow tremor fluctuations as in case of medicines. Medicines tend to end the effect unpredictably, and patients planning for their work or to go out for shopping may be at a risk of attack as the effect may subside any time which can impact their quality of life. (The author is an Associate Director - Neuro Surgery & Neuro Spine, BLK-Max Super Speciality Hospital, New Delhi)

Yemen Houthi rebels say US strikes kill 2

Trump's bombing video suggests higher overall death toll

DUBAI, April 6: Suspected US airstrikes killed at least two people overnight in a stronghold of Yemen's Houthi rebels, the group said Sunday, while a bombing video posted by US President Donald Trump suggested casualties in the overall campaign may be higher than the rebels acknowledge.

The strikes in Saada killed two people and wounded nine others, with footage aired by the Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel showing a strike collapsing what appeared to be a two-story building. The Iranian-backed Houthis aired no footage from inside the building, which they described as a solar power shop.

The intense campaign of airstrikes in Yemen under Trump targeting the rebels over their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea waters stemming from the Israel-Hamas war has killed at least 69 people, according to casualty figures released by the Houthis.

However, the Houthis have not acknowledged any casualties from their security and military leadership — something challenged after an online video posted by Trump.

Early Saturday, Trump posted what appeared to be black-and-white video from a drone of a group of over 70 people gathered in a circle. An explosion detonates during the 25-second video, with a massive crater left in its wake.

"These Houthis gathered for instructions on an attack," Trump claimed, without offering a location for the attack or any other details about the strike. "Oops, there will be no attack by these Houthis! They will never sink our ships again!"

The US military's Central Command, which oversees America's Mideast military operations, has not published the video, nor offered any specific details about the strikes it has conducted since March 15. The White House has said there have been over 200



strikes so far targeting the Houthis.

The rebel-controlled SABA news agency in Yemen, citing an anonymous source, described the bombing as targeting "a social Eid visit in Hodeida governorate." Muslims across the world just celebrated Eid al-Fitr, the festival at the end of the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. SABA had published images of other commanders meeting fighters during the holiday, though not any high-level Houthi officials.

"Those present at that gathering had no connection to the operations carried out by the (Houthis), which are implementing the decision to ban navigation on ships linked to the American and Israeli enemy," the SABA report said, adding that the attack killed and wounded "dozens."

However, the Houthis previously have not acknowledged any strike on Hodeida during that time with such a high casualty count.

The SABA report also did not describe those killed as civilians, suggesting they did have ties to the rebels' security or military forces. Hodeida has been a site of Houthi attacks into the Red Sea.

Moammar al-Eryani, the information minister for Yemen's exiled government opposing the Houthis, claimed the strike killed some 70 Houthi fighters and leaders, as well as "experts" from Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

He offered no evidence for the claim, though Iran has backed the Houthis in the war. Neither the Iranian government nor the Guard has not acknowledged the attack.

Mohammed al-Basha, a Yemen expert of the Basha Report risk advisory firm, cited social media condolence notices suggesting a colonel overseeing police stations for the Houthis in Hodeida had been killed in the strike Trump highlighted, alongside his two

brothers.

"The strikes have expanded significantly, hitting multiple governorates simultaneously, alongside telecommunications infrastructure, command nodes, properties tied to senior Houthi leadership and previously untouched tunnel networks in mountainous areas," al-Basha told The Associated Press.

"We've also seen direct targeting of Houthi force gatherings, indicating a more aggressive and evolving shift in the targeting strategy," al-Basha said.

An AP review has found the new American operation against the Houthis under Trump appears more extensive than those under former US President Joe Biden, as Washington moves from solely targeting launch sites to firing at ranking personnel and dropping bombs on cities.

The new campaign of airstrikes started after the rebels threatened to begin targeting "Israeli" ships again over Israel blocking aid entering the Gaza Strip. The rebels have loosely defined what constitutes an Israeli ship, meaning many vessels could be targeted.

The Houthis targeted more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two of them and killing four sailors from November 2023 until January of this year. They also launched attacks targeting American warships without success.

The attacks greatly raised the profile of the Houthis, who faced economic problems and launched a crackdown targeting dissent and aid workers in Yemen amid a decade-long stalemate war that has torn apart the Arab world's poorest nation.

The campaign shows no signs of stopping as the Trump administration repeatedly has linked its airstrikes on the Houthis to an effort to pressure Iran over its rapidly advancing nuclear programme. (AP)

Death toll from earlier missile strike rises to 19

1 killed in Russian attack on Kyiv



KYIV, April 6: One person was killed on Sunday as Russian air strikes hit the Ukrainian capital Kyiv while the death toll from Friday's deadly attack on the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih continued to rise.

The Kyiv victim was found close to the strike's epicentre of the attack in the city's Darnytskyi district, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

A further three people were injured in the strike, which saw fires break out in several nonresidential areas, damaging cars and buildings.

Meanwhile, officials said the death toll from Friday's attack on the central city of Kryvyi Rih had continued to grow, with 19 dead — including many children — and a further 75 wounded.

Oleksandr Vilkul, head of Kryvyi Rih's military administration, declared three days of mourning for the attack, starting on April 7. He said that there was "pain in the hearts of millions of people".

"Together we will stand. And no matter how difficult it is, we will win," he said. "The enemy will be punished for every Ukrainian and

for every mother's tear." Local authorities said the Kryvyi Rih strike damaged 44 apartment buildings and 23 private houses.

The Russian Defence Ministry claimed Friday that it had carried out a high-precision missile strike with a high explosive warhead on a restaurant where a meeting with unit commanders and Western instructors was taking place.

Russian military claimed that the strike killed 85 military personnel and foreign officers and destroyed 20 vehicles. The military's claims could not be independently verified. The Ukrainian General Staff rejected the claims.

Elsewhere, Russian troops fired 23 missiles and 109 strike and decoy drones across Ukraine overnight, the Ukrainian air force said Sunday. Thirteen missiles and 40 drones were shot down, while 53 decoy drones were jammed and did not reach their destinations, it said. Russia's Defence Ministry said that its air defences had destroyed 11 Ukrainian drones, including eight over the Rostov region and two over the Kursk region. (AP)

Angry protesters from New York to Alaska assail Trump and Musk in 'Hands Off!' rallies



WASHINGTON, April 6: Crowds of people angry about the way President Donald Trump is running the country marched and rallied in scores of American cities Saturday in the biggest day of demonstrations yet by an opposition movement trying to regain its momentum after the shock of the Republican's first weeks in office.

So-called Hands Off! demonstrations were organised for more than 1,200 locations in all 50 states by more than 150 groups, including civil rights organisations, labour unions, LBGTQ+ advocates, veterans and elections activists. The rallies appeared peaceful, with no immediate reports of arrests.

Thousands of protesters in cities dotting the nation from Midtown Manhattan to Anchorage, Alaska, including at multiple state capitols, assailed Trump and billionaire Elon Musk's actions on government downsizing, the economy, immigration and human rights.

On the West Coast, in the shadow of Seattle's iconic Space Needle, protesters held signs with slogans like "Fight the oligarchy." Protesters chanted as they took to the streets in Portland, Oregon, and Los Angeles, where they marched from Pershing Square to City Hall.

Demonstrators voiced anger over the administration's moves to fire thousands of federal workers,

close Social Security Administration field offices, effectively shuttering entire agencies, deporting immigrants, scale back protections for transgender people and cut funding for health programs.

Musk, a Trump adviser who runs Tesla, SpaceX and the social media platform X, has played a key role in the downsizing as the head of the newly created Department of Government Efficiency. He says he is saving taxpayers billions of dollars.

Asked about the protests, the White House said in a statement that "President Trump's position is clear: he will always protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for eligible beneficiaries. Meanwhile, the Democrats' stance is giving Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare benefits to illegal aliens, which will bankrupt these programs and crush American seniors."

Kelley Robinson, president of the Human Rights Campaign advocacy group, criticized the administration's treatment of the LBGTQ+ community at the rally at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., where Democratic members of Congress also took the stage.

"The attacks that we're seeing, they're not just political. They are personal, y'all," Robinson said. "They're trying to ban our books, they're slashing HIV prevention funding, they're criminalizing our doctors, our teachers, our families and our lives."

"We don't want this America, y'all," Robinson added. "We want the America we deserve, where dignity, safety and freedom belong not to some of us, but to all of us." (AP)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa begins mapping Afghan nationals amid nationwide repatriation drive

PESHAWAR, April 6: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government has started the mapping of Afghan citizens in line with the Pakistan government's policy to repatriate them to Afghanistan, officials said.

Thousands of Afghans have lived in the provincial capital Peshawar since 1978, when the Russian invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan led to a massive influx of refugees into Pakistan.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has deputed police to map and collect data on the whereabouts of Afghans, as the district administration here identified 160,000 people holding Afghan Citizens Cards (ACC) who are set to be repatriated.

Police say mapping of Afghans and other foreign nationals residing in Peshawar is underway and will help determine their exact numbers in specific areas.

Over 90 teams were constituted for mapping in Peshawar, comprising officials from police, district administration, and other departments. Of these over 200 are police officials.

Holding centres in Peshawar and Khyber districts are also being manned by police contingents.

However, a police official, wishing not to be named, said they have not yet received orders about Afghans living illegally in Peshawar. Afghans wanting voluntary repatriation will be repatriated, the police official said.

On Saturday, the Torkham border point in Khyber district saw the largest deportation of Afghans since April 1, when the government launched a nationwide operation to repatriate illegal foreigners.

Over 750 refugees, including men, women and children, were sent to Afghanistan after they were rounded up in the Punjab province



and Islamabad. Officials at the transit centre in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Landi Kotal said the Afghan nationals were handed over to the Khyber police at the Karkhano Market checkpoint in Peshawar.

The refugees were first taken to the transit centre for registration at the NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority) desk and then shifted to the Torkham border to complete the deportation process. Officials at the transit centre noted a rise in the number of returning Afghans since the March 31 deadline for voluntary repatriation expired, as Punjab police intensified their crackdown on undocumented Afghan nationals in the province.

The assistant commissioner of Landi Kotal directed all Afghans residing in the tehsil to vacate their homes and return to Afghanistan, as per the federal government's order to expel all illegal foreigners.

Meanwhile, the Kohat administration has asked Afghan nationals, including illegal refugees and Afghan Citizen Card holders, to return to their country voluntarily.

According to official data, in Kohat's eight camps, 100,000

Afghan refugees live, of which 16,000 got Afghan Citizen Cards from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2017.

Kohat Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) (G) Hamid Iqbal, Superintendent of police (SP) (City) Farooq Zaman and other officials met with Afghan elders from three Ghamkol Sharif refugee camps on Saturday. They emphasised that Pakistan had hosted refugees for 40 years but it was time for them to return on their own in line with the government's decision. The ADC said authorities won't use force to send refugees to Afghanistan and would facilitate their return.

"Afghan refugees should understand Pakistan's economic and security compulsions under which they can't be hosted any further, so they should opt for voluntary repatriation," he said.

Meanwhile, customs officials said that over the past three days, 519 vehicles transported export goods to Afghanistan, while an additional 85 vehicles carrying Afghan Transit Trade consignments were also dispatched. (PTI)

Elon Musk says he hopes for zero tariffs with Europe someday

WASHINGTON, April 6: Billionaire Elon Musk told Italy League leader Matteo Salvini on Saturday that he hoped in the future the US and Europe could create "a very close, stronger partnership" and reach a "zero-tariff zone."

Musk spoke to Salvini in a video conference during the League's congress in Florence. Salvini is the leader of the far-right, anti-migrant League party and vice premier of the Italian conservative government led by Premier Giorgia Meloni.

He said that, ideally, there will be a "zero-tariff zone in the future with a free trade zone between Europe and North America." Musk, an adviser to President Donald Trump who owns Tesla, SpaceX and the social media platform X, has played a key role in government downsizing as the head of the newly created Department of Government Efficiency.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron agreed Saturday that a trade war was in no one's interest as they discussed the fallout from the sweeping tariffs announced earlier this week by President Donald Trump.

Starmer and Macron discussed the global economic and security impact of the tariffs, particularly in Southeast Asia, Starmer's office said in a statement re-

leased after a phone call between the two leaders. "They agreed that a trade war was in nobody's interests, but nothing should be off the table and that it was important to keep business updated on developments," the statement said.

The leaders also discussed efforts to build a coalition of countries willing to support Ukraine in its war against Russia and provide peacekeeping forces in the event a ceasefire is reached.

"Following discussions between military planners in Ukraine this week, they discussed the good progress that has been made on the Coalition of the Willing," the statement said. The baseline 10% levy announced by Trump this week kicked in at 12:01 am Saturday ET (04:01 GMT), triggering customs agents' collections at ports of entry across the U.S.

Countries targeted by Trump for higher tariffs are due to go in effect on Wednesday. Those include assessments as high as 50% for Lesotho, 49% for Cambodia and 47% for Madagascar.

In an all-caps social media post Saturday, Trump insisted: "THIS IS AN ECONOMIC REVOLUTION, AND WE WILL WIN."

Public reaction hasn't been so confident, with stock markets slumping since

the tariff announcement.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun posted on his Facebook page a screen saving showing the Dow Jones, S&P 500 and Nasdaq all declining by more than 5% on Friday, with the commentary, "The market has spoken."

"The trade and tariff war started by the U.S. against the world is unprovoked and unjustified," Guo wrote. "Now is the time for the U.S. to stop doing the wrong things and resolve the differences with trading partners through equal-footed consultation."

China on Saturday night heaped more criticism on the US tariffs, saying they had "seriously infringed upon the legitimate rights and interests of all countries, seriously violated the rules of the World Trade Organization, seriously damaged the rules-based multilateral trading system, and severely impacted the stability of the global economic order." The US "uses tariffs as a weapon to exert extreme pressure and seek private interests. This is a typical act of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying," said the statement, attributed to the Chinese government and carried by the official Xinhua News Agency.

"The Chinese people believe in treating



others with sincerity and taking trust as the basis. We do not provoke trouble, but we are not afraid of trouble. Pressure and threats are not the right way to deal with China. China has and will continue to take firm measures to safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests," the statement said.

It said China would continue to promote "high-level opening-up" rather than closing its economy with even higher tariffs.

"Economic globalization is the inevitable path for the development of

human society," it said. "The world needs justice, not tyranny!"

The British maker of Jaguar and Land Rover cars is pausing shipments to the U.S. as it works to mitigate the impact of a 25% tax on vehicle imports imposed by the Trump administration.

Jaguar Land Rover Automotive, one of Britain's biggest carmakers, said Saturday that the pause would take place this month.

"The USA is an important market for JLR's luxury brands," the company said in a statement. "As we work to address the new trading terms with our business partners, we are taking some short-term actions including a shipment pause in April, as we develop our mid-to-longer term plans." The U.K. automotive industry is expected to be hard hit by the new tariffs, which come at a time when British carmakers are struggling with declining demand at home and the need to retool their plants for the transition to electric vehicles.

President Donald Trump on Saturday morning posted on his Truth Social media site that China has been negatively impacted by tariffs "much harder than the USA, not even close."

Newly announced US tariffs on nations around the world, including 34% tariffs on China, have sent stock markets reeling for

days. China has vowed to match the rate that Trump imposed.

On Saturday Trump was at his golf course in Jupiter, Florida. It's his first time visiting the club since his second term started. Spotted in his motorcade, in his signature red MAGA hat and white polo shirt, Trump was reading a tabloid article about China's response to U.S. tariffs.

"They, and many other nations, have treated us unsustainably badly," Trump said on Truth Social. "We have been the dumb and helpless 'whipping post,' but not any longer."

Italian Economy Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti warned that imposing retaliatory tariffs on the United States would be damaging for both Italy and Europe.

Speaking at a business forum in Cernobbio, near Milan, Giorgetti said Saturday that Italy is working for a "de-escalation" with the U.S. following Trump's announcement of a general tariff of 20% on European Union countries.

"We should avoid launching a policy of counter-tariffs that could be damaging for everyone and especially for us," Giorgetti said. "Our message is that we need to avoid pushing the panic button. ... We are following a pragmatic and rational approach." (AP)

Generational shift ongoing process in Cong: Pilot ahead of AICC session

NEW DELHI, April 6: Ahead of the AICC session in Ahmedabad, Congress general secretary Sachin Pilot on Sunday said a generational shift was underway in the party with young leaders living up to the tasks entrusted to them, and asserted that accountability as well as strengthening of ideology would be the watchwords going forward.

In an interview with PTI, Pilot said the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session taking place in Gujarat is significant as it comes at a time when the focus is on strengthening the party in that state and restoring its past glory there.

The former Union minister also asserted that while the party may have lost some state polls after the Lok Sabha elections, it has not lost the conviction or the vigour to fight on.

Asked if the time has come for a generational shift within the party, Pilot said any shift is never overnight but a gradual one.

"The party has committed itself to strengthening the backwards, young people, women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and minorities. These are the sections that form the largest chunks of our population and adequate representation of those sections is crucial," he said.

"At the party forum, we adopted the Udaipur declaration and are adhering to that. In all party appointments we are keeping that declaration in mind.

"The (generational) shift is happening automatically, there are many people who are now taking on leadership roles whether it is within Parliament

or outside Parliament, whether in states or new people appointed in AICC, young people are now taking on leadership roles and are living up to the task," Pilot told PTI over phone from Jaipur.

Noting that the party had declared at its Belagavi conclave in December that 2025 will be the year of organisational empowerment, Pilot said the focus was on organisational reforms, filling up of vacant posts and making sure the party sticks to the Udaipur declaration by giving young people more political power.

"Mr Rahul Gandhi, Mr Mallikarjun Kharge and Priyanka (Gandhi Vadra) ji are taking active interest in the functioning of the party, departments and front organisations like the IYC, NSUI, Sewa Dal, Mahila Congress and so on.

"We have committed ourselves to making 2025 as the year of rejuvenating and enthusing the party cadre. We are going to see more ideological strengthening of the party, giving effective people more responsibilities and ensuring that those who are not up to the task make way for people that are working hard and performing," Pilot said.

Whether accountability would be the watchword going forward for the party, Pilot shot back, saying "it has to be".

Giving responsibility is one thing but every person, when he or she is given a job, has to be accountable, he stressed.

"There will be a constant review of who's performing and not performing. For example, in Rajasthan we have taken a decision that any office



bearer of the party who does not attend three party meetings consecutively without proper reason, that person has to let go and give space to someone else," the Congress general secretary said.

Pilot said in the meetings at the Indira Gandhi Bhawan here, it has been decided that District Congress Committee chiefs will be given a much larger role and they will have more involvement in elections, financial management and selection process of candidates for elections.

All those aspects have been there before also but will be much more enhanced in the future, he added.

On Congress persons switching sides around the Lok Sabha polls and after that, Pilot said organisations are bigger than individuals and people come and go according to their likes and dislikes and political compulsions.

But the Congress is one of the oldest political

organisations in the world and its commitment to serve the people whether in power or in the opposition remains intact, he said.

"How to sharpen it, how to strengthen it, how to get more young people join the Congress fold is obviously a constant effort from the top leadership...The BJP has used central agencies to subjugate, defame, threaten, lure and character assassinate leaders from the opposition, especially from the Congress," he said.

"The Congress persons who are committed will forge on. Our top leadership has been attacked politically by the agencies but we have fought back, we will fight them legally and we will fight them on the streets," he said.

Pilot asserted that in politics, one has to be strong in convictions as there will be times that are good and there will be times that are bad.

"We were in government for 10 years, we are out of power for 10 years. But we need to have strength of convictions to fight the battle ahead. Times are hard because the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to subjugate the voice of the opposition, to suppress, entice and to undermine," Pilot said.

He asserted that Rahul Gandhi has led from the front and has asked tough questions in Parliament to take the government to task.

"We are performing the role of a constructive opposition while the BJP is raising emotive issues," he said.

Talking about the AICC session in Gujarat, Pilot said it is significant that after a long gap such an

event is being held in Gujarat.

"I think Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi has made it very clear that we will focus very strongly on Gujarat. Politically, we have been strong in Gujarat and this AICC session will give a boost to all our workers in the country but most specifically to our leaders and workers in Gujarat," he said.

"Gujarat has always been a Congress bastion. However, in the last two decades or so we haven't been able to win elections but our vote share has been very strong there and it is bipolar politics in Gujarat. Mr Gandhi has made several visits to the state recently also. I think he and Mr Kharge have taken it upon themselves that we have to revive, strengthen and restore the Congress' past glory in Gujarat," Pilot said.

Gujarat is an "important state for us and we are ready to take up any challenge from the BJP", he added.

With the third term of Modi government going to complete one year in office soon, Pilot said there are many cases where the Congress and the opposition were able to put the government on the backfoot.

"We want to reiterate our commitment of working for the entire country, exposing the government's functioning and the way it is trying to weaken the institutions relentlessly," he said.

The AICC session in Ahmedabad will be themed 'Nyaypath: Sankalp, Samarpan and Sangharsh', with over 1,700 AICC members attending the main conclave on April 9. (PTI)

Prez Murmu embarks on state visit to Portugal, Slovakia amid shifting global trade dynamics

NEW DELHI, April 6: President Droupadi Murmu set off on a state visit to Portugal and the Slovak Republic on Sunday, marking the first such visit in nearly three decades.

Her tour comes at a time of significant global economic change, with trade tariffs recently imposed by the United States reshaping international commerce and India's growing engagement with Europe.

In February, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the College of Commissioners visited India. New Delhi has expressed hope of finalising the India-EU free trade agreement this year.

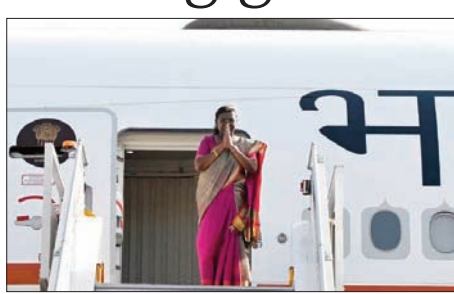
In a tweet on X, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "President Droupadi Murmu embarks on state visits to Portugal and the Slovak Republic. These are the first state visits to either country by the President of India in more than 25 years. The visits will further expand India's multi-faceted engagement with two important EU partners."

Murmu's two-day "landmark" visit to Portugal, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between New Delhi and Lisbon, comes 27 years after an Indian president last visited the nation.

President Murmu will engage in meetings with top leadership including Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, Prime Minister Luís Montenegro and Assembly Speaker Dr José Pedro Aguiar-Branco.

Mayor of Lisbon Carlos Manuel Félix Moedas will host a special event for President Murmu. She will also attend a banquet hosted by President Sousa.

"Trade between India and Portugal is valued



at USD 1.5 billion and has been growing steadily with a 50 per cent increase over the last five years," said Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West) at the Ministry of External Affairs, on Friday while briefing the press about the visit.

"We are seeing expansion in cooperation across renewable energy, IT, pharmaceuticals, education, tourism, and defence," he had said.

He also said that Portugal has always played a very important role in deepening the India-EU partnership. Asked about the possibility of the discussions on India-EU free trade agreement, Lal had said, "Yes, the areas of mutual interest will be discussed."

"In 2000, during the Portuguese Presidency, the first India-EU Summit was hosted by them. Also in 2021, the first-ever Leaders' Summit between India and the EU, where all the leaders from all individual EU partner countries attended this summit. So the India-Portugal relationship has a very strong element of India-EU partnership," Lal had said.

During her visit to Portugal, President Murmu will interact with a cross-section of Indian community members including researchers working

in various Portuguese institutions.

The Indian community in Portugal numbers approximately 1,25,000, including over 35,000 Indian nationals and 90,000 persons of Indian origin. The community, spread across Lisbon, Algarve, and Porto, has become an integral part of Portugal's social and economic landscape.

President Murmu will also offer floral tributes at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the 'Alameda Mahatma Gandhi' (Avenue). She will also attend a community reception before moving to her second leg of the visit to the Slovak Republic on April 9 and 10.

"There are deep connections, especially with Sanskrit studies in Slovakia. Mahatma Gandhi's works have been translated into Slovak, and Slovakia offered valuable support during the evacuation of Indian students from Ukraine in 2022," Lal noted. During her visit to Slovakia, President Murmu will hold delegation-level talks and meet Slovak President Peter Pellegrini, Prime Minister Robert Fico, and the Speaker of the National Council Richard Rasi.

Her engagements include a visit to the state-of-the-art Tata Motors Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) facility in Nitra, a testament to the strong industrial ties between Slovakia and India. Inaugurated in 2018, the JLR plant has a capacity to produce 1,50,000 vehicles annually, with an investment of Euro 1.4 billion.

As part of her diplomatic tour, President Murmu will participate in a traditional bread and salt ceremony, an ancient Slovak custom symbolizing life and health. She will also meet Indian community members in Slovakia. There are around 6,000 Indians living and working in the Central European nation. (PTI)

PM should allay fears of TN over delimitation exercise: Stalin

UDHAGAMANDALAM (TAMIL NADU), April 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi should allay the fears of people of Tamil Nadu surrounding the proposed delimitation exercise, Chief Minister M K Stalin said here on Sunday.

Modi should also ensure that a resolution is passed in the Parliament to make sure the rights of Tamil Nadu are not curbed, he said at an official event here.

Stalin, after inaugurating a slew of projects and announcing new schemes to the popular tourist spot here, said he has sought an appointment with the Prime Minister to present the memorandum on the concerns surrounding the proposed delimitation.

"We have sought an appointment to present the memorandum on the delimitation... Since I am taking part in this government function I have conveyed to the PM about my inability to take part in his meeting and deputed our Ministers Thangam Thennarasu and Raja Kannappan. Through this meeting and through you, I hereby seek the Prime Minister to allay the fears of delimitation," Stalin said while addressing the gathering.

He was referring to Modi's visit to Tamil Nadu's Rameswaram on Sunday where the PM inaugurated the new Pambam bridge.

"Yog (Modi) should also ensure that a resolution in this regard is passed in the Parliament. This (delimitation) not only leads to a reduction of Parliamentary seats, it is our right to ask and at the same time, it is also a cause of worry about our future," he said.

"Including Puducherry there would be 40 Parliamentary seats. But the ruling BJP government is trying to shrink our voices through delimitation."

Stalin said a Joint Action Committee meeting on fair delimitation was conducted on March 22 in Chennai and saw the participation of Chief Ministers, Deputy Chief Minister and prominent leaders representing various political ideologies across India.

In his brief address to the gathering, Stalin emphasized that Prime Minister Modi must provide a clear guarantee that Tamil Nadu, along with other states that have effectively managed population growth, will not be penalized in the upcoming delimitation process.

"Their (Tamil Nadu's) share of parliamentary seats in percentage terms will remain untouched. He should make this promise publicly, allay the fears in the minds of the people of Tamil Nadu and follow it up with a constitutional amendment in Parliament. This is the only way to ensure a fair delimitation," Stalin said.

He recalled that Tamil Nadu was the sole state to oppose the delimitation exercise, alleging that the Centre had conspired to reduce the state's parliamentary representation. "If (Delimitation in the present form) has been established it will cause a huge loss for the state in the Parliament," he warned.

The CM noted that his party's MPs have raised concerns in Parliament over the delimitation issue, the alleged imposition of Hindi, and the allocation of funds to Tamil Nadu.

Earlier, Stalin inaugurated and inspected a new 700-bed healthcare facility at the Government Medical College Hospital in the district, which was built with an investment of Rs 143.69 crore.

He acknowledged that constructing a hospital in a hilly region like Udhagamandalam was challenging, but credited the efforts of Minister E V Velu (Minister for Public Works) for making the project a reality.

Taking a dig at the previous AIADMK government, Stalin said a proposal to establish a medical hospital was mooted by the then Chief Minister (Edapadi K Palaniswami), but it was only implemented during the current regime.

During his visit to the hill station, Stalin also announced a slew of projects to Udhagamandalam, which includes a multi-level car parking facility, 'Hop-on, Hop-off' tourist bus facility among others. (PTI)

Myanmar quake: India sends more humanitarian aid in C-17 aircraft



NEW DELHI, April 6: India on Sunday sent 31 tonnes of humanitarian aid, including replenishment stores for an Indian army field hospital unit deployed in Myanmar, to augment New Delhi's efforts to provide succour to the quake-hit neighbouring country.

The aid was sent in a C-17 Globemaster heavy-lift aircraft.

It took off from the Hindon air force station in Ghaziabad early

Sunday, a senior official said. "#OperationBrahma@IAF_MCC C-17 plane departs for Mandalay with 31 tons of humanitarian aid, including replenishment stores for the Indian army field hospital unit," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar posted on X and also shared a few photos.

A 7.7-magnitude earthquake jolted Myanmar last week, with the toll rising to over 3,000 even

as rescuers continue to search through the rubble for signs of life. India mounted its relief mission named 'Operation Brahma' as a swift response to the devastation caused by the earthquake that hit Myanmar as well as Thailand on March 28.

The field hospital, under 'Operation Brahma', continues its humanitarian mission in Myanmar as the local government and its agencies also soldered on with their efforts in relief and rescue work.

The hospital unit comprising 118 personnel was deployed in Myanmar using two C-17 heavy-lift aircraft of the IAF which had taken off from Agra on March 29.

The field hospital has been set up by the Indian Army in Mandalay.

Meanwhile, an Indian Navy spokesperson said that INS Ghazi with 442 tonnes of relief material, including 405 tonnes of rice, arrived at Yangon early Saturday. (PTI)

Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal ends his indefinite hunger strike

CHANDIGARH, April 6: Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal on Sunday ended his indefinite fast, which he had started on November 26 last year to press for various demands of agitating farmers including a legal guarantee on the minimum support price for crops.

The announcement came a day after Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu appealed to him to end his fast-unto-death.

Dallewal announced that he was ending his indefinite fast at a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' organised at Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib district of Punjab.

"You (farmers) all have asked me to end the fast unto death. I am indebted to you for taking care of the agitation. I respect your sentiments. I accept your order," said Dallewal while addressing the

farmers' gathering.

Dallewal is a senior leader of a joint forum of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM). He began his indefinite hunger strike on November 26 last year to press the Centre to accept the farmers' demands.

After the Centre invited the farmer leaders for talks in January, Dallewal started taking medical aid at the Khanauri protest site but did not end his fast.

On Saturday, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had appealed to Dallewal to end his hunger strike.

In a post on X, he said, "The ongoing dialogue between the representatives of the Government of India and the representatives of farmers' organisations regarding their demands is continuing."

"Farmer leader Shri Jagjit Singh Dallewal has now re-

turned from hospital and we wish him a speedy recovery. We also request him to end his hunger strike and we will meet with the representatives of the farmers' organisations for talks at 11 am on May 4 as per the already decided date."

A similar appeal was made by Union minister Bittu on Saturday.

"Your health is more important, and your life is precious for the people of Punjab as your leadership will always be needed for the struggle of farmers and farm labourers," Bittu said.

He said all BJP ministers and senior leaders had during the Lok Sabha session inquired about Dallewal and extended their wishes for his wellbeing.

The minister appealed to Dallewal to end his hunger strike and come forward for discussion with the central government. (PTI)

BJP will achieve 'shat pratishat' status in Thane, claims party leader

THANE, April 6: In remarks that may raise hackles of Deputy CM Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, a BJP leader on Sunday claimed the party is rapidly moving towards achieving "shat pratishat" or hundred per cent BJP status in Thane.

Thane is the home turf of Shinde whose party is one of the key constituents in the ruling BJP-led Mahayuti alliance.

Thane City district BJP president Sanjay Waghule said several workers from Shiv Sena, Sena (UBT), and NCP (SP) joined the BJP on Sunday marking its 45th foundation day.

"The BJP is rapidly moving towards achieving 'shat pratishat BJP' (100% BJP) status in Thane. We have already enrolled more than 84,000 primary members in Thane alone," Waghule claimed and added that the BJP is expanding its regional footprint.

BJP MLA Sanjay Kelkar claimed more than 1.5 crore members have joined BJP across Maharashtra, with more than 1.5 lakh coming from Thane district alone.

MLC Niranjan Davkhare said the symbolic importance of welcoming new members to the BJP on Ram Navami added spiritual and cultural significance to the occasion.

"It is a positive sign that people are showing trust in BJP's vision and leadership, especially on such an auspicious day," he said. (PTI)

Judge conducting trial in 2008 Malegaon blast case transferred, victims say it will delay justice

MUMBAI, April 6: Special NIA court judge AK Lahoti, conducting trial in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, has been posted to Nashik in the annual general transfer of district judges, days before the court was likely to reserve the matter for judgment. The transfer order for Lahoti and other judges issued by the registrar general of the Bombay High Court will come into effect when the courts re-open after summer vacation on June 9.

Victims, however, said Lahoti's transfer would further delay justice, and they are planning to approach the Bombay High Court, requesting an extension for the special judge. Lahoti is the fifth judge to be transferred in the 17-year-old case. The order has mentioned that the judicial officers who are under the order of transfer are "directed (a) to finish by judgments all cases in which hearing has already been concluded and (b) should endeavour to dispose of all part-heard cases before handing over charge".

In the last hearing on Saturday, judge Lahoti directed the prosecution and defence to wrap up the remaining arguments by April 15 and was expected to reserve the matter for judgment the following day, a defence lawyer said. Advocate Shahid Nadeem, representing the victims, said, "We are considering filing an application in the high court. We had earlier submitted a letter to the chief justice requesting an extension of his (judge's) tenure until the judgment is passed."

He said the justice has already been delayed, and the presiding judge's transfer will cause more delays.

"In the interest of justice, we will decide after con-



sulting with senior advocates," he added.

Six persons were killed and more than 100 injured when an explosive device strapped on a motorcycle went off on September 29, 2008, near a mosque in north Maharashtra's Nashik district.

BJP leader Pragna Thakur, Lt Col Prasad Purohit and five others are being tried for their alleged involvement in the case. The accused are facing prosecution under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The prosecution examined 323 witnesses during the trial, while the defence examined eight.

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) probed the case initially before it was transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2011. (PTI)

Govt plans capacity building activities for frontline workers of HPV vaccination

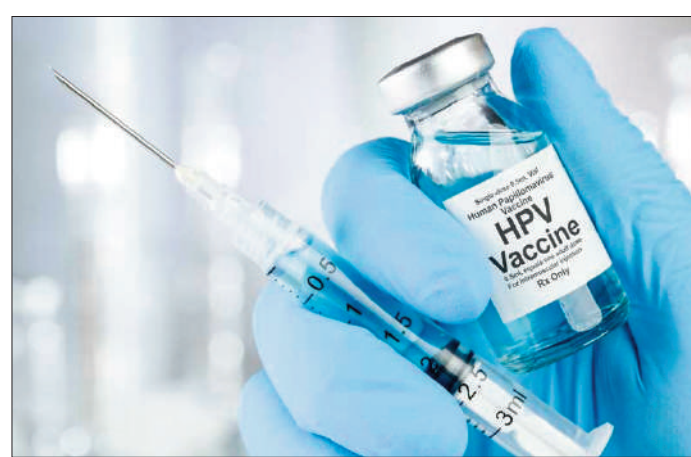
NEW DELHI, April 6: The Union Health Ministry is planning to roll out capacity building activities for frontline workers involved in administration of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination, sources said.

In her interim budget speech in 2024, Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the government will encourage vaccination of girls in the age group of 9-14 years to prevent cervical cancer.

According to sources, the Union Health Ministry has held several meetings and is working on a detailed strategy for the implementation of the same.

"Roll-out of capacity building activities for the frontline workers and IEC (information education and communications) activities for sensitisation purposes are being planned with respect to HPV vaccination," an official source said.

In June 2022, National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) had recommended the introduction of HPV vaccine in the



Universal Immunisation Programme for adolescent girls in the age group of 9-14 years.

Currently, vaccines by two manufacturers -- MSD Pharmaceuticals and Serum Institute of India -- are available in the Indian market.

MSD Pharmaceuticals' Gardasil 4 vaccine and Serum Institute's Cervavac are quadrivalent vaccines

that target four HPV sub-types -- 6, 11, 16 and 18.

MSD's Gardasil 9, which is India's first gender-neutral HPV vaccine, is also available. The 9-valent HPV vaccine targets sub-types 6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58 among Indian girls and women (aged 9-26 years) and boys (aged 9-15 years).

The vaccine helps protect against cervical cancer, vulvar cancer and vaginal cancer among females. It also protects against anal cancer and genital warts in both males and females, sources said.

According to sources, the HPV sub-types 16 and 18 are responsible for the maximum cases of cervical cancer. The WHO has recommended a single-dose administration of the HPV vaccine for optimal protection.

India is home to about 16 per cent of the world's women, but it accounts for about a quarter of all cervical cancer cases and nearly a third of global cervical cancer deaths.

Indian women face 1.6 per cent lifetime cumulative risk of developing cervical cancer and 1 per cent cumulative death risk from cervical cancer, officials had stated.

According to some recent estimates, almost 80,000 women develop cervical cancer and 35,000 die due to this cancer in India every year. (PTI)

I don't know where I would fit in today's game, says Michael Owen

MUMBAI, April 6: The game of football continues to evolve in a fast pace and teams hardly use two strikers these days, says former England and Real Madrid forward Michael Owen, adding he does not know how he would fit in the modern game.

Owen is in Mumbai along with several other international superstars such as Luis Figo, Carlos Puyol, Rivaldo, Xavi and many others to take part in a 'Legends Faceoff' match between former Real Madrid and FC Barcelona players.

"The game has definitely changed. Everybody had two

strikers when I was growing up, when I played professional football. Now, hardly anybody does that," Owen said during a select media interaction ahead of the match here on Sunday.

"Of course, now not many people have two strikers, the role has changed. The profile has changed, the shape and size of the striker has changed.

"Somebody like myself, I guess, I don't know where I would fit in today's game. Maybe I would have to play in one of the wider areas," he said.

Owen said across Europe there are not many natural No. 9s that can score a lot of goals

which indicated towards the change in profile of players.

"Profile (has) definitely changed. There's just less because of that, because of the profile and because of the way teams play now, there's just less strikers as well," he said.

"I look around Europe and there's not many natural No. 9s who can score lot of goals. But when we were playing, there was loads and loads of them. The game has changed a little bit. Wider players scoring more goals now coming inside, being on their wrong foot," he added.

The 45-year-old Owen, who last played for England in 2008,



he would prefer to stick with the old style.

"I prefer the old style. I think combinations and pairings was great and I do think in time it will come back. Football is quite fashionable. You know, if one great coach is playing one way, then everybody thinks that's the perfect way and everybody follows," he said.

"So maybe in a few years we will come back to having two centre forwards, I don't know. But yeah, I'd certainly prefer the old way when everybody had pairs," he added.

Portugal and Real Madrid legend Figo said it remains to

be seen whether Cristiano Ronaldo will play for the country in the 2026 World Cup.

"I don't know what is the idea for Cristiano, how long he wants to continue to play, how long he will play for Portugal. It's a lot of questions that I cannot answer right now," he said.

"But in the end, a World Cup is always a big competition. It's always the best nations that are playing and normally it's always the last part of the competition.

"We have to wait a bit and see first which one they qualify, which players are fit to play," he added. (PTI)

MI look to overcome batting woes against inspired RCB



MUMBAI, April 6: Struggling Mumbai Indians will hope the batters will get their act together to shoulder responsibility when they take on an inspired Royal Challengers Bengaluru in an Indian Premier League match here on Monday.

With three defeats in four games marking yet another poor start for the five-time winners, Mumbai Indians are grappling with batting woes. Only two MI batters have hit half-centuries so far in four matches, with Suryakumar Yadav and Ryan Rickelton recording one each. Among all the 10 IPL teams, this is the least number of contributions in terms of fifties per batter.

Scoring fifties has always been tough in T20 cricket, and IPL teams have increasingly moved towards being top-heavy with their best batters getting most overs to face and looking to bat through.

At the centre of MI's struggles with the bat are former skipper Rohit Sharma, who missed the last game against Lucknow Super Giants due to a blow to his knee at the nets after a poor start to the IPL, and middle-order batter Tilak Varma, whose starts haven't converted into big scores. It remains to be seen if Rohit is fit for the clash against RCB but MI will certainly need a quick fix to their batting woes and would need Suryakumar to continue doing the heavy lifting.

With 177 runs to his kitty, the India T20I captain has been MI's best

batter this season. His maiden half-century gave MI the glimmer of hope for a win over LSG, but it corresponded with Tilak's failure to accelerate which left the lower order with an uphill task in the chase.

Despite skipper Hardik Pandya's five-for, LSG accumulated a total which was also beyond MI as they lacked a hard-hitting batter lower down the order. Pandya struck a valiant 16-ball 28 but got no support from the other end.

Mumbai Indians have indeed been bolstered with the return of Jasprit Bumrah, who joined the team ahead of the clash against RCB but it remains to be seen if he is fit to bowl or not. MI's only win so far came last week over Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede, which would certainly spur the confidence of the Pandya-led side to put up a unified show again. For the visiting Royal Challengers Bengaluru, it would be an opportunity to exploit MI's batting frailties and pile up further pressure on their opponents.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Rajat Patidar (c), Virat Kohli, Phil Salt, Jitesh Sharma, Devdutt Padikkal, Swastik Chhikara, Liam Livingstone, Krunal Pandya, Swapnil Singh, Tim David, Romario Shepherd, Manoj Bhandage, Jacob Bethell, Josh Hazlewood, Rasikh Salam Dar, Suyash Sharma, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Nuwan Thushara, Lungi Ngidi, Abhinandan Singh, Mohit Raheem, Yash Dayal. (PTI)

former MI player knows this ground well and its short boundaries will give the burly Australian another chance to play an explosive knock, something which he has done several times in the past for his former side. RCB have a strong pace bowling attack in Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar providing control at the top, but spin bowlers are yet to make their mark.

RCB are placed at third position in the points table and would be keen to bounce back from their loss to Gujarat Titans in their last outing.

The Teams (from): Mumbai Indians: Hardik Pandya (c), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Robin Minz, Ryan Rickelton, Shrijith Krishnan, Bevon Jacobs, Tilak Varma, Naman Dhir, Will Jacks, Mitchell Santner, Raj Angad Bawa, Vignesh Puthur, Corbin Bosch, Trent Boult, Karn Sharma, Deepak Chahar, Ashwani Kumar, Reece Topley, VS Pemeetsa, Arjun Tendulkar, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Jasprit Bumrah.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Rajat Patidar (c), Virat Kohli, Phil Salt, Jitesh Sharma, Devdutt Padikkal, Swastik Chhikara, Liam Livingstone, Krunal Pandya, Swapnil Singh, Tim David, Romario Shepherd, Manoj Bhandage, Jacob Bethell, Josh Hazlewood, Rasikh Salam Dar, Suyash Sharma, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Nuwan Thushara, Lungi Ngidi, Abhinandan Singh, Mohit Raheem, Yash Dayal. (PTI)

India ends World Boxing Cup campaign on a high with six-medal haul

NEW DELHI, April 6: The Indian boxing contingent ended their campaign at the World Boxing Cup with an impressive haul of six medals, including a gold won by Hitesh, at Foz Do Iguacu in Brazil.

It's India's first-ever outing in an elite-level international meet organised by World Boxing.

Hitesh became the first Indian boxer to clinch a gold medal in the World Boxing Cup. His opponent Odel Kamara of England was injured and couldn't take to the ring in the 70kg final on Saturday. Abhinash Jamwal, the other Indian boxer to reach the final in the 65kg category, gave his best against local favourite Yuri Reis but could not do enough to get a favourable verdict and bagged a silver medal.

Four Indians -- Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (50kg), Manish Rathore (55kg), Sachin

(60kg) and Vishal (90kg) -- bagged bronze medals.

Hitesh credited the 10-day preparatory camp in Brazil ahead of the tournament as something that helped him and the team a lot.

"The camp helped me learn a few tactical nuances that helped me a lot in the competition. This tournament has provided us fantastic exposure at the highest level and I am happy that I could grab the gold medal," said Hitesh.

India had fielded a 10-member contingent at the World Boxing Cup, their first major international outing since the Paris Olympics.

The strong performance will not only boost the confidence of the players as they start preparing for the Olympic cycle ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Games. (PTI)

I deserve the price tag: Confident Chahal looks to regain rhythm

BENGALURU, April 6: Yuzvendra Chahal said on Sunday that the hefty Rs 18 crore price tag sits lightly on him, and was confident that he can overcome the lukewarm start in the IPL 2025 for Punjab Kings.

Chahal, the highest wicket-taker in the IPL with 206 scalps, has taken only one wicket so far in this iteration of the tournament.

"We have played three matches and the best thing is that we won two of them. The tournament has just started and I'm getting into my rhythm. My performance is secondary. If I don't get a single wicket, and if we win the trophy, that would be my preference," Chahal said during the JioHotstar Press Room with Punjab Kings.

"The price tag, I think, I deserve it. When you play, you don't think about whether

you've lost 5 crores or 18 crores," he added.

So, is it imperative for Chahal to perform well in the IPL to chart his way back to the Indian team, for whom he has not played since August 2023.



Chahal is not unduly worried about it. "I don't think about it. It's not in my hands. Last year as well, I was not playing for a year, but I came to the (T20) World Cup (squad). I don't put any pressure (on himself). I just enjoy my cricket whether I am playing or not (for India)," he

said. Chahal was also glad that Kuldeep Yadav, the one part of the famed KulCha pair, is doing well for the country and in the IPL. "As far as Kulcha is concerned those are my memories. He will always be there. He is doing so well. I am so happy for him. I think, right now, he is the world's number one wrist spinner," he said.

There is a considerable gap in Chahal's game time these days, but the leg-spinner said it has not affected his bowling.

"We've played so many matches all over India. We know the stadiums, the conditions. If I play in Chinnaswamy or in Chepauk, I plan my bowling after the match situation and the team needs.

"We speak to our captain about what we need. We should attack or we should defend. So, according to that, we always bowl," he added. (PTI)

JOFRA IS ONLY GOING TO GET BETTER AND BETTER: SANDEEP SHARRMA

CHANDIGARH, April 6: Jofra Archer is one of the toughest bowlers to face in world cricket and he regaining form after proving expensive early in the IPL was on expected lines, his Rajasthan Royals teammate Sandeep Sharma said.

Archer had leaked as many as 76 runs in his four overs in the opening game against Sunrisers Hyderabad before conceding 33 runs in 2.3 overs against Kolkata Knight Riders. He also failed to pick up a wicket besides proving expensive.

However, the England pacer upped his ante in his previous two outings, most recently against Punjab Kings on Saturday night when he struck twice in the open-

ing over.

"When you start any tournament, something like the IPL, it's high pressure. You have so many quality batters and opponent sides. First two matches, your nerves are high. I think that is what happened.

"We always knew Jofra is a world class bowler. The skill he brings to the table or into the game, it's totally different. Very few can bring that," said Sandeep after the win over Punjab Kings.

Archer had castled Priyansh Arya and skipper Shreyas Iyer in the opening over.

"All management and team had this confidence on him that the day he gets that 1 over, 1 wicket, maybe 2 overs, those 2 good



overs, that will boost his confidence. He is one of the toughest bowlers to face. With more games, he is going to get better

and better," said Sandeep. Sandeep also contributed to Royals' success with the ball, taking two wickets for 21 runs in his

four overs. In response to Royals' 205 for 4, Punjab Kings could only manage 155 for 9.

"Actually, this pitch, the back-of-length was skidding and was keeping low. We saw the other team bowling. I think we read the pitch faster than the other team," Sandeep said.

"We had the same plan during time-outs. We talked to the batsmen who were playing inside us. We got their feedback on which ball is tough to hit or which ball is tough to convert boundary balls.

"We cut down those balls on this wicket. Again, I feel the wicket was not that good. The credit goes to our batters, who scored well," he added. (PTI)

MBSG seek to overturn deficit against JFC in second leg semifinal

KOLKATA, April 6: Hosts Mohun Bagan Super Giant will have their task cut out as they look to overturn a one-goal deficit against Jamshedpur FC in their second leg semi-final of the Indian Super League here on Monday.

Jamshedpur FC will enter Mohun Bagan SG's bastion -- Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Kriangan (VYBK) -- with a 2-1 aggregate advantage after the Khalid Jamil-coached side snapped MBSG's six-game unbeaten streak against the Red Miners.

The League Shield winners will be drawing confidence from their impeccable home record though, having not given away a goal in any of their previous six games at the stadium.

They will have to extend that streak to overturn the deficit and find a place in the summit clash for the third year running. MBSG, however, have lost three of their last four playoff games in the ISL, including each of their last two. They had faced defeats in only two of their first nine playoff matches before this patch began; a promising run of form they will seek to regain starting from this game.

Having scored 21 goals from set-pieces this season, which is the most ever by a team in a single ISL campaign, Mohun Bagan Super Giant's mastery from dead-ball situations could be instrumental in dissecting Jamshedpur FC's backline.

Jamshedpur FC have scored

multiple goals in each of their last four ISL games, which is their second-best such streak ever. However, they have never netted more than once in consecutive games against MBSG before, and an alert home side defence will be eager to sustain that record.

While their attacking form has been inspiring, the Red Miners have conceded a league-high 23 goals in the first half. Jamil will push his team to shore up defensively early on to avoid conceding their aggregate advantage.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant head coach Jose Molina brought the focus to the core objective from the coming match: to progress into the finals.

"The only thing that is there in my mind right now is the matchday. We have to perform well and win -- that's the goal currently," he said.

"We have kept our preparations for this match the same as before."

Jamshedpur FC head coach Khalid Jamil recognised MBSG's strength at home.

"We have kept our preparations for this game the same as before. There is no doubt about Mohun Bagan Super Giant, who always play very well, especially at home," he said.

The two sides have played 11 games against each other, with MBSG winning five times and Jamshedpur FC emerging victorious four times. Two encounters have produced draws. (PTI)

Verstappen holds off McLarens to win his fourth straight Japanese GP

SUZUKA (JAPAN), April 6: Max Verstappen won Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix to break a "mini-slump" of two wins from 16 races but needed a drive that his Red Bull team engineer called "perfection" to get it done.

It was Verstappen's fourth straight victory on the Suzuka circuit in central Japan and breaks the momentum of the McLarens of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri, who won the season's first two races in Australia and China.

"We still have work to do," Verstappen said. "But it does show if we nail everything we can be up there."

He did just that. The four-time defending Formula 1 champion, Verstappen started from pole position after setting a course-record time in qualifying, which he called "insane." Norris placed second and Piastri was third. The track was dry despite rain earlier in the day to produce an incident-free race.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finished fourth followed by George Russell of Mercedes and teammate Kimi Antonelli in sixth. Japanese driver Yuki Tsunoda finished 12th in his first drive with Red Bull's top team.

"We keep pushing," Verstappen said. "Unbelievable. A great weekend for us."

Norris leads the driver's standings after three races with 62 points to 61 for Verstappen.

The weekend turned when Verstappen took the pole on his record lap Saturday in qualify-

ing. And there was only one incident of note in Sunday's race -- one that's being dubbed the "grass-cutting moment."

Most of the leaders pitted around the 20-lap mark with Verstappen and Norris exiting the pits at almost exactly the same time with Norris forced to drive over the grass, unable to get by Verstappen and he tried to access the track.

"He drove himself into the grass," Verstappen said on the radio.

Norris said he had no bone to pick with Verstappen.

"He had the position and the right to do what he did," Norris said.

Race stewards agreed. After the race, Verstappen saluted Japanese engine maker Honda, which this season will end its run of supplying the Red Bull team. And of course the win came on the Suzuka circuit, which Honda runs.

"It was fun, just pushing very hard at the end," Verstappen said. "The two McLarens were pushing very hard. We didn't give up improving the car and today it was in its best form."

"Of course, starting on the pole -- that's what made it possible to win this race."

Norris trailed right behind Verstappen for almost the whole race, unable to pass on the narrow Suzuka circuit.

"I could see Max quite clearly for the whole race but just couldn't quite make any inroads," Norris said, unsurprised Verstappen was flawless and left him no openings. (AP)