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THE HILLS TIMES

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

Voice of the hills people

Vol .No. II Issue No. 071

RNI-ASSENG/2023/86488

GUWAHATI, TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025

PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8

'Pahalgam attack the most barbaric face of terrorism' Pak behaviour will decide India's future action: PM



NEW DELHI, May 12: In his first address to the nation after Operation Sindoor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday sternly warned Pakistan that India will not succumb to nuclear blackmail and sent a clear message to the world: terror and trade, terror and talks cannot go together.

"Operation Sindoor is India's new policy against terrorism. We have only kept in abeyance our operations against Pakistan and the future will depend on their behaviour," Modi said in a 22-minute address.

He also had an advice for Pakistan's rulers: "The terrorists they have been feeding and nurturing all these years will swallow Pakistan itself. If Pakistan wants to survive, it will have to root out terrorism." "This is not an era of war, but this is also not the era of terror," Modi said, as he paid glowing tributes to the armed forces for successfully forcing Pakistan to plead for peace after eight of their airbases were heavily damaged.

"Any talks with Pakistan can happen

only on terrorism and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir," the prime minister said.

Modi's assertions about not doing trade with Pakistan came minutes after US President Donald Trump said that he told India and Pakistan that his administration will do trade with them only if they end the conflict. Modi said that while Pakistan pleaded with India to stop the military offensive, New Delhi considered it only after they promised to stop their misadventure.

The prime minister termed the Pahalgam attack as the most "barbaric face of terrorism", saying it was personal pain for him, but the enemy has now realised the consequences of removing "sindoor from the forehead of our women".

Addressing the nation, Modi said Operation Sindoor was not just a name but, through it, the whole world saw India's resolve turn into action and more than 100 dreaded terrorists were slaughtered. "India will not tolerate any nuclear blackmail. We have only kept in abeyance our operations against Pakistan," (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NDA has potential to win 104 of 126 assembly seats in Assam: Himanta

GUWAHATI, May 12: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday termed the BJP's performance in the panchayat polls as "historic" and said the ruling alliance has the potential to win 104 assembly seats out of 126 in next year's election.

The ruling BJP on Monday is leading in all panchayat bodies across Assam with counting of votes continuing for the second day in a row.

"The BJP is marching ahead to capture more than 300 seats in Zilla Parishad and it is historic. However, it is still being counted," Sarma told reporters here.

Asked about the expectation in next year's assembly elections, he said that it will be better than the panchayat results.

"Panchayats are usually in the rural areas. In the Assembly, both rural and urban areas will go to the polls. Traditionally, the BJP performs well in urban locations. "Presently, the BJP-led alliance's potential in Assam is 104 seats. However, there is a difference between potential and reality. We hope that we will win 95 seats. But everything depends on the public mood," the CM said.

Presently, the ruling BJP's strength in the 126-member Assam Assembly is 64, while its allies AGP has nine MLAs and UPPL has seven.

In the opposition camp, the Congress' strength is



26, AIUDF has 15 members, BPF has three and CPI(M) has one MLA. There is one Independent legislator also.

When asked about the Bodoland Territorial Region's election, which is due later this year, Sarma said, "We will fight alone in BTR, but we will not fight in all seats." (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Buddha Purnima celebrated with grandeur and unity in Nampong village

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 12: Buddha Purnima was commemorated with grandeur and reverence at Nampong village, located in the Piyong circle of Namsai district, on Monday.

On this auspicious occasion, a new Buddha Vihara was inaugurated by Dr Chowna Mein, deputy chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, in the distinguished presence of several notable attendees, including Tapir Gao, MP from East Arunachal.

Buddha Jayanti, also known as Buddha Purnima or Vesak, is observed on the full moon day (Purnima) in the Hindu month of Vaisakha, which typically falls in May. It is the most significant festival in the Buddhist calendar, commemorating the birth, enlightenment (nirvana), and death (parinirvana) of Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.

The celebration featured the participation of several senior and junior venerables (Bhantes or monks),



along with members of the public. Devotees visited Buddhist temples, especially those housing relics or images of the Buddha. Offerings of flowers, candles, fruits, and incense were made to Buddha statues, while people chanted Buddhist scriptures and engaged in meditation and mindfulness practices.

On this day, followers also per-

form good deeds, give to charity, and observe ethical guidelines for lay Buddhists. Across various countries, a wide range of religious, cultural, and traditional activities mark the occasion. The day is observed with great reverence, joy, and celebration—blending spiritual devotion with local customs. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM Himanta hails India's Integrated Air Defence System

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, May 12: Hailing India's Integrated Air Defence System, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said it represents a declaration of the country's technological superiority and military dominance.

"Our Integrated Air Defence System is not just a shield — it is a declaration of India's technological superiority and military dominance. From the sky to the ground, India now decides the terms of engagement. This is not propaganda. This is the new India — driven by strategy, powered by strength, and backed by facts," Sarma wrote on micro-blogging site X. Sarma also appreciated the briefings by top military officials in the national capital regarding tensions with Pakistan and the strikes by Indian forces that caused large-scale damage in the neighbouring country.

The chief minister asserted that the briefings were "unapologetically professional and brutally honest." "The briefings by our DGMs were intense, unapologetically professional, and brutally honest. They faced tough questions without flinching — and made one thing absolutely clear: the Indian Armed Forces have struck Pakistan (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Counting on for Assam panchayat polls, BJP registers huge leads

GUWAHATI, May 12: The BJP is leading in all panchayat bodies across Assam with counting of votes continuing for the second day in a row amid tight security, officials said on Monday.

Panchayat elections took place in two phases on May 2 and 7 in Assam's 27 districts for the first time after the delimitation of the constituencies.

The counting of votes, cast by ballot papers, for both phases began at 8 am on Sunday.

According to Assam State Election Commission (ASEC) data, the BJP has won 242 members of Anchalik Panchayat constituencies, while its ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) has bagged 30 seats so far.

Opposition Congress has cornered 34 seats, one constituency each won by Rajior Dal and AIUDF and 14 by Independents.

In Zilla Parishad, the BJP has won 26 seats while its ally AGP emerged victorious in three. No other party has opened its account yet in ZP constituencies, the ASEC data showed.

Along with these, results for thousands of seats for Gram Panchayat (GP) have also been declared, but these are all Inde-

pendents as candidates were not allowed to contest on party tickets.

"The counting has been continuing non-stop since yesterday morning. Different people and teams worked the whole night to declare the results. We are hopeful that the final result will be out by tomorrow," a senior ASEC official told PTI.

The counting of ballot papers is going on at all the 39 centres across the state, he added. The total seats include 21,920 Gram Panchayat members with 10,883 seats reserved for women. Voting also happened for 2,192 Anchalik Panchayat members with 1,124 reserved for women and 397 Zilla Parishad members with 199 seats reserved for women.

As many as 2,912 candidates have won uncontested — 34 Zilla Parishad members, 311 Anchalik Panchayat members and 2,567 GP ward members.

In view of some violence and disruptions during the voting, the administration has arranged adequate security measures in all the counting centres. A total of 74.71 per cent of the 1,80,36,682 voters exercised their franchise in the two-phase panchayat polls. (PTI)

Border regions come back to life as fog of war lifts

NEW DELHI, May 12: After teetering on the edge for nearly a week, border regions in the north experienced a less fraught day, with no shelling, no sightings of drones, and a comparatively lighter yoke of emergency measures.

Markets teemed with people in the border areas of Punjab on Monday, even though schools in some districts remained shut.

New Delhi and Islamabad reached an understanding Saturday to halt military actions with immediate effect after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Schools in Ferozepur, Fazilka, Pathankot, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and Gurdaspur districts, that lie on the border with Pakistan, remained

shut on Monday. In Pathankot and Gurdaspur, colleges and universities also remained closed.

Punjab shares a 553-km frontier with Pakistan. "India has taught a lesson to Pakistan and it has been successful in sending a strong message to the neighbouring nation. And now Pakistan, which is a rogue nation, will not dare to cast an evil eye on our country," a grocery shop owner in Pathankot said.

Pakistan especially targeted Pathankot with multiple drone attacks, but they were thwarted by the Indian security forces.

In Ferozepur, villagers who had moved to safer places were returning to their villages. Daler Singh, a native of Jallo Ke village near the border, said (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

China denies reports of sending cargo plane with military supplies to Pakistan

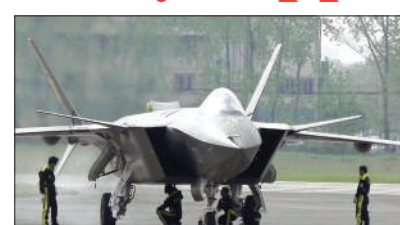
BEIJING, May 12: The Chinese military on Monday denied reports that its largest military cargo plane has carried arms supplies to Pakistan and warned legal action against those spreading such rumours.

The People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) has denied that its Xi'an Y-20 military transport aircraft has taken supplies to Pakistan.

After seeing a large amount of information on the internet about a "Y-20 transporting relief supplies to Pakistan", the Air Force said in a statement that such claims were untrue, a report on the official website of the Chinese Defence Ministry said on Monday.

The PLAAF also posted several screenshots of photos and words that shared the incorrect information, with each stamped with the red word "rumour".

"The internet is not beyond the law!



Those who produce and spread military-related rumours will be held legally responsible!" the report added.

The denial by the PLA, which shares close ties with its Pakistan counterpart, was regarded as significant, coming two days after an understanding between India and Pakistan to stop all firings and military actions and Islamabad's requirement for immediate replenishments.

According to a recent report of Stockholm International Peace Research Insti-

tute (SIPRI), China has emerged as the largest weapons supplier to Pakistan, accounting for 81 per cent of arms procurement of China's all-weather ally from 2020 to 2024. The procurement included the latest jet fighters, radars, naval ships, submarines and missiles.

Both countries jointly manufacture J-17 aircraft, the mainstay of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). Considering the large-scale use of Chinese weapons supplies by Pakistan and the all-weather relationship between the two countries, the Chinese official media showed considerable interest during the last few days in the India-Pakistan military confrontation, regurgitating some of Pakistan's claims, including the downing of planes.

India launched 'Operation Sindoor' on May 7 to destroy nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Guwahati will get 11 new 5-star hotels, says CM

GUWAHATI, May 12: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said Guwahati will get 11 new five-star hotels, transforming the city into a hospitality hub of the region.

Sarma laid the foundation stone for two hotels of the global hospitality chain Marriott International, to be developed at an investment of Rs 500 crore.

"Guwahati gets a leg up on attracting global hospitality chains! Today, I performed the Bhoomi Poojan for two major Marriott International properties," he said in a post on X.

These two upcoming projects -- Marriott Resort & Spa and Fairfield by Marriott -- will be huge and unique as they will be developed on 76 bigha (over 25 acre) of land, he said.

"The MOUs for these projects worth Rs 500 crore were signed during the Advantage Assam 2.0 investment summit earlier this year and work has begun within just three months," Sarma said.

"With 11 five-star hotels in the pipeline, Guwahati is becoming a hub for global hospitality chains who are seizing the opportunity to cater to the huge demand in the region," he said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Airstrike in central Myanmar kills up to 22 people at bombed school, reports say

BANGKOK, May 12: An airstrike by Myanmar's military on a village in the country's central Sagaing region hit a school on Monday, killing as many as 20 students and two teachers, according to a member of a resistance group, an aid worker and media reports.

The morning attack on Ohe Htein Twin village in the region's Tabayin township, also known as Depayin, also wounded dozens of students, they said.

Neither the military government nor state-controlled media have released information about the reported airstrike.

The military has increasingly used airstrikes to counter a widespread armed struggle against its rule, which began in February 2021 when it seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

More than 6,600 civilians are estimated to have been killed by security forces since then, according to figures compiled by nongovern-



mental organisations.

A member of the White Depayin People's Defence Force resistance group fighting against army rule told The Associated Press that a fighter jet dropped a bomb directly onto a school, where many students from primary to high school levels were studying after 9 am.

The area is about 115 kilometres northwest of Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city.

The resistance fighter, who rushed to the site of the attack to

help the victims, spoke on condition of anonymity because he was afraid of being arrested by the military. He said that 20 students and two teachers were killed in the attack on the school, which is operated by the country's pro-democracy movement, and about 50 others were wounded. He also said that there had been no recent fighting in the area, though Sagaing is a stronghold of the resistance. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

UN Global Road Safety Week: WHO urges members for safer road design, lower speed limits

'In 2021 alone, our region accounted for more than 3.3 lakh deaths from road crashes'

NEW DELHI, May 12: The WHO has urged all member states, the civil society, the private sector and communities to push for people-centred mobility policies, safer road design, safe vehicles and lower speed limits on the occasion of the 8th UN Global Road Safety Week.

The UN Global Road Safety Week is marked biennially, starting on the third Monday of May.

This year, the theme urges the world to make walking and cycling safe for everyone.

Walking and cycling are an integral part of the multimodal transport systems in the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2020-2030, Saima Wazed, regional director, WHO South-East Asia, said. They also promote healthy and sustainable cities and lifestyles, she added.

"Globally each year, road-traffic crashes take a devastating toll on



our communities, claiming the lives of nearly 1.2 million (12 lakh) people and leaving up to 50 million (five crore) more with non-fatal injuries. These tragedies are not mere statistics. They are the loss of children, parents and loved ones, and are largely preventable," Wazed

said. "Road-traffic injuries are now the leading cause of death among young people aged five to 29 years, and they continue to be a pressing public health concern in our WHO South-East Asia Region," she said. "In 2021 alone, our region accounted for more than 3.3 lakh

deaths from road crashes, representing 28 per cent of the global total," she added.

Vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and operators of two- and three-wheelers, made up for 66 per cent of those fatalities, Wazed said. This year's theme is a timely call to action.

"Pedestrians and cyclists already account for more than one in four road-traffic deaths. Ensuring their safety is not only a matter of saving lives, prioritising walking and cycling supports physical activity, which is a key modifiable risk factor for non-communicable diseases, such as heart diseases, stroke, diabetes and cancers. Walking and cycling also support mental well-being, helping to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety," Wazed said. Road safety is an important element of the World Health (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Stock markets log biggest single-day rise after suspension of India-Pak hostilities

MUMBAI, May 12: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty recorded their biggest single-day gains in absolute terms on Monday, after India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop military actions and US and China announced a deal to lower tariffs significantly.

After opening on a high note, the 30-share BSE Sensex soared by 2,975.43 points or 3.74 per cent to settle at a more than seven-month high of 82,429.90. During the day, it rallied 3,041.5 points or 3.82 per cent to a high of 82,495.97.

The 50-issue Nifty of NSE skyrocketed 916.70 points or 3.82 per cent to close at 24,924.70. In intraday trade, the barometer zoomed 936.8 points or 3.90 per cent to 24,944.80.

Sensex and Nifty logged their biggest single-day gains in absolute terms on across the board buying led by IT, metal, realty and tech shares. Sensex had previously posted its biggest single-day gain of 2,507.45 points and Nifty by 733.20 points on June 3, 2024.

Following the sharp rally, Dalal Street investors became richer by ₹ 16.15 lakh crore on Monday as markets. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms jumped by ₹ 16,15,275.19 crore to ₹ 4,32,56,125.65 crore (USD 5.05 trillion) in a single day.

Stock markets welcomed the understanding reached between India and Pakistan on Saturday to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea.

India launched 'Operation Sin-



door' on early May 7 to destroy nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack.

"Confluence of positive geopolitical and economic developments the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, coupled with a breakthrough trade agreement between the US and China sparked the strongest daily market rally in recent times," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Sustained FII inflows, along with a resurgence in retail participation fuelled by expectations of a swift improvement in business sentiment, propelled today's upside, he added.

"Adding to the positive sentiment were encouraging updates on the US-China trade deal, which further boosted investor confidence as the session progressed," Ajit Mishra SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

The easing of geopolitical concerns and progress on global trade

talks brought significant relief to the markets, reflected in a sharp drop in the India VIX volatility index, he added.

US and China on Sunday announced suspension of high tariffs for 90 days. After their talks in Geneva, the US agreed to cut tariffs on Chinese goods to 30 per cent from 145 per cent while China announced to lower its tariffs on US goods to 10 per cent from 125 per cent. From the Sensex firms, Infosys jumped 7.91 per cent. HCL Tech, Tata Steel, Eternal, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, NTPC, Reliance Industries and Bajaj Finance were the other major gainers. Sun Pharma and IndusInd Bank were the only laggards from the pack. The broader markets also mirrored this strength, with Midcap and Smallcap advancing close to 4 per cent.

The BSE smallcap gauge surged 4.18 per cent and midcap index jumped 3.85 per cent. All sectoral indices ended higher. IT zoomed 6.75 per cent, BSE Focused IT

(6.74 per cent), realty (5.87 per cent), metal (5.24 per cent), tech (5.21 per cent), utilities (5.07 per cent), power (4.82 per cent) and industrials (4.24 per cent).

As many as 3,545 stocks advanced while 576 declined and 133 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Meanwhile, stock markets in Pakistan rallied following the understanding between the countries. Benchmark KSE-100 index jumped more than 9 per cent on Monday.

Among other Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled higher.

Markets in Europe were trading in positive territory. US markets ended on a mixed note on Friday.

"Markets were on a roll and turned buoyant after the news of a ceasefire between India and Pakistan... Investors turned risk-on with safe-haven gold taking a beating while equities turned out to be clear winners on the back of broad-based buying support. With talks on global tariff seen on a smooth path, equities could gain traction going ahead," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 2.88 per cent to USD 65.75 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,798.71 crore on Friday, after remaining net buyers for many days, according to exchange data.

Forex markets were closed on Monday on account of Buddha Purnima. (PTI)

Britannia revamps Gobbles Cake Range

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, May 12: Britannia Industries has unveiled a revamped version of its popular Gobbles cake line, featuring a softer texture and richer flavours across its classic variants—Fruit, Chocolate, Pineapple, Orange, Milk, and Butter.

The updated product is also accompanied by refreshed packaging, designed to enhance consumer appeal and the overall snacking experience.

According to an official statement from the company, the reformulation is part of Britannia's continued efforts to respond to evolving consumer preferences.

"The new Britannia Gobbles cake is a result of that commitment, a recipe that delivers an incredibly soft texture and rich flavour that truly delights," said Yudit Shringi, Chief Business Officer - Bread, Cakes & Rusks at Britannia.

The product refresh is being supported by a digital campaign titled "Badey Badon Ko Pighla De", developed by creative agency Schbang. The film features television veterans Shivaji Satam and Dayanand Shetty reprising their iconic investigative roles in a humorous twist—this time as members of the fictional Cakes Investigation Department.

In the campaign, the duo abandons their pursuit of a thief after being won over by the irresistible softness of the cake.

Speaking about the collaboration, Shivaji Satam remarked, "When we tasted their cake, hum toh sach mein pighal gaye!" Dayanand Shetty added, "We were super kicked when Britannia challenged us to get our softest avatars on the floor."

ReNew Power to invest ₹ 22,000 cr in renewable projects in Andhra Pradesh

VIJAYAWADA, May 12: ReNew Power, a leading green energy company, is set to invest ₹ 22,000 crore in establishing India's largest renewable energy complex in Andhra Pradesh, marking its return to the state after five years.

ReNew will set up a 1,800 megawatt solar energy plant and another 1,000 MW wind facility along with a battery energy storage system (BESS) of 2 gigawatt hour (GWh) in two phases at Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh, sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

The company will also set up a 100-kilometre extra-high voltage (EHV) line for transmission of the clean power.

Groundbreaking for the project is planned for May 16, which is likely to be attended by Nara Lokesh, Minister for Information Technology, Electronics, Communications, and Human Resources Development in the Andhra Pradesh government.

In the first phase, ReNew will set up 587 MW of solar plant and a 250.8 MW wind project alongside a 415 MWh BESS, they said, adding that the remaining capacity would be developed in the subsequent phases. An email sent to the company for comments remained unanswered.

This would be the largest renewable energy complex in India.

The Andhra Pradesh government approved the projects under the new integrated clean energy policy launched in October 2024.

The investments mark the re-entry of the renewable energy major in Andhra Pradesh after a five-year lull.

The Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government in the state had in 2019 ordered a review of all electricity tariffs agreements signed with green companies. The renegotiation of the power purchase agreements (PPAs) put at risk about 5.2 GW of solar and wind power projects in the state.

The move hurt 14 major renewable energy companies, including ACME Solar, ReNew Power, Greenko Holding, Axis Wind farms, Azure Power and Mytrah. The firms dragged the state government to court, and the result was a lull in investments.

Sources said no renewable capacity in the state was added from 2019 to 2024. After coming to power, the government led by N Chandrababu Naidu has made renewed efforts to bring investments and companies to the state.

The re-entry of ReNew, whose 777 MW project was impacted by the PPA review by the previous government, into Andhra Pradesh is being seen as a vote of confidence in the government led by N Chandrababu Naidu. (PTI)



VVIP Group to invest ₹ 800cr in new housing project in Greater Noida

NEW DELHI, May 12: Realty firm VVIP Group will invest around ₹ 800 crore to develop a luxury housing project in Greater Noida.

In a statement on Monday, VVIP Group said it has launched a new ultra-luxury project 'VVIP Addresses' at Sector 12, Greater

Noida West.

"With an investment of approximately ₹ 800 crore, the project will comprise 350-plus premium residential units in a single-phase development," it said.

The project is spread over 5 acres. The company is selling units between ₹ 3.49 crore and ₹ 6 crore.

Praveen Tyagi, CMD of VVIP Group, said, "There is a growing demand for luxury housing in the region, which reflects buyers' evolving preferences and a keen desire for a lifestyle that combines opulence, comfort, and connectivity." VVIP Group has developed many projects in Delhi-NCR. (PTI)

Gold tanks ₹ 3,400 to ₹ 96,550/10 g as US-China trade deal curbs demand

NEW DELHI, May 12: Gold prices tanked sharply by ₹ 3,400 to ₹ 96,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday as traders shifted from safe-haven buying after the US declared a 90-day pause on tariff against Chinese imports.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity plunged ₹ 3,400 to ₹ 96,100 per 10 grams on Monday. This marks the steepest fall in 10 months since gold prices plunged ₹ 3,350 on July 23, 2024.

Gold of 99.9 and 99.5 per cent purity had settled at ₹ 99,950 and ₹ 99,500 per 10 grams on Saturday. "Gold prices fell sharply amid signs of progress in trade talks between the US and China, along with some relief in geopolitical tensions, including India-Pakistan," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities at Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Also, silver prices fell ₹ 200 to ₹ 99,700 per kg from Saturday's close of ₹ 99,900 per kg.

Following the trade talks in



Geneva over the weekend, the US agreed to drop its 145 per cent tariff rate on Chinese goods to 30 per cent, while China agreed to lower its rate on US goods to 10 per cent for a 90-day period.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, is trading higher by 1.42 per cent at 101.76.

In futures trades, the most traded contract for gold plummeted ₹

3,932 or 4.07 per cent to trade at ₹ 92,586 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

According to Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, geopolitical tensions cooled with signs of a potential truce between Russia and Ukraine, and an understanding between India and Pakistan on military actions.

These developments led to heavy profit booking in gold,

which had previously rallied on global uncertainty, Trivedi said.

A strong rally in stock markets also hit the gold's appeal as a safe-haven bet.

Silver contracts for July delivery slumped ₹ 2,295 or 2.37 per cent to ₹ 94,434 per kg on the MCX.

Spot gold tanked over 3 per cent to trade at USD 3,218.70 per ounce in the global markets.

Spot silver in the international markets fell 1.19 per cent to trade at USD 32.33 per ounce.

"Gold dips more than 2 per cent on long-liquidation/profit-booking amid easing geo-political tensions and recovery in the greenback against major currencies," Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG - Commodity & Currency Research at JM Financial Services Ltd, said.

Later in the week, investors will focus on the US macroeconomic data, including inflation/retail sales and consumer sentiments. They will also await US Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech - for more clues on the central bank interest rate path, Mer added. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Pak behaviour will decide India's

the future will depend on their behaviour. Operation Sindoor is now India's new policy against terrorism, a new line has been drawn," he said. PM Modi said India will not see terrorists and their state sponsors separately. "Pakistan has to dismantle its terror infrastructure. There is no other way to peace," the prime minister said.

"The Pahalgam attack was the most barbaric face of terrorism, it was a personal pain for me. We gave the armed forces full liberty to raze terrorists to dust.

"The enemy has now realised the consequences of removing 'sindoor' from the forehead of our women. Operation Sindoor was not just a name... on May 7, the whole world saw our resolve turn into action," he said.

"When our missiles and drones destroyed terror sites in Pakistan, not only their buildings but their spirit was also demolished. When 'Nation First' is our resolve, steely decisions are taken," he said.

Saluting the security forces, PM Modi dedicated their bravery to mothers, sisters and daughters of this country.

Pakistan slumped into gloom after the Indian attack on terror camps, "but they dared to attack us rather than helping fight terrorism. More than 100 dreaded terrorists were slaughtered in the Indian attack", Modi said.

"The entire world saw how Pakistani drones were downed by our military might. India has struck at the heart of Pakistan, our missiles attacked with precision to damage their air bases," he said. (PTI)

NDA has potential to win 104

We will contest only in those seats where we have our strength. Our alliance with UPPL will continue."

According to Assam State Election Commission (ASEC) data, the BJP has won 242 members of Anchalik Panchayat constituencies, while its ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) has bagged 30 seats so far.

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CM Himanta hails India's Integrated

deep inside its own territory, with precision and resolve," he added. The Indian Army on Monday shared a powerful compilation video titled "Destroy the Enemy in the Sky" during a high-level briefing of top defence officials.

The video showcased coordinated operations by the Army, Navy, and Air Force as part of the recently concluded Operation Sindoor. A striking segment of the footage included a still collage showing wreckage believed to be enemy military equipment. One image was boldly captioned: "The Pakistani Mirage... Shattered", underscoring the confirmed downing of a Pakistani fighter jet during the operation.

At a high-level joint press conference in New Delhi, senior officers from the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy on Monday shared a detailed account of the operation. The session was led by Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai, Director General of Military Operations (DGMO); Air Vice Marshal AK Bharti, Director General, Air Operations; and Vice Admiral AN Pramod, Director General, Naval Operations.

Addressing the media, Air Vice Marshal Bharti highlighted the strong performance of India's indigenous air defence systems during the conflict.

"Our battle-proven systems stood the test of time and took them head-on. A major highlight has been the stellar performance of the indigenous Akash air defence system. Assembling and operationalising this potent AD environment has only been possible due to the budgetary and policy support from the Government of India over the past decade," he said.

Guwahati will get 11 new

Sharing details, the CM said there will be four more Marriott hotels in the city, followed by two new Taj properties and one of the Lemon Tree.

"Radisson is expanding by 100 more keys. In place of the present Vivanta, Taj is coming up. These projects are expected to significantly strengthen Assam's hospitality infrastructure and create substantial direct and indirect employment opportunities, contributing to the state's economic growth," he said. (PTI)

Border regions come back

that most residents of nearby areas had left hearth and home. "Now, most of them have returned but they remain cautious. Overall, life is normal and we are going back to our fields," he said. A Ferozepur native said, "The situation is normal now. We hope the ceasefire holds and peace prevails."

Jammu and Kashmir, the worst hit border, was peaceful last night with no hostilities between the Indian and Pakistani militaries along the Line of Control and the International Border. "The night remained largely peaceful across Jammu and Kashmir and other areas along the International border," the Indian Army said in a brief statement Monday morning.

"No incidents have been reported, marking the first calm night in recent days," it said. In Rajasthan, a complete blackout was observed in the border districts on Sunday night. There were reports that some red lights, suspected to be of drones, were spotted in the sky in Barmer.

The district administration sent out an alert on X, "Incoming drone activity spotted. Please stay inside your houses and observe blackout: DM Barmer." It, however, said no drone was shot down.

By Monday morning, an apparent sense of normalcy became palpable in the border districts with people gathering at tea stalls and shops and bantering. Jalam Singh, a Jaisalmer local, said, "Things appear to be back to normal now. Last night was peaceful." (PTI)

Buddha Purnima celebrated with

Almsgiving ceremonies were held, where people offered meals to monks and dignitaries. The event beautifully combined solemn spirituality with colorful cultural celebration. From silent meditation to rhythmic drumming, Buddha Purnima honors peace, wisdom, and compassion through rituals, dance, music, and community gatherings.

This year's Buddha Jayanti was particularly special, as people from different settlements across Namsai came together to celebrate in a grand and harmonious way at Nampong village.

China denies reports of sending

and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack.

This was followed by major strikes on several Pakistan airbases a day later, virtually weakening Pakistan's ability to retaliate as India's air defence missile systems successfully thwarted a series of attempts made by Pakistan to breach Indian airspace with swarm drone and missile attacks.

While the Chinese official media here intimately played up reports of Pakistan's claims of shooting down planes, the scale of attacks by the Indian Air Force on nine terror sites deep inside Pakistan followed by strikes on radar systems and air bases came as a surprise here.

The Indian Embassy in Beijing cautioned state-run tabloid Global Times to verify messages before posting them on social media.

On the diplomatic front, China said it will play a constructive role to bring about a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

China hopes India and Pakistan will consolidate and maintain the momentum of the ceasefire, avoid renewed conflict, and resolve differences through dialogue and negotiation, returning to the path of political settlement.

China stands ready to maintain communication with both sides and continue to play a constructive role in achieving a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire and safeguarding regional peace and stability, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told the media last week. (PTI)

Airstrike in central Myanmar kills

Nay Phone Latt, a spokesperson for the opposition's National Unity Government, told the AP that he received the same information on the number of casualties, and that the death toll could rise. The organization is the main opposition group coordinating resistance to military rule.

He accused the military of deliberately attacking civilians in monasteries, refugee camps, schools and hospitals, with the excuse that resistance fighters were sheltering at such sites, though this was not the case and the bombings were intended to alienate the people from the resistance movement.

The death tolls from Monday's bombing reported by independent Myanmar media ranged from 17 to more than 20. A volunteer in Tabayin assisting displaced people who asked not to be identified because of fear of government reprisals said he received the information from the ground that 12 students were confirmed dead and around 30-50 others were wounded.

Sagaing region, near the border with India, has been a stronghold of armed resistance, and the military in recent years has stepped up airstrikes against the local pro-democracy People's Defense Forces. The resistance has no effective defense against air attacks.

In September 2022, aerial attacks by the military's helicopters against a school and village in Let Yet Kone village in the same township, killed at least 13 people, including seven children.

Airstrikes in April 2023 airstrikes killed as many as 160 people, including many children, who were attending a ceremony held by opponents of army rule outside Pazigy village in Sagaing region's Kanbalu township.

Airstrikes in Myanmar garnered increased attention recently when numerous reports deemed credible by the United Nations and human rights groups said that they continued to be carried out in the wake of Myanmar's devastating March 28 earthquake, after which the military and resistance groups declared ceasefires to facilitate relief efforts. (AP)

UN Global Road Safety Week

Organisation's (WHO) guidance for healthy cities. "In our region, the WHO partnership for healthy cities has been working extensively, with megacities, such as Mumbai and Bangkok, to address road safety and promote safe transportation. This includes improved designs of pedestrian walkways, through the assessment of hundreds of kilometres of roads and sidewalks and through universally inclusive designs for accessible walkways," Wazed said.

Creating safe, inclusive and accessible roads for all in the densely-populated cities of South-East Asia is challenging, she pointed out.

"However, doing so will support the population, especially the most vulnerable, through improved community well-being and environmental sustainability. When we integrate road safety with the promotion of physical activity, we address interconnected challenges -- injuries, non-communicable diseases, mental health and even climate change," she said.

"I urge all member states, the civil society, the private sector and communities to push for people-centred mobility policies, safer road design, safe vehicles and lower speed limits," Wazed said. (PTI)

Rout for Raijor Dal and Congress BJP sweeps Panchayat Polls in Sivasagar and Nazira

HT CORRESPONDENT

SIVASAGAR, May 12: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has registered a decisive victory in the recently concluded Panchayat elections in the 96 Sivasagar Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC), significantly outperforming both the Raijor Dal and the Indian National Congress (INC).

Of the 90 Panchayat wards where results have been declared, BJP-backed candidates emerged victorious in 54. The party secured sweeping wins in all Zila Parishad Constituencies (ZPCs) in Desangmukh, Morabazar, Jakaichuk, and Rongpur.

In Desangmukh, BJP's Ajit Changmai garnered 11,260 votes, defeating his nearest rival Bibhuti Kumar Chetia who managed 5,741 votes.

In Jakaichuk, Hari Krishna Neog of BJP won with 9,832 votes, leaving behind Bhupendra Bora of Congress with 6,392 votes.

Rebika Handique won Morabazar ZPC with 11,901 votes, while her rival Junu Gogoi of the



INC secured 7,203 votes.

In Rongpur, Mridusmita Chetia Swarnakar achieved a landslide victory with 18,433 votes, defeating Ritamoni Phukan Bora who got 9,672 votes.

In Nazira CDC, the BJP is poised to sweep all ZPCs, maintaining a strong lead across constituencies.

The poor performance of the Congress and Raijor Dal has been attributed to disunity among opposition factions. Despite its alliance

with the BJP, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), under Pradip Hazarika, fielded independent candidates in many areas, especially in Jakaichuk and Morabazar ZPCs, creating further electoral fragmentation.

The BJP also dominated the Anchalik Panchayat (AP) segments, winning 23 out of 27 seats, including Konwarpur, Hanhchora, Morabazar, Kawoimati, Rangpur, Desangmukh, Bhunyanakhat, Banmukh, Khanamukh, Barua

Pukhuri, Deoraja, Desangdihiali, Panbessa, Rudrasagar, Santipur, Nantiali, Charing, Saulkora, Dikshu, Mogarhat, Hatighuli, and Salaguri.

The AGP managed to win only Mumaitamuli, Dikhowmukh, and Hafolting AP seats, while the Congress secured just one, Dolakhararia in Geleki.

Voter Turnout: Sivasagar Sadar CDC: Total voters: 1,74,617 (87,063 male; 87,553 female; 1 transgender). Votes polled: 1,29,092 (73.93%). Male voters: 63,639 | Female voters: 65,452 | Transgender: 1

Nazira CDC: Total voters: 1,57,418. Votes polled: 1,19,363 (75%). Male voters: 58,087 | Female voters: 61,276

Demow CDC: Total voters: 1,71,648 (85,068 male; 86,578 female). Votes polled: 1,27,843 (74.48%). Male voters: 62,419 | Female voters: 65,424

Counting continues at Sivasagar Government Higher Secondary School for the remaining results in Sivasagar Sadar.

Son kills father in Sapekhati over domestic dispute



HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, May 12: In a shocking incident that has sent shockwaves through Charaideo district, a 19-year-old youth, Hemanta Gogoi, allegedly killed his father, Rupom Gogoi (49), with an axe early Sunday morning at their residence in Tairai Majgaon under Sapekhati.

According to reports, the deceased, reportedly under the influence of alcohol, had been quarrelling and disturbing the family throughout the night. In a fit of rage and frustration, Hemanta attacked his father while he was asleep. Following the incident, the accused surrendered himself to the Sapekhati Police Station.

Locals revealed that the victim had a history of violent behavior, especially towards his wife, who had previously sought police help due to repeated threats from him.

The gruesome act has sparked widespread concern among senior citizens and community leaders in the district. They have voiced alarm over the unchecked proliferation of liquor shops and the growing accessibility of alcohol to youths and adolescents in areas including Sapekhati, Borhat, Boruasali, Kanubari, Lefera, and Baruanagar. Authorities have launched an investigation into the matter, while calls grow louder for stricter regulation of liquor sales in the region to prevent further tragedies.

BJP-led alliance sweeps Panchayat Poll in Demow

HT correspondent

DEMOW, May 12: The BJP-led alliance has swept the Panchayat Elections in the 95 No Demow Constituency, as the vote counting concluded on May 12 (Monday) at Demow College, following the polling on May 11 (Sunday).

According to official data, Demow Co-District comprises 171,648 voters, 4 Zila Parishad Constituencies, 28 Gaon Panchayats, and 2 Anchalik Panchayats. The BJP-led alliance

emerged victorious across all major levels. Zilla Parishad Seats (4): Anima Chungkrang (BJP-supported) — Nitai Panidehing ZPC, Sudhir Munda (BJP-supported) — Demow ZPC, Swapna Gharphalia (BJP-supported) — Bokota Lakwa ZPC, Ghana Gogoi (AGP-supported) — Khelua ZPC

Ward Members: BJP-led alliance: 271 wards, INC-supported: 16 wards, Raijor Dal-supported: 2 wards

Anchalik Panchayat Members: BJP-led al-

liance: 25 members

Raijor Dal-supported: 1 member This resounding victory for the ruling alliance reflects the continuing stronghold of the BJP and its allies, including the AGP, in the region. Meanwhile, opposition parties like the INC and Raijor Dal secured only a marginal presence in the constituency.

The election outcome in Demow further reinforces the BJP-led alliance's momentum ahead of the 2026 Assam Assembly polls.

BJP-led alliance retains Nagaon Zila Parishad

Congress makes strong inroads with 13 ZPC Seats



HT Correspondent

NAGAON, May 12: The BJP-led alliance has successfully retained control of the Nagaon Zila Parishad following the 2025 Panchayat elections, securing a total of 14 out of 27 seats, while the Congress emerged as a formidable opposition force, winning 13 ZPC seats in the district.

Out of the 27 Zila Parishad seats: Six candidates were elected unopposed — five from BJP and one from its ally AGP. In the remaining 21 contested seats, the

BJP-led alliance won 8, while Congress secured 13.

The unopposed wins for BJP are Jiten Gaur (Dwar-Bagori), Sunita Ingtipi (Barhampur), Purabi Bordoloi (Jamunamukh), Rambha Loring (Kathiati), Gitanjali Hazarika (Uriagaon)

For AGP: Punyalata Baruah (Chatal-Pubthoriya) and contested wins — BJP-Led Alliance (8): Pranjal Das (Kachamari), Swapnali Sangkakati Bora (Bhutai-Pathari), Mintu Sarma (Puranigudam), Arnab Das (Pakhimariya-Ja-

muguri), Rupiyoti Bordoloi Das (Phulaguri-Barapujia), Jonalim Das Deka (Chaparmukh), Jayasree Mondal (AGP) (Ambagan), Anil Thakur (Dwar-Salna)

The Congress Wins (13) are: Ibrahim Ali (Singimari), Momtaz Begum (Garajan), Mostan Kenduwai (Bhakatgaon), Momtaz Begum (Bajigaon), Raihana Rahman Chowdhury (Phakali), Nazma Chowdhury (Juria), Asphia Semim (Alitangani-Dagaon), Muskur Hussain (Maheripar-Borghuli), Nargis Parveen (Amalakh-Saharia), Khalida Yasmin (Balisatra), Matiu Rahman (Bechamari), Babul Ali (Lahkar) and Abdul Jabbar (Madhabpara)

The ruling alliance showed strength in Batadroba, Nagaon, Raha, and Kaliabor Assembly constituencies, consolidating its rural base. However, the Congress party's resurgence, especially in minority-dominated and semi-urban belts, signals a competitive political landscape ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

Notably, the AIUDF, despite fielding candidates in minority-rich constituencies, failed to win a single ZPC seat. Raijor Dal, which contested one seat, also failed to secure any wins.

Claims landslide victory

BJP-AGP alliance sweeps Panchayat Polls in Sonitpur

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, May 12: The BJP-led alliance has recorded a resounding victory in the 2025 Panchayat elections in Sonitpur district, sweeping nearly all seats across the Zilla Parishad, Anchalik Panchayat, and ward levels. The vote counting, which began Sunday morning at Darrang College, concluded on Monday with the declaration of results for 20 Zilla Parishad Constituencies (ZPCs), 88 Anchalik Panchayat (AP) seats, and 880 ward member seats.

In a dominant show, the BJP-AGP combine clinched all 20 ZPC seats. These include constituencies like Balipara, Mansiri, Misamari, Thelamara, Bihaguri, Bargaoan, Amiyapur, Gupteswar, Panbari, Doomduma, Haleswar, Parbatia, Bhomoraguri, Dekargaon, Chariduar, Jamuguri, Phulaguri, Phulbari, Murhadal, and Nagsankar. Victorious candidates include: Madhusmita Das Tiru, Manisha Upadhyai, Dulmoni Bora Das, Siba Saran Sahu, Rakesh Nath, Rani Basumatary, Kusum Kumari, Nirmai Das, Mishona Tirkhi Tanti, Ankur Suter, Munmi Boruah (AGP), Swapnaji Bania, Nurul Hoque (AGP), Jayanta Kumar Borah, Minu Saikia Tamuli, Utpal Borah, Kusum Tanti, Bikee Tanti, Renuka Devi, and Hitesh Baruah.

In the Anchalik Panchayat seg-



ments, the BJP secured 78 out of 88 seats, with Congress winning 6, AGP taking 2, and 2 seats going to Independents.

A notable development was seen in Naduar, where all but one ward were won unopposed, indicating overwhelming support or strategic withdrawals.

For the first time in decades, the Bhomoraguri ZPC seat, traditionally a Congress stronghold, was captured by the AGP, marking a significant political shift.

Expressing his gratitude, Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rabha thanked the electorate for the strong mandate and emphasized that the people have reposed their

faith in the development-oriented vision of the BJP-AGP alliance.

"The people of Tezpur and Sonitpur have shown that development is their priority. Their overwhelming support reflects their confidence in our ability to deliver on that promise. The historic win in Bhomoraguri is a clear signal that change is underway, and we are confident of a strong performance in the 2026 Assembly polls," Rabha said.

Most of the 880 Gram Panchayat ward seats were also captured by candidates supported by the ruling alliance, further cementing their grassroots hold in the district.

Aggression on Tribal Sangha and Brahma Dharma property triggers outrage in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, May 12: A tense situation has emerged in Kokrajhar following a police raid at the residence of controversial businessman Sanjan Pal, a non-Assamese migrant based in the Patharghat area. The raid was conducted by Kokrajhar Police in response to an FIR filed by the Kokrajhar District Tribal Sangha on May 5, alleging theft of construction materials from their under-construction district office.

The raid led to the recovery of iron grills, tin sheets, iron railings, and door and window frames—items identified as materials stolen from the site of the Tribal Sangha and Brahma Dharma office-cum-Tribal Rest House, a project backed by land legally allotted by the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Government on November 13, 2024.

The incident has triggered widespread outrage among indigenous

tribal communities, who view the act not merely as theft but a deliberate attempt to sabotage tribal institutions and infringe upon their land rights. The Kokrajhar District Committee of the Tribal Sangha has strongly condemned the act, calling it "a targeted aggression with malicious intent tied to deeper land disputes."

Sanjan Pal, the accused businessman, has been previously named in multiple land scam controversies in the region and is often cited in connection with illegal land acquisitions and encroachments. His contentious presence in Kokrajhar has long been a subject of tension, with questions raised about his citizenship status and business dealings with tribal lands.

Local tribal leaders allege that Pal has been obstructing the Tribal Sangha's construction project since the land was allotted, using intimidation and illegal actions to derail the project. They claim that

not only were building materials stolen, but even heritage-style Assamese bungalows on the site were dismantled and looted.

Despite the recovery of stolen items during the police raid, Pal has not yet been arrested, a fact that has shocked the Tribal Sangha and further inflamed community sentiment. Leaders of the Tribal Sangha have demanded immediate legal action and accountability from the administration, expressing disappointment over the lack of progress in ensuring justice.

The Kokrajhar District Tribal Sangha emphasized that the Tribal Rest House project, meant to serve as a hub for welfare and cultural activities of tribal communities, must be protected from external interference. They have appealed to the BTR administration and state authorities to ensure the safety of tribal lands, institutions, and uphold the rule of law.

BJP-AGP alliance sweeps Jorhat Panchayat Polls, dismantles Congress strongholds

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, May 12: The BJP and its alliance partner Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) have registered a sweeping victory in the Panchayat elections across Jorhat district, decimating the Indian National Congress (INC) in what was once considered its stronghold.

As per final results declared late Sunday night, the BJP-AGP alliance won all 16 Zila Parishad Constituencies (ZPCs) in Jorhat, with BJP bagging 15 seats and AGP 1.

In the 86 Anchalik Panchayat (AP) constituencies, BJP emerged dominant with 72 seats, AGP secured 10, Congress managed a dismal 3, and 1 seat went to an Independent.

A key highlight of the results was the collapse of Congress in Titabar, a constituency once represented four consecutive terms by former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi. The BJP won all four ZPCs and 23 of the 26 AP seats in Titabar. AGP won one AP seat, while Congress could secure only two—a massive fall from previous influence in the region.

In the Jorhat, Mariani, and Teok Assembly constituencies, BJP clinched 11 of the 12 ZPC seats, with AGP winning the remaining one. The AP results under these constituencies saw BJP take 49 seats, AGP 9, Congress 1, and one seat going to an Independent.

Following directives from Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, celebrations were kept low-key across the district due to ongoing India-Pakistan border tensions. Party workers refrained from large-scale festivities.

It is noteworthy that the Jorhat Zila Parishad, once held by Congress following the 2018 polls, had shifted to BJP control in August 2022 after a Congress member defected and the chairman and vice-chairperson were removed on disciplinary grounds. This election result further consolidates BJP's control at the grassroots level.

In Majuli district, BJP won all four ZPCs. The ruling party also dominated the AP segment with 16 seats, while AGP secured 2, and Congress and an Independent candidate won one seat each.

ICDS training empowers Anganwadi workers in Baithalangso under RACE Project

HT Correspondent

DONGKAMUKAM, May 12: In a vital initiative aimed at strengthening maternal and child health services in remote regions, a one-day training on Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) was successfully conducted under the Right to Access Conceptual Education (RACE) Project. The program was organized by Bosco Reach Out, with support from BMZ and Childaid Network, and held at Agriculture IB, Baithalangso in West Karbi Anglong.

The training brought together 14 Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) representing 20 Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) from across the zone. The session was formally inaugurated by KJ Goutam, Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator of the RACE Project, who emphasized the pivotal role of Anganwadi



Workers as the first point of contact in community healthcare delivery, especially in remote and underserved areas.

The training featured a detailed technical session led by Dr Longbiram Dera, Officer-in-Charge of Baithalangso Primary Health Centre (BPHC). Dr Dera's session

covered essential components of ICDS, including: Antenatal and Postnatal Care, nutritional assessment using MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference), immunization schedules, Early Childhood Education, role and implementation of Village Health and Nutrition Day (VHND)

Using case-based learning and practical demonstrations, Dr Dera ensured participants could effectively relate the guidelines to real-world applications in their field duties.

In his concluding remarks, Goutam, along with Project Coordinator Alben Kongadi, thanked Dr Dera and the participants for their proactive involvement. They urged the AWWs to integrate the knowledge gained into their daily practices and stressed the importance of inter-sectoral collaboration among healthcare and education workers for improved community outcomes.

This training is part of Bosco Reach Out's ongoing efforts to build capacity among frontline educators and health workers, thereby enhancing healthcare and early childhood development in the Baithalangso region.

Operation intensifies against forest mafias in Dirgheswari

Sniffer dogs deployed

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, May 12: In a major crackdown on illegal timber operations, the Forest Department has intensified its action in the Dirgheswari Reserved Forest under the North Guwahati Silah Forest Division, following the seizure of a large consignment of illegally felled sal logs.

Four days ago, forest officials intercepted a group of timber smugglers attempting to transport valuable sal wood from the protected area. Although the logs were seized on-site, the perpetrators managed to escape under the cover of darkness.

In response, a joint operation was launched late Sunday night involving the Forest Department, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and

the Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF). The operation included the deployment of sniffer dogs, marking a rare and aggressive measure in forest crime control efforts in the region.

While authorities have yet to disclose full details, sources say that key clues have emerged, and the identification of the culprits is imminent. Forest officials are optimistic that arrests will follow shortly.

The illegal felling has triggered widespread concern among environmentalists and local communities, who fear the irreparable ecological damage caused by such activities. As the Dirgheswari forest is home to rich biodiversity, pressure is mounting on authorities to act swiftly and ensure justice.

VACANCY

Post Vacant : Headmaster Interested may contact the office, during office hours.

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Anglong.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I want to do with you what spring does with cherry trees - Pablo Neruda

Growth in India's MSME sector

The NITI Aayog's recent document, "Enhancing MSMEs Competitiveness in India", highlights the growth trajectory of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India. Vice President Suman K Berry praised MSMEs for significantly contributing to India's GDP, exports, and employment. He noted the steady increase in MSMEs' share in Gross Value Added (GVA) from 27.3% in 2020-21 to 30.1% in 2022-23 and emphasized the surge in exports—from ₹3.95 lakh crore in 2020-21 to ₹12.39 lakh crore in 2024-25. Similarly, the number of MSMEs involved in exports tripled within the same period. However, this apparent success is heavily influenced by a strategic change in the MSME definition made under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Package during the COVID-19 crisis. This redefinition expanded eligibility by increasing investment and turnover limits and merging manufacturing and service enterprises under one classification. For instance, the upper investment limit for medium enterprises rose from ₹10 crore to ₹20 crore, and turnover criteria were introduced for the first time. This change, implemented from July 2020, enabled larger enterprises to qualify as MSMEs. As a result, the sector's reported contribution to GDP remained stable or even rose on paper, despite economic disruptions. Without this definitional shift, the actual performance of smaller, traditional MSMEs would have shown a decline. Indeed, under the older definition, MSMEs already contributed 30.5% to GVA in 2018-19 and 2019-20—higher than the 30.1% in 2022-23 despite including bigger enterprises.

Furthermore, while Berry cited significant export growth from the MSME sector, the data reveal a different story. The share of MSMEs in total exports has actually declined—from 49.75% in 2019-20 (under the old definition) to 45.79% by May 2024, despite the inclusion of larger firms. This suggests that the inclusion of bigger players did little to enhance overall export performance and may have masked the ongoing struggles of smaller firms. The Union Budget 2025-26 continues this trend by further raising investment and turnover thresholds; for instance, the upper investment limit for medium enterprises is now ₹125 crore, and the turnover cap is ₹500 crore. While such changes may boost official numbers, they blur the line between MSMEs and larger firms, distorting the sector's real health. The deeper concern is that the policy focus appears to favor optics over substance. While the expansion of the definition inflates data to reflect higher growth and resilience, the ground reality for many smaller MSMEs remains bleak. These enterprises continue to grapple with limited access to finance, delayed disbursements under government schemes, and reduced demand post-COVID. Collateral-free loans, a key component of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Package, faced sluggish implementation and had limited impact.

Ultimately, while redefining MSMEs may improve India's economic figures on paper, it fails to address the core issues confronting traditional small businesses. Their declining share in exports and stagnant job creation highlight the need for targeted support, not just reclassification. NITI Aayog's glowing endorsement of the government's performance overlooks this fundamental truth—real MSME competitiveness cannot be achieved through cosmetic changes but through genuine structural reforms and timely support. The attempt to present a "rosy picture" by expanding definitions conceals the vulnerability and ongoing struggles of actual MSMEs. Despite the broader scope and numbers, the sector's foundational issues—access to credit, policy execution, and resilience—remain unaddressed, leaving many small enterprises still fighting for survival in an uneven economic landscape.

Operation Sindoor: India's strike against terror



On May 7, 2025, the Indian Armed Forces executed "Operation Sindoor", a meticulously planned and decisive military operation targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK). This operation, named by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to honor the widows of the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack, marked one of India's most significant cross-border strikes since the 2019 Balakot airstrike. The operation, which lasted approximately 25 minutes, destroyed nine terrorist facilities linked to banned outfits Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Hizbul Mujahideen, neutralizing an estimated 80 to 90 terrorists and delivering a powerful message against cross-border terrorism. The successful completion of "Operation Sindoor" has been hailed as a triumph of India's resolve, precision, and strategic restraint, while also escalating tensions with Pakistan, raising global concerns about potential conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

The genesis of "Operation Sindoor" lies in the brutal Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, 2025, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians, including 25 Indians and one Nepali national, in Jammu and Kashmir's picturesque Baisaran meadow. The attack, carried out by Pakistan-based LeT operatives and claimed by its affiliate, The Resistance Front, targeted tourists, predominantly Hindu men, many of whom were newlyweds. The chilling imagery of grieving widows, their sindoor—vermillion symbolizing marital status—now absent, galvanized public outrage and steered India's determination to respond. Prime Minister Modi, who vowed to pursue the perpetrators "to the ends of the earth," personally condemned the operation "Sindoor", invoking the cultural significance of sindoor to humanize the victims and underscore the attack's devastating impact on families. The operation was not merely a military response but a symbolic act of justice for the bereaved, particularly the widows left behind.

Launched in the pre-dawn hours of May 7, "Operation Sin-

door" was a coordinated effort involving the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, showcasing India's tri-service synergy. The strikes targeted nine specific terrorist sites—four in mainland Pakistan and five in PoJK—selected based on credible intelligence pinpointing their role in planning and executing attacks against India. Among the targets were high-value facilities like Markaz Subhan Allah in Bahawalpur, JeM's ideological and operational headquarters, and Markaz Taiba in Muridke, LeT's 200-acre compound used for indoctrination and logistics. Other sites included the Abbas Terrorist Camp in Kotli, a nerve center for LeT's suicide bomber training, and Syedna Bilal and Shawai Nalla camps in Muzaffarabad, used as infiltration points for JeM and LeT operatives. Hizbul Mujahideen's training centers, such as Makaz Raheel Shahid in Kotli and Mehmoona Joya in Sialkot, were also destroyed. The precision of the strikes, executed between 1:05 AM and 1:30 AM, ensured no Pakistani military installations were hit, reflecting India's intent to avoid escalation while delivering a focused blow to terrorist infrastructure.

The operation employed advanced weaponry, including Rafale fighter jets armed with SCALP cruise missiles, capable of deep strikes, and HAMMER precision-guided bombs, designed to destroy hardened bunkers and multi-story buildings. Loitering munitions, or "kamikaze drones," played a critical role in surveillance, target acquisition, and terminal strikes, enhancing the operation's accuracy. Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, briefing the media, emphasized that target selection was based on "strong intelligence inputs" and designed to minimize civilian casualties. Wing Commander Vyomika Singh added that the strikes used carefully selected warheads to avoid collateral damage, with each target—a specific building or group of buildings—hit with surgical precision. The Ministry of Defence described the operation as "focused, measured, and non-escalatory," a stance reiterated by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri,

who justified the strikes as a necessary deterrent against impending attacks signaled by intelligence reports.

The impact of "Operation Sindoor" was immediate and profound. Indian sources reported that over 80 terrorists were killed, including 10 family members and four aides of JeM chief Masood Azhar, significantly disrupting the operational capabilities of JeM, LeT, and Hizbul Mujahideen. The destruction of

key training camps, recruitment centers, and launchpads dealt a severe blow to Pakistan's terror ecosystem, particularly facilities linked to high-profile attacks like the 2008 Mumbai massacre and the 2019 Pulwama bombing. The Indian Army's post on X, "Justice is Served. Jai Hind!" encapsulated the national sentiment, with political leaders across party lines rallying in support. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, and Rahul Gandhi lauded the armed forces' courage, while Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and former Defence Minister AK Antony called the operation a fitting reply to Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Public figures, from industrialist Anand Mahindra to actor Rajinikanth, echoed the patriotic fervor, with social media resounding with slogans like "Bharat Mata Ki Jai."

Pakistan's response, however, was swift and belligerent. Islamabad claimed 26 civilians, including women and children, were killed in the strikes, labeling them a "blatant act of war." Pakistan's military reported hits on five locations, including a mosque in Bahawalpur, and closed its airspace for 48 hours. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, presiding over a Na-

tional Security Council meeting, authorized the armed forces to retaliate "at a time, place, and manner of its choosing," invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter. Heavy cross-border shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) followed, with Pakistan targeting civilian areas in Jammu and Kashmir, killing at least eight Indians, while India reported three deaths from Pakistani fire. The Indian Army responded in a calibrated manner, and civilians along the LoC were evacuated to bunkers. Pakistan's claims of downing Indian aircraft or capturing soldiers were debunked by India's Press Information Bureau, which clarified misinformation, such as recycled images from a 2021 MiG-21 crash.

The international community expressed alarm at the escalating tensions. UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged "maximum military restraint," warning that a confrontation between India and Pakistan was unaffordable. U.S. President Donald Trump called the clashes "a shame," hoping for a quick resolution, while Secretary of State Marco Rubio monitored the situation closely. Russia and China voiced concerns, with the latter calling India's actions "regrettable." Britain offered to mediate dialogue, and a UN team reportedly visited the strike site in Muzaffarabad. India, however, maintained its right to self-defense, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar asserting a "zero tolerance for terrorism" policy. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval briefed counterparts in the U.S., UK, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Japan, emphasizing the operation's precision and India's resolve to retaliate if provoked further.

Domestically, "Operation Sindoor" triggered a flurry of security

measures. Home Minister Amit Shah convened a high-level meeting with chief ministers and police chiefs of border states, including Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Rajasthan, to strengthen coordination and border preparedness. A nationwide civil defense mock drill was scheduled across 244 districts to enhance emergency readiness, involving air-raid sirens and bunker restoration. Prime Minister Modi, who monitored the operation overnight, briefed President Droupadi Murmu and chaired a Cabinet Committee on Security meeting to assess the situation. An all-party meeting was planned for May 8 to brief opposition leaders, reflecting bipartisan unity on national security. Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah held emergency reviews to bolster local security.

The operation's success has sparked debates about its strategic and humanitarian implications. While India insists the strikes were proportionate and avoided civilian infrastructure, Pakistan's claims of civilian casualties have fueled counter-narratives, with pro-Pakistan social media amplifying misinformation. The operation's name, "Sindoor", has been praised for its emotional resonance, humanizing the Pahalgam victims and reinforcing India's warrior ethos, as sindoor is also worn by soldiers. However, the risk of escalation looms large, with Pakistan's retaliatory shelling and rhetoric signaling potential for further conflict. Analysts warn that while "Operation Sindoor" has crippled terror networks, it may provoke Pakistan's military and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which allegedly support these groups, to intensify asymmetric warfare.

As India celebrates the operation's success, the path forward remains fraught. The strikes have reaffirmed India's military prowess and unwavering stance against terrorism, but they also underscore the delicate balance of deterrence and diplomacy in a volatile region. The international community's calls for de-escalation, coupled with Pakistan's vow to retaliate, suggest that "Operation Sindoor" may be a turning point in India-Pakistan relations.

Operation Sindoor: India's strategic reset against terrorism

By: Dipak Kurmi

The midnight of May 6-7, 2025, marked a tectonic shift in India's counter-terrorism posture with the launch of Operation Sindoor—a multi-target, precision military strike deep into Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. More than a tactical manoeuvre, this was a decisive political message underscoring India's will to punish cross-border terrorism, reclaim its strategic deterrence, and reassert its moral authority in the face of a barbaric assault. The Pahalgam massacre, where 26 innocent tourists were gunned down in cold blood, was not merely an act of terror; it was a targeted, ideological provocation intended to polarise India internally and embarrass it internationally. The Indian response, therefore, had to transcend the rhetoric of condemnation and embody calibrated kinetic action.

The Pahalgam attack crossed every threshold of tolerance. It was not just an outrage against civilians, but a brutal reminder of the cost of strategic restraint. Operation Sindoor was crafted to be precise, symbolic, and effective—striking nine high-value terror hubs, including Muridke and Bahawalpur, long acknowledged as nurseries of jihadist extremism. What stood out was the professionalism of the Indian Armed Forces and the clarity of intent from the political leadership. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in granting full operational autonomy to the forces, set a tone of resolve. The operation was planned not only to avoid civilian casualties but also to remain within the framework of India's doctrine of legitimate self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Military responses, especially in a nuclear-armed subcontinent, carry immense political weight. The scale and sophistication of the strikes demonstrated not just military prowess but a nuanced understanding of global optics. The Indian state sought to re-establish a conventional deterrent that had been diluted by years of reactive posturing and euphemistic frameworks such as "cross-border terrorism". Such terminology obfuscated reality—that training, arming, and infiltrating militants constitutes an act of war. For decades, the Pakistani deep state, embodied in the nexus between the GHQ and the ISI, has orchestrated this low-cost war, while hiding behind the façade of non-state actors. The world, often complicit in its silence, allowed Pakistan to escape accountability.

However, the events of May 2025 marked a reset. The strikes were an overdue act of retribution, but they

were also an assertion of strategic clarity. Pakistan's decades-long policy of bleeding India through a thousand cuts now faces the reality of a nation willing to call its bluff. Unlike the post-Ur surgical strikes of 2016 or the Balakot airstrikes of 2019, Operation Sindoor unfolded on a broader scale, with simultaneous attacks across multiple locations and a heightened emphasis on psychological warfare. It was also a calculated gamble under the nuclear shadow. India used air-launched munitions and avoided striking Pakistani military assets, signalling a desire to avoid escalation. Yet, it was a stern warning—India would no longer passively absorb such provocations.

Pakistan's response, predictably, involved a mix of denial, disinformation, and saber-rattling. Nuclear threats were once again floated, reflecting both desperation and doctrine. But the credibility of these threats is waning. The international community, while cautious, has grown weary of Pakistan's nuclear blackmail. The strategic calculus today includes global environmental concerns, heightened surveillance of Pakistani nuclear assets, and a more assertive India unwilling to be paralysed by threats. It is reasonable to believe that Pakistan's generals, despite their past misjudgements, understand the suicidal consequences of initiating a nuclear conflict.

Yet, the military dimension is just one axis. Diplomatically, India must brace for the challenge of narrative management. While Operation Sindoor may find tacit acceptance among key allies, the global community often pivots from counter-terrorism solidarity to conflict prevention. This shift creates moral equivalence between the victim and the aggressor. Moreover, the international system has shown reluctance to impose substantive penalties on Pakistan, despite its well-documented role in fostering terror. The United States and Europe, driven by geopolitical pragmatism, continue to view Pakistan as a necessary evil in their regional counter-terrorism strategies. Aid flows continue with minimal conditionality, and Pakistan remains outside the list of officially designated state sponsors of terrorism.

In such a scenario, India must leverage its rising global stature to change the discourse. It must demand clarity and commitment from the international community, especially on its position on Jammu and Kashmir. India must ensure that sympathy translates into pressure, and solidarity into action. Internally, the response must extend beyond the battlefield. The three Ps of counter-terrorism—Predict, Prevent,

and Punish—require a multidimensional strategy. Prediction demands not just surveillance, but socio-political engagement. Building trust in every village of Kashmir, avoiding collective stigmatisation, and isolating terror ideologues from the broader population are critical.

Prevention entails enhancing our counter-terrorism capabilities, including unmanned systems, rapid mobility, and terrain-specific equipment. Protecting high-risk targets and tightening protocols are no longer optional but essential. The capacity to preempt attacks by striking at source, as Operation Sindoor showed, must become a permanent feature of Indian doctrine. However, secrecy should not be used as a shield against accountability. Parliamentary and public scrutiny of defence readiness and counter-terror operations ensures that strategic lapses are corrected and institutional learning takes place.

Beyond all, we must not fall into the psychological trap laid by the ISI—to divide India along its internal ethnic and religious lines. The dream of every DG ISI is to see India implode under the weight of its diversity, a mirror image of their own fractured polity. This makes internal cohesion our strongest shield. Coercive measures against Pakistan—such as reconsidering the Indus Waters Treaty—must be approached with strategic foresight. Water, like terrorism, is an emotional trigger. India must anticipate that such moves could become new rallying cries in Pakistan's domestic propaganda.

Finally, India must accept a sobering reality: the fight against Pakistan-backed terrorism will not end with one strike. It is a protracted engagement requiring patience, resilience, and clarity. Attrition, escalation, and loss of life are possibilities that must be factored in. Yet, as the region grapples with the global shifts of the 21st century—climate crises, AI revolutions, and multipolarity—India cannot afford to be held hostage by a recalcitrant neighbour trapped in the paradigms of the 20th century. A secure Bharat is foundational to the dream of a Viksit Bharat. Operation Sindoor is not an end; it is the beginning of a new doctrine of accountability, clarity, and strength. If terrorism is to be uprooted, deterrence must be real, political unity must be unwavering, and the strategic imagination must be bold.

This is the new grammar of Indian security—and the world must take note. (The writer can be reached at di-pakkurmi@gmail.com)

Which side will Bangladesh opt for in the India-Pakistan conflict?

By: Saleem Samad

After the air strikes in Kashmir, when a full-scale conflict erupts between Pakistan and India, what should be the official stance of Bangladesh?

In 53 years, Bangladesh has not waged any war with its neighbours, Myanmar and India. Other South Asian countries are hundreds of kilometers away. Therefore, there has not been any issue with these countries.

No denying, Bangladesh-India, Bangladesh-Myanmar had engaged in border skirmishes and were quickly resolved at the border guards force level.

Bangladesh's military is not a fighting force. Accordingly they are trained as a defensive force. The military is being prepared for peacekeeping missions under the United Nations deployment in countries troubled by militancy and rogue warlords.

Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan are significant troop contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, with Bangladesh and India consistently ranking among the top three globally. Bangladesh has a strong history of contributing to UN peacekeeping, with 6,772 peacekeepers deployed in 58 missions across 40 countries since 1988. They are currently among the top troop-contributing nations.

A few days ago, The Economic Times, an Indian publication picked up an irrelevant content, from a social media post by a former Bangladesh military officer and close aide of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has suggested that Dhaka should collaborate with China to occupy India's northeastern states if it attacks Pakistan in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

Moments later, the Interim Government distanced itself from Major General (R) ALM Fazlur Rahman's remarks on his social media account.

Distancing itself from the former army officer's remarks, Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a media release said, "The comments do not reflect the position or policies of the government of Bangladesh, and as such, the government neither endorses nor supports such rhetoric in any form or manner."

By the way, China has never fought a war except for border clashes with 14 neighbours that it shares a border with, including India. China has border disputes with

Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan in South Asia. Abhijeet Sen wrote for, india.com, that in the case of a conflict, it will be interesting to see how the neighboring countries of India, such as China, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Bangladesh, and Bhutan, will react and choose sides.

Sen believe that Bangladesh would fish in murky water during the Indo-Pak conflict and will take an opportunity to invade North East India with the military support of mighty China. He is forgetting that the Seven Sisters have recently ended their decades-old separatist insurgency by several ethnic groups.

Bangladesh is literally a homogeneous nation having language nationalism as a binding factor. They possess a unique culture, tradition, heritage, and history. Most importantly, the majoritarian are Muslims.

The North East Indian states have hundreds of languages spoken by ethnic communities and are divided among Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, animist identity and a negligible Muslim population.

Bangladesh military adventurism in the Northeast would be suicidal in an unknown hill-forest terrain, which would jeopardize the geopolitical landscape of the region.

Nevertheless, the former ethnic combatants trained in military-grade weapons would violently resist the occupation.

The nation has witnessed brutality during the nine-month independence war in 1971. An estimated 3 million were martyred, one million became war refugees, 500,000 were victims of rape as weapon of war and another 3.5 million were internally displaced.

The social media are flooded with nationalistic rhetoric, which goes against the spirit of the liberation war of 1971. The post reminds the audience that Bangladesh is a pacifist nation and pursues a 'no war' policy.

Afroja Shoma, a teacher of Media Studies at a private university, posted on Facebook: We are tomatoes, not India/Pakistan lovers or haters.

Political activist Hasnat Quaiyum, a member of Rastra Songskar Andolon (Movement for Reforms of the Country), urged that Bangladesh, under any excuse, should get involved in the Indo-Pak war.

Nevertheless, the Bangladesh constitution outlines specific provisions regarding war and peace, emphasizing the renunciation of force in international relations and prioritizing

peaceful resolutions.

Article 63 states that war cannot be declared or the country participate in war without the Parliament's assent. Furthermore, Article 25 mandates that the state's foreign policy be based on the principles of renouncing force, supporting the right of self-determination, and upholding the right of oppressed people to struggle against imperialism and colonialism.

However, Article 25 also supports international solidarity with oppressed peoples in their struggle against imperialism and colonialism.

Finally, the constitution implicitly prioritizes peaceful resolutions to conflicts, as evidenced by the renunciation of force and the emphasis on international solidarity and support for self-determination.

Bangladesh must prepare carefully for all possible scenarios while remaining steadfastly neutral and committed to peace. At the same time, it is in the collective interest of the region that India and Pakistan recognize the futility of further escalation and work toward resolving their differences through peaceful means. The future prosperity and stability of South Asia depend on it, writes Mir Mostafizur Rahaman in the Financial Express, published from Dhaka.

Bangladesh authorities, before speaking their mind, are feeling the pinch in their shoes. The Dhaka stock market witnessed a major decline this morning (7 May) due to the India-Pakistan war. The main index fell by more than 70 points in the first 10 minutes of trading. The index fell by more than 50 points in the first five minutes. The downward trend continues.

Ramisa Rob is the Geopolitical Insights Editor at The Daily Star, writes: Needless to say, both nations must urgently engage in de-escalation. But the political reality of de-escalating the current volatile situation between India and Pakistan is much easier said than done. There's little precedent that the nuclear-armed nations would spike a hot war; however, the short- and long-term stability in South Asia after the deadly Pahalgam attacks appears bleaker than ever before. (The author is an award-winning independent journalist based in Bangladesh. A media rights defender with the Reporters Without Borders (@RSF inter). Recipient of Ashoka Fellowship and Hellman-Hammett Award. He could be reached at saleemsamad@hotmail.com; Twitter (X): @saleemsamad)

Medical myths: All about aging

By: Tim Newman

Around 300,000 generations ago, the human species split from an ancient ancestor that we share with chimpanzees. Since then, human life expectancy at birth has doubled.

Over the last 200 years, life expectancy at birth has doubled again. As animals go, humans perform well in longevity.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Between 2000 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will double from about 11% to 22%."

With these facts in mind, dispelling the many myths associated with aging seems more pressing than at any point in our evolutionary history. In this article, we will tackle myths associated with exercise, cognitive ability, sex, and more.

1. Physical deterioration is inevitable

This is not entirely untrue. As we age, our body does experience wear and tear from decades of use. However, physical deterioration does not have to be complete, and people can often slow it down.

As the WHO explain, "Increased physical activity and improving diet can effectively tackle many of the problems frequently associated with old age." These problems include reduced strength, increased body fat, high blood pressure, and reduced bone density.

Some research suggests that merely expecting physical deterioration increases the likelihood that someone will physically deteriorate.

In one study, scientists surveyed 148 older adults about their aging, lifestyles, and general health expectations.

They concluded that expectations regarding aging "play an important role in the adoption of physically active lifestyles in older adults and may influence health outcomes, such as physical function."

So, although some deterioration is likely, managing expectations will help individuals make better life choices to maintain physical health and fitness later in life.

An older study investigated how perceptions of aging influenced an individual's likelihood of seeking medical attention. The authors of the study, which included data from 429 older adults, concluded:

"[H]aving low expectations regarding aging was independently associated with not believing it important to seek health care."

Another study looked at individual

attitudes to aging during late middle-age and how they might influence their overall lifespan. The authors concluded that "older individuals with more positive self-perceptions of aging, measured up to 23 years earlier, lived 7.5 years longer than those with less positive self-perceptions of aging."

In short, keeping active, eating right, and maintaining a positive outlook can often slow the physical deterioration associated with older age.

2. Older adults should not exercise

From the previous section, it is clear that this is a myth. According to an older article in Neuropsychobiology, keeping active can boost muscle strength, reduce fat, and improve mental health.

Some people think that, once they reach a certain age, there is no point in exercising, as they believe that it will provide no benefit. This is another myth. In one study, researchers put 142 adults aged 60–80 through a 42-week weight-lifting regime.

The scientists found that the course increased "dynamic muscle strength, muscle size, and functional capacity."

There is also good evidence that regular exercise can reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. A study, which involved 1,740 older adults, found that regular exercise was "associated with a delay in onset of dementia and Alzheimer's disease."

However, people should consult their doctor before embarking on a new exercise regime if they have a

stem from the stereotype that older adults rise early in the morning.

These myths are relatively difficult to unpick because there are many factors involved. It is undoubtedly true that older adults have more difficulty getting to sleep and that their sleep tends to be more fragmented.

This might help explain why some older adults need to nap in the day. As the human body changes with age, it can disrupt the circadian (daily) rhythms.

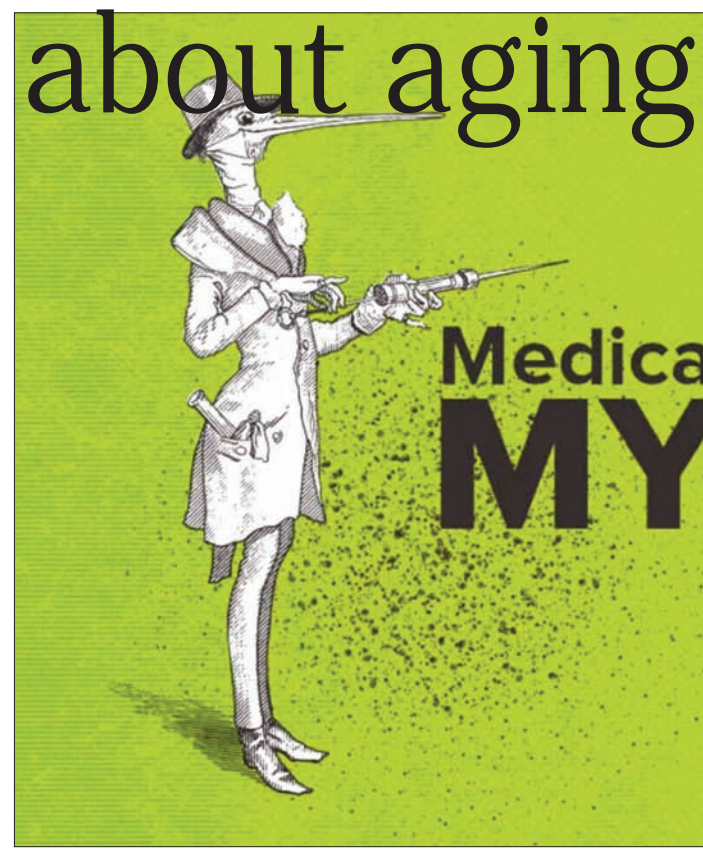
This, in turn, can impact sleep. The relationship is multifaceted, too: if a person's circadian rhythms become disrupted, it can influence other aspects of their physiology, such as hormone levels, which might also impact their sleep.

Aside from circadian disruptions, certain diseases that occur more commonly in older adults, such as osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, can cause discomfort, which might adversely influence an individual's ability to get to sleep or stay asleep.

Similarly, some conditions cause shortness of breath, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and congestive heart failure; this can also make sleeping more challenging.

According to an older article, certain medications, including beta-blockers, bronchodilators, corticosteroids, decongestants, and diuretics, can also interfere with sleep. Older adults are more likely to be taking these types of medication, sometimes together.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) state that people aged 61–64 need 7–9



weaker. Some people believe that it only affects women. This is not true; it can affect either sex and people of any age. However, osteoporosis is indeed much more common in older people, white people, and females.

According to an overview article, the International Osteoporosis Foundation estimate that globally, around 1 in 3 women over 50 have osteoporosis, and about 1 in 5 men will experience a bone fracture related to osteoporosis in their lifetime.

Another related myth is that osteoporosis is inevitable for women as they age. As the figures above

older adults. Worldwide, an estimated 5–8% of people over 60 have dementia. That means that 92%–95% of people aged 60 or older do not have dementia.

In the United States, an estimated 13.9% of people over 71 have dementia, meaning that 86.1% of people over 71 do not have dementia.

Cognitive decline leads to dementia

Contrary to popular opinion, cognitive decline does not necessarily signal the start of dementia.

People who go on to develop dementia tend to experience cognitive decline first. However, not everyone who experiences cognitive decline will develop dementia.

One older study estimated that 22.2% of people in the U.S. aged 71 or older experience cognitive decline. Of these, each year, 11.7%–20% develop dementia.

Cognitive decline is inevitable

As the above statistics show, cognitive decline is not inevitable, regardless of the long-held myth that older adults experience a mental slowing down. And, importantly, there are ways to reduce the risk. In 2015, the Alzheimer's Association evaluated the evidence of modifiable risk factors for both dementia and cognitive decline.

Their report, presented to the World Dementia Council, explains that "there is sufficient evidence to support the link between several modifiable risk factors and a reduced risk for cognitive decline."

They identified that maintaining regular physical activity and managing classic cardiovascular risk factors, such as diabetes, obesity, smoking, and high blood pressure

were strongly associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline.

They also found good evidence that a healthful diet and lifelong learning or cognitive training also reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

6. There's no point giving up smoking now

Whether this is a genuine myth or merely an excuse, some older adults say that there is no point in giving up smoking at "their age." This is not true. As the NHS clearly explain:

"No matter how long you have smoked for and no matter how many cigarettes you smoke a day, your health will start to improve as soon as you quit. Some health benefits are immediate, some are longer-term, but what matters is that it's never too late."

7. Sex is rare or impossible as you age

Some people believe that older adults lose their ability to enjoy sex and that their sexual organs become unfit for purpose. This, thankfully, is a myth.

It is true that the risk of erectile dysfunction (ED) and vaginal dryness increases as people age, but for most individuals, these are not insurmountable problems.

Sildenafil (Viagra) and lubricants or hormone creams can work wonders in many cases. Before taking Viagra, though, it is essential to speak with a doctor, as it is not suitable for everyone.

An article in the International Journal of Clinical Practice indicates that around 0.4% of men aged 18–29 experience ED, compared with 11.5% of men aged 60–69. However, flipping that statistic

on its head makes it much less daunting — almost 9 out of 10 men in their 60s do not have ED.

Intercourse between older people may be less fast and furious, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. As one author writes, "Growing old does not necessarily discontinue a healthy sexual life, but it does call for redefining its expression."

There are certain benefits, too. For instance, a male's penis often becomes less sensitive, helping them maintain an erection longer.

It is true that as some people grow older, they do not have the same sexual desire or drive as when they were young, but this is by no means the case for everyone.

To end this section on a high, below is a quote from a survey study that involved 158 older adults. Although the participants reported that they were having less sex than a decade earlier, the authors write:

"A remarkably robust sex life was evidenced by both the men and the women, even until advanced old age."

The takehome

Overall, most of the myths surrounding age seem to center on inevitability. People believe that it is inevitable that they will gradually crumble into dust as their lives become increasingly unbearable, boring, passionless, and painful.

Although certain aspects of health might decline with age, none of the above is inevitable for everyone. As we have discovered, a positive psychological outlook on aging can benefit the physical aspects of aging. (Courtesy: *Medical News Today*)

A study in the Journal of Sleep Research found that older adults scored better following a sleep deprivation intervention than younger adults in a range of measures, including negative affect, depression, confusion, tension, anger, fatigue, and irritability ...

medical condition. For example, the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom indicate that people with certain conditions associated with age, such as osteoporosis, should avoid high impact exercise.

However, the vast majority of older adults can indulge in some form of physical activity.

3. Older adults need less (or more) sleep

Some people believe that older adults need more sleep than younger adults, perhaps because of the stereotype that older people enjoy a nap. Others say that older adults need less sleep, which might

hours, and people aged 65 or older need 7–8 hours of sleep each night. It just might be more difficult for them to get that all-important shut-eye.

As a silver lining, some research suggests that older adults can handle sleep deprivation better than young adults. A study in the Journal of Sleep Research found that older adults scored better following a sleep deprivation intervention than younger adults in a range of measures, including negative affect, depression, confusion, tension, anger, fatigue, and irritability.

Osteoporosis is a condition where bones gradually become

attest, two-thirds of women over 50 do not have osteoporosis. To minimize risks, the National Institute on Aging advise people to eat foods rich in calcium and vitamin D and exercise regularly.

5. As you age, your brain slows The term cognitive decline refers to a gradual decrease in mental functioning with age, but before we tackle the facts of the matter, we dismiss a couple of associated myths:

Dementia is inevitable as you age

According to the WHO, the risk of developing dementia increases with age, but it does not affect all

Whose job is at greater risk because of AI? Let's find out

By: Amisha Dash

Artificial Intelligence is the hot topic rolling over the entire globe currently. AI has been an emerging and trending concept, and it is giving some sort of competition to HI (human intelligence), regardless of knowing the fact that we are the ones who have given birth to this. Some people can write a lot about Artificial Intelligence, and some people will write about it only with the help of Artificial Intelligence. But leaving this aside, I will be talking about one topic today that is the need of the hour: "After all, whose job is at great risk because of Artificial Intelligence?"

Yes, you heard it right! You all have heard that AI will take our jobs, AI will make us unemployed but deep down, for which industry, that's no one is talking about. After all, who should live in fear of losing his/her job because of this? Is he from the software industry? Is he from the media industry, or is he from any other industry? We should pay more attention to this topic. Before this AI trend, our intelligence, skill set, and expertise in handling tools were used in different firms and continue to date. Now, all of a sudden, AI has come into the picture, and its merit, i.e., its intelligence, has become indigestible to us.

No doubt, AI thinks beyond human capability, but why are we losing out on our actual thinking capability? We are the ones who take its help and then say that it will take my job. It's found that in a 2010 study looking into IQ and educational attainment scores for 108 nations found that the average IQ across the globe was 89. The average IQ of countries around the world can range from India at 76.24 to China at 104.10. Artificial Intelligence did not stop our scientists from making discoveries that we study today.

In humans, intelligence is commonly defined as the sum of mental capacities such as abstract thinking, understanding, communication, reasoning, learning and memory formation, action planning, and problem solving, which we are somewhere down the line losing out on and then questioning the same. Human intelligence is a natural, evolved trait, while artificial intelligence is a human-created technology. Cribbing only about how AI can destroy our careers, we should give more attention to how AI will help us in doing our tasks. After all, it's just a tool.

Things AI Can't Do (So Far)

1. Multitask: Although AI developers are working to advance the technology so that it can do

several jobs simultaneously, the majority of AI systems are highly trained to solve particular challenges. With Google Assistant's Routines feature, Google recently made major progress in this area. However, that kind of multitasking involves the AI performing several specific actions (such as sharing reminders or turning on lights) in response to a single user instruction. Let's assume that current AI cannot take notes during a quarterly sales meeting teleconference, reply to a customer's email, and watch a sales analytics dashboard.

2. Explain Its Decisions: There is an "explainability" issue with AI. Although consumers of AI-powered goods are unlikely to be aware of the precise facts the AI utilizes to make decisions, it does provide answers and predictions based on the algorithms and data models it uses to learn.



Does the artificial intelligence (AI) judge whether a picture shows a human being, for instance, by "seeing" a mouth, eye, or nose? Furthermore, as a recent piece in the McKinsey Quarterly pointed out, it gets harder to explain in human words why AI made a particular judgment the bigger and more complicated the data models are.

3. Make Moral Judgments: Simply put, AI systems are unable to determine if their decisions, including ones that can cause harm or death to a living thing, are "right" or "wrong." Is it better for the autonomous vehicle to stay on track and crash into a concrete barrier, killing four people, or should it veer off course and crush kids and pets at a crosswalk? Which response is correct? Is there a correct response? Not precisely, considering how awful both outcomes are. However, the goal of MIT's Moral Machine Project is to educate AI, such as self-driving cars, on how to make the "right" decisions based on what most people believe would be a morally decent choice in a particular circumstance.

4. Feel Empathy, Sympathy, or Anything Else for That Matter: AI is unable to comprehend human emotions, just as it is incapable of moral judgment. "I'm sorry to hear about the issue with your order," an AI chatbot can say to a furious customer. I can appreciate how frustrated you are. Ultimately, though, the technology is a robot and isn't truly sorry; it doesn't understand what frustration or any other emotion feels like.

Therefore, even if AI can be a great aid in customer service operations, human interaction is still essential in many kinds of client interactions.

5. Be Creative (On Its Own, Anyway): One of the leading companies in AI innovation, IBM, views creativity as "the ultimate moonshot" for the technology. Regarding this subject, the business states: "Experts doubt if AI can become creative on its own, even though advances in AI allow computers to be trained on certain aspects of creativity. Can artificial intelligence learn to create on its own?"

Perhaps, as with many AI-related questions. Actually, examples of AI creating artistic works, including as paintings and melodies, have previously been documented. However, human programmers were responsible for making such accomplishments feasible. As a result, really spontaneous innovation is still distinctly human, at least for the time being.

6. Fully Replace Human Workers: The sixth constraint is highlighted by the five previously mentioned limitations: People cannot be replaced by AI. Indeed, AI is capable of doing numerous tasks at tenfold quicker speeds than humans. Additionally, it is capable of data-related activities that the human brain cannot. Indeed, the use of AI in the workplace has the potential to eliminate positions that can be automated, such as those involving only data entry.

AI can, however, also free up workers to do completely different activities, including more engaging and meaningful employment. Therefore, it may be argued that human hesitancy to experiment with the technology and investigate its potential as a priceless aid in the job and beyond is AI's worst drawback.

Hence, to conclude myself don't get threatened because of AI; rather, think about how smartly and wisely you can make the best use of it. After all, human innovation has always led to success, and it will continue forever. (Courtesy: *Youth Ki Awaaz*)

Headaches, vertigo and depression: Long COVID hits harder for those with obesity, finds study

By: Himanshu Nitnaware

From debilitating headaches to persistent vertigo and memory loss, people living with long COVID are grappling with a wide range of symptoms that researchers say are more likely to affect individuals with obesity — even long after the virus has cleared.

A study published in the journal PLOS ONE found that obesity was strongly associated with persistent post-COVID-19 symptoms such as headaches, memory impairment, vertigo, numbness, smell and taste disorders, depression, fatigue and sleep disturbances. The paper demonstrated that obesity raises the risk of neurological and mental health symptoms in people who have recovered from COVID-19.

Researchers conducted a meta-analysis of studies involving approximately 140,000 participants. They found growing evidence that a subset of COVID-19 survivors experienced long-term, debilitating symptoms — referred to as post-COVID-19 condition (PCC) — which led to extended recovery periods and impaired daily functioning.

The study noted that the global prevalence of overweight and obesity coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This dual burden, the authors argued, exacerbated the risk of related diseases and posed serious clinical and social consequences.

"Obesity was found to be associated with poor COVID-19 outcomes, such as hospital admissions, intensive care admissions, and lethality rates. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has come under control, the multisystemic nature of this disease and its long-term impacts have yet to be elucidated," the researchers wrote in the paper. Excess weight may contribute to the development of PCC symptoms persisting for more than 12 weeks after the initial infection, the authors wrote. Many patients reported that headaches worsened with physical exertion, while a sedentary lifestyle and reduced physical activity during recovery contributed to further weight gain. Disruptions in taste and smell, the study suggested, might lead to unhealthy eating behaviours, including increased consumption of highly palatable, ultra-processed foods rich in salt, sugar and additives. These dietary changes could worsen taste dysfunction and aggravate other symptoms.

Vertigo, which often affected balance and mobility, was strongly linked to depressive

symptoms. The study warned that a cycle of physical and psychological distress may reinforce one another in those with PCC, increasing the risk of chronic depression.

"A significant positive association between obesity and depressed mood has been observed across multiple COVID-19 periods, similar to findings in other coronavirus outbreaks," it observed.

The study emphasised that long-term neurological symptoms significantly reduced quality of life and may be more severe in people with pre-existing conditions. Because symptoms often overlapped with those of chronic illnesses such as diabetes or hypertension, many individuals attributed them to their underlying conditions rather than recognising them as part of PCC.

However, the study emphasised that it remained unclear whether these neurological and neuropsychiatric symptoms could be directly attributed to the SARS-CoV-2 virus or whether they emerged indirectly as a result of immune responses or medical interventions. The symptoms appeared to involve both the central and peripheral nervous systems.

Additionally, the role of excess weight in the progression of COVID-19 is not yet fully understood, though it may be linked to an exaggerated inflammatory response or shared genetic factors, the authors noted.

The scientists also discussed the possible role of adipose tissue — which stores fat — in enabling viral persistence. Adipocytes (fat cells), they argued, might serve as reservoirs for the virus, due to their expression of ACE2 receptors that facilitate viral entry. Elevated fatty acid levels may further promote viral replication and delay clearance, contributing to ongoing symptoms.

The researchers underpinned widely agreed treatment on post COVID-19 conditions are yet to be established. "This highlights gaps in scientific knowledge and the urgent need for government agencies, especially of low and middle-income countries, to develop evidence-based clinical practice guidelines and training programs for health-care workers, especially in primary care services to improve diagnosis and enable more comprehensive patients care," the paper said.

The authors called for the development of multidisciplinary rehabilitation strategies tailored to individual needs in order to improve care and support recovery for those affected by long COVID. (Courtesy: *Down to Earth*)

US, China take step back from sky-high tariffs, agree to pause for 90 days

GENEVA, May 12: US and Chinese officials said Monday they had reached a deal to roll back most of their recent tariffs and call a 90-day truce in their trade war for more talks on resolving their trade disputes.

Stock markets rose sharply as the globe's two major economic powers took a step back from a clash that has unsettled the global economy. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the US agreed to drop its 145 per cent tariff rate on Chinese goods by 115 percentage points to 30 per cent, while China agreed to lower its rate on US goods by the same amount to 10 per cent. Greer and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced the tariff reductions at a news conference in Geneva.

The two officials struck a positive tone as they said the two sides had set up consultations to continue discussing their trade issues.

Bessent said at the news briefing after two days of talks that the high tariff levels would have amounted to a complete blockade of each sides goods, an outcome neither side wants.

The consensus from both delegations this weekend is neither side wants a decoupling, Bessent said. And what had occurred with these very high tariff ... was an embargo, the equivalent of an embargo. And



neither side wants that. We do want trade. We want more balanced trade. And I think that both sides are committed to achieving that."

China's Commerce Ministry called the agreement an important step for the resolution of the two countries' differences and said it lays the foundation for further cooperation. This initiative aligns with the expectations of producers and consumers in both countries and serves the interests of both nations as well as the common interests of the world, a ministry statement said. It added that China hopes the US will stop the erroneous practice of unilateral tariff hikes and work with China to safeguard the development of their economic and trade relations, in-

jecting more certainty and stability into the global economy.

The full impact on the complicated tariffs and other trade penalties enacted by Washington and Beijing remains unclear. And much depends on whether they will find ways to bridge longstanding differences during the 90-day suspension. But as trade envoys from the world's two biggest economies blinked, finding ways to pull back from potentially massive disruptions to world trade and their own markets, investors rejoiced.

Futures for the S&P 500 jumped 2.6 per cent and for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 2 per cent. Oil prices surged more than USD 1.60 a barrel and the US dollar gained against the euro and the

Japanese yen. Jens Eskelund, president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, welcomed the news but expressed caution. The tariffs only were suspended for 90 days and there is great uncertainty over what lies ahead, he said in a statement.

Businesses need predictability to maintain normal operations and make investment decisions. The chamber therefore hopes to see both sides continue to engage in dialogue to resolve differences, and avoid taking measures that will disrupt global trade and result in collateral damage for those caught in the cross-fire," Eskelund said.

Trump last month raised US tariffs on China to a combined 145 per cent and China retaliated by hitting American imports with a 125 per cent levy. Tariffs that high essentially amount to the two countries boycotting each other's products, disrupting trade that last year topped USD 660 billion.

The announcement by the US and China sent shares surging, with US futures jumping more than 2 per cent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index surged nearly 3 per cent and benchmarks in Germany and France were both up 0.7 per cent.

The Trump administration has imposed tariffs on countries worldwide, but its fight with China has been the most intense. (AP)

Zelenskyy hopes for ceasefire with Russia

Ukrainian Prez challenges Putin to meet him in Turkiye 'personally'

KYIV, May 12: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday challenged Russia's President Vladimir Putin to meet him personally in Turkiye on Thursday, the latest move in a weekend-long exchange of proposals from both sides on the next steps in the US-led peace effort.

Zelenskyy said that he still hopes for a ceasefire with Russia starting Monday, and that he will "be waiting for Putin" in Turkiye "personally" after US President Donald Trump insisted Ukraine accept Russia's latest offer — to hold direct talks in Turkiye on Thursday.

Ukraine, along with European allies, had demanded Russia accept an unconditional 30-day ceasefire starting Monday before holding talks, but Moscow effectively rejected the proposal and called for direct negotiations instead.

It was not clear if Zelenskyy was conditioning his presence in Turkiye on the Monday ceasefire holding, and there was no immediate comment from the Kremlin on whether Putin would go. In 2022, the war's early months, Zelenskyy repeatedly called for a personal meeting with the Russian president but was rebuffed, and eventually enacted a decree declaring that holding negotiations with Putin had become impossible.

"We await a full and lasting ceasefire, starting from tomorrow, to provide the necessary basis for diplomacy. There is no point in prolonging the killings. And I will be waiting for Putin in (Turkiye) on Thursday. Personally. I hope that this time the Russians will not look for excuses," Zelenskyy wrote on X on Sunday.

Trump said in a social media post earlier Sunday that Ukraine should agree to Putin's peace talks proposal "IMMEDIATELY."

"At least they will be able to determine whether or not a deal is possible, and if it is not, European leaders, and the U.S., will know where everything stands, and can proceed accordingly!" Trump wrote, adding: "HAVE THE MEETING, NOW!!!"

Ukraine, allies insist on a ceasefire

French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk met with Zelenskyy in Kyiv on Saturday and issued a coordinated call for a 30-day truce starting Monday. The plan has received backing from both the European Union and



Trump. The leaders pledged tougher sanctions on Russia if Putin did not accept the proposal.

Putin in remarks to the media overnight effectively rejected the offer and proposed restarting direct talks with Ukraine in Istanbul on Thursday instead "without preconditions." He did not specify whether the talks on Thursday would involve Zelenskyy and himself personally. He said a ceasefire might be agreed on during the negotiations — but stressed that the Kremlin needs a truce that would lead to a "lasting peace" instead of one that would allow Ukraine to rearm and mobilise more men into its armed forces.

Zelenskyy said on X on Sunday morning that it was a "positive sign that the Russians have finally begun to consider ending the war," but insisted on a ceasefire first.

Putin and Zelenskyy have only met once — in 2019. After repeated unsuccessful calls for a personal meeting with the Russian leader early on in the war, and following the Kremlin's decision in September 2022 to illegally annex four regions of Ukraine, Zelenskyy enacted a decree declaring that holding negotiations with Putin had become impossible.

Macron said Sunday that Putin's offer of direct negotiations with Ukraine is "a first step, but not enough," signaling continued Western skepticism toward Moscow's intentions.

Moscow presses on with peace talks offer. Turkiye says it's ready to host

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, in comments aired by Russian state TV on Sunday, called Putin's proposal "very serious," aimed at eliminating "the root causes of the conflict," and said it "confirms a real intention to find a peaceful solution."

Without directly mentioning Moscow's proposal, Trump said in

a social media post several hours after Putin's overnight remarks that it was "a potentially great day for Russia and Ukraine!"

"Think of the hundreds of thousands of lives that will be saved as this never ending bloodbath" hopefully comes to an end," Trump wrote. "I will continue to work with both sides to make sure that it happens. The USA wants to focus, instead, on Rebuilding and Trade. A BIG week upcoming!" he added.

In another post on Sunday, the US president said Ukraine should accept Putin's offer "to meet on Thursday, in Turkiye, to negotiate a possible end to the BLOOD-BATH." He added, however, that he was "starting to doubt that Ukraine will make a deal with Putin."

Putin spoke Sunday to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who expressed readiness to host the talks, the Kremlin said.

Questions over next steps persist as attacks continue

Zelenskyy in his nightly video address on Sunday said he still expected a ceasefire to take hold on Monday, and that he was still waiting for a "clear answer" from Russia about it.

Zelenskyy said he was also waiting to see reaction from Western allies who on Saturday promised robust sanctions against Russia if Putin did not abide by the Monday truce.

"We have repeatedly heard from partners that they are ready to strengthen sanctions against Russia if Putin refuses a ceasefire. We will see," he said.

He reiterated he would be present in Turkiye on Thursday. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov did not immediately respond to a message from The Associated Press asking for a comment.

Meanwhile, Russia resumed mass drone attacks in Ukraine early on Sunday, after its self-declared three-day pause expired. (AP)

Poland orders closure of Russian consulate in Krakow

WARSAW, May 12: Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski said Monday that he was ordering the closure of Russia's consulate in the southern city of Krakow after Polish authorities said Russia was responsible for a fire that destroyed a shopping centre in Warsaw last year.

The fire broke out May 12, 2024, in the Marywilka 44 shopping centre that housed some 1,400 shops and service points, a budget marketplace in a warehouse-like structure in a northern district of Warsaw. Many of the vendors were from Vietnam, and it inflicted tragedy on many in Warsaw's Vietnamese community.

Sikorski announced the closure in a statement published in Warsaw on Monday morning, exactly one year after the fire.

He also addressed the matter during a visit to Britain, telling reporters the decision was taken because the Justice Ministry and Security forces found evidence that Russia had committed arson.

This was a huge fire of a shopping mall in Warsaw in which, just by sheer luck, nobody was hurt. This is completely unacceptable," Sikorski said.

So the Russian consulate will have to leave, he added. And if these attacks continue, we'll take further action.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Monday that there would be an adequate response to the consulate's closure.

Warsaw is continuing to deliberately destroy relations (between Poland and Russia) and acting against the interests of its citizens, ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said, as quoted by Russian news outlet Interfax.

Sikorski last year already ordered the closure of the Russian consulate in Poznan, one of three at the time in Poland, in response to acts of sabotage including arson attacks that he said were sponsored by Moscow. This leaves only one Russian consulate left, in Gdansk. (AP)

Australian prime minister names new Cabinet that drops Israel critic

MELBOURNE, May 12: Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced his new Cabinet on Monday after former minister Ed Husic blamed his demotion on his own criticism of Israel's war in Gaza.

Albanese named the 30 lawmakers who will fill Cabinet and outer-ministry positions after his centre-left Labor Party won a landslide victory in the May 3 elections.

Labor has claimed 92 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form government. As vote counting continues, Albanese said his government could hold as many as 95 seats.

Labor had never held more seats since the first Parliament sat in 1901, he said.

"I'm deeply humbled by the trust that was put into my government with the election and we cer-

tainly won't take it for granted," Albanese told reporters at Parliament House.

While Labor prime ministers allocate the ministerial portfolios, the party's factional leaders pick the 30 lawmakers who will get them based on the proportion of seats each faction won.

The factional leaders dropped former Industry and Science Minister Husic, who was born in Sydney to Bosnian Muslim immigrants, and former Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, who is Jewish. Husic, who after the 2022 election became Australia's first federal minister to be sworn into office on a Quran, told Australian Broadcasting Corp. on Sunday that Albanese should have intervened to keep him and Dreyfus in Cabinet. Husic said his demotion was in part punishment for his views on how Israel has waged war in Gaza.

"I think it's been a factor in there. Would I do things differently? I don't think so," Husic told ABC. "You can't celebrate diversity and then expect it to sit in a corner and be silent. You need to speak up ... for the communities that you care about," Husic added.

Albanese did not directly answer when asked whether he had fought for either Husic or Dreyfus to remain in Cabinet.

"We have a process in the Labor Party caucus. You've been watching it for some time," Albanese told reporters.

Albanese said he had a "constructive discussion" with Husic on Monday morning.

"What I've done is to allocate portfolios. That's the system that's there. It's one that Ed and others have supported for a long period of time," Albanese said.

Bilal Rauf, an adviser to the Australian National Imams Council, called for Albanese to explain whether Husic's demotion was due to his views on Gaza. (AP)

Burkina Faso forces killed 100 civilians in March attack, Human Rights Watch says

DAKAR, May 12: At least 100 civilians were killed by Burkina Faso government forces in March near the western town of Solenzo, Human Rights Watch said Monday.

According to victim testimony and videos shared on social media gathered by the rights group, the attackers were Burkina Faso special forces and members of a pro-government militia, the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland. The victims were all ethnic Fulani, a pastoralist community that is widespread across the region, which the government has long accused of supporting Muslim militants.

An earlier report from Human Rights Watch stated that the government's involvement was likely, because of video evidence on social media, although the findings were not definitive. The government issued a sharp denial when first reports surfaced, saying in a statement it "condemned the propagation, on social media, of images inducing hate and community violence, and fake information

aimed at undermining social cohesion" in the country.

"The viral videos of the atrocities by pro-government militias near Solenzo sent shock waves through Africa's Sahel region, but they told only part of the story," said Ilaria Allegrozzi, senior Sahel researcher at Human Rights Watch. "Further research uncovered that Burkina Faso's military was responsible for these mass killings of Fulani civilians, which were followed by deadly reprisals by an Islamist armed group. The government needs to impartially investigate these deaths and prosecute all those responsible."

Burkina Faso authorities did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the group's new report.

The landlocked nation of 23 million people has symbolized the security crisis in the arid Sahel region south of the Sahara in recent years. It has been shaken by violence from extremist groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group, and the

governments fighting them.

The military junta, which took power in 2022, failed to provide the stability it promised. According to conservative estimates, more than 60% of the country is now outside of government control, more than 2.1 million people have lost their homes and almost 6.5 million need humanitarian aid to survive.

The attack in the western Boucle du Mouhoun region, including Solenzo and other towns, began on Feb 27 and lasted until April 2, involving hundreds of government troops and drones, according to eyewitnesses quoted in the report.

"The VDPs shot at us like animals, while drones were flying over our heads. Many women and children died because they could not run," said a Fulani herder, 44, from Solenzo, referring to the pro-government militias.

After the attack, hundreds of Fulani residents fled across the border into neighboring Mali, the report said. (AP)

Nepal PM Oli thanks India, Pak for stopping military actions

KATHMANDU, May 12: Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on Monday thanked India and Pakistan for reaching an understanding to stop all firings and military actions, saying Lord Buddha's message of peace and non-violence is more relevant today.

"Lord Buddha's teachings and his message of peace and non-violence are more relevant today at a time when we are facing conflicts around us," Oli said while speaking at an event held on the occasion of the 2569th Buddha Jayanti in Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha.

"A few days ago in our neighbourhood, tensions had escalated between India and Pakistan, but now the conflict has ceased," he said.

"I want to thank both India and Pakistan for the same," Oli said.

"I have been saying from the beginning that tension should not escalate... the conflict should not turn into a war," Oli said, adding that he also talked to both sides.

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared significantly following India's Operation Sindoor last week in response to the Pahalgalam attack on April 22 that killed 26 people, including a Nepalese citizen.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect on Saturday.

Speaking at the event, Oli said the doctrine of the founder of Buddhism is useful and relevant for world peace and humanity. He offered prayer at the idol of Buddha at Lumbini, where hundreds of people, including Buddhist monks, scholars, political leaders, students and peace lovers had gathered.

In Kathmandu, people offered prayers at Swayambhunath and Boudhanath stupas to observe Buddha Purnima. Gyanmala Bhajan group organised a programme of devotional songs in praise of Lord Buddha on the occasion. (PTI)

Food security experts warn Gaza at critical risk of famine if Israel doesn't end blockade

TEL AVIV, May 12: The Gaza Strip is at critical risk of famine if Israel doesn't lift its blockade and stop its military campaign, food security experts said in a stark warning on Monday.

Outright famine is the mostly likely scenario unless conditions change, according to findings by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a leading international authority on the severity of hunger crises.

Nearly a half million Palestinians are in "catastrophic" levels of hunger, meaning they face possible starvation, the report said, while another million are at "emergency" levels of hunger.

Israel has banned any food, shelter, medicine or other goods from entering the Palestinian territory for the past 10 weeks, even as it carries out waves of airstrikes and ground operations.

Gaza's population of around 2.3 million people relies almost entirely on outside aid to survive, because Israel's 19-month-old military campaign has wiped away most capacity to produce food in-

side the territory.

Desperate scenes as food is running out

Food supplies are emptying out dramatically. Communal kitchens handing out cooked meals are virtually the only remaining source of food for most people in Gaza now, but they too are rapidly shutting down for lack of stocks.

Thousands of Palestinians crowd daily outside the public kitchens, pushing and jostling with their pots to receive lentils or pasta.

"We end up waiting in line for four, five hours, in the sun. It is exhausting," said Riham Sheikh el-Eid, waiting at a kitchen on Sunday. "At the end, we walk away with nothing. It is not enough for everybody."

The lack of a famine declaration doesn't mean people aren't already starving, and a declaration shouldn't be a precondition for ending the suffering, said Chris Newton, an analyst for the International Crisis Group focusing on starvation as a weapon of war.

"The Israeli government is

starving Gaza as part of its attempt to destroy Hamas and transform the strip," he said.

Israel demands a new aid system

The office of Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, did not respond to a request for comment. The army has said that enough assistance entered Gaza during a two-month ceasefire that Israel shattered in mid-March when it relaunched its military campaign.

Israel says the blockade aims to pressure Hamas to release the hostages it still holds. It says it won't let aid back in until a new system giving it control over distribution is in place, accusing Hamas of siphoning off supplies.

The United Nations denies substantial diversion of aid is taking place. It says the new system Israel envisages is unnecessary, will allow aid to be used as a weapon for political and military goals, and will not meet the massive needs of Palestinians.

The United States says it is working up a new mechanism that will start deliveries soon, but it has



given no timeframe. The UN has so far refused to participate, saying the plan does not meet humanitarian standards.

Monday's report said that any slight gains made during the ceasefire have been reversed. Nearly the entire population of Gaza now faces high levels of hunger, it said, driven by conflict, the collapse of infrastructure, destruction of agriculture, and blockades of aid.

Commenting on the report, the

head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation said any delay in restoring the flow of aid "bringing us closer to famine."

"If we fail to act, we are failing to uphold the right to food, which is a basic human right," FAO Director-General QU Dongyu said.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas after the group's October 7, 2023, surprise attack on Israel, in which militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took

251 hostage, most of whom have been released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israel's offensive has killed over 52,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, whose count does not distinguish between civilians or combatants.

Three criteria for declaring famine

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, first set up in 2004 during the famine in Somalia, groups more than a dozen UN agencies, aid groups, governments and other bodies.

It has only declared famine a few times — in Somalia in 2011, and South Sudan in 2017 and 2020, and last year in parts of Sudan's western Darfur region. Tens of thousands are believed to have died in Somalia and South Sudan.

It rates an area as in famine when at least two of three things occur: 20 per cent of households have an extreme lack of food, or are essentially starving; at least 30 per cent of children six months to

five years suffer from acute malnutrition or wasting, meaning they're too thin for their height; and at least two people or four children under five per every 10,000 are dying daily due to starvation or the interaction of malnutrition and disease.

The report found that the first threshold was met in Gaza, saying 477,000 people — or 22 per cent of the population — are classified as in "catastrophic" hunger for the period from May 11 to the end of September, and another million area at "emergency" levels, meaning they face very large gaps in food and high levels of acute malnutrition.

The malnutrition and deaths thresholds were not met. The data was gathered in April and up to May 6. Food security experts say it takes time for people to start dying from starvation. The report warned of "imminent" famine in northern Gaza in March 2024, but the following month, Israel allowed an influx of aid under US pressure after an Israeli strike killed seven aid workers. (AP)

'Urged the authorities to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public resources'

ARTIAYF files FIR against DFO Roing over alleged misuse of afforestation funds

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 12: The Arunachal RTI Activist Youth Forum (ARTIAYF) on Monday announced that it has filed a First Information Report (FIR) against the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the Dibang Forest Division, Roing, over alleged irregularities and misuse of government funds.

According to the ARTIAYF President, the forum had filed a Right to Information (RTI) application seeking details of projects executed under the Compensatory Afforestation (CA) and Net Present Value (NPV) funds, amounting to ₹ 452.71 lakh and ₹ 426.39 lakh respectively, during the 2023-24 financial year.

The President alleged that despite official records showing the funds as utilized, a site inspection revealed no visible maintenance work or plantation activities on the ground. "There is no evidence of plantation or upkeep at the designated sites, yet payments have been made. This clearly indicates misuse of public funds," he asserted.

While some documents were furnished by the DFO in response to the RTI query, the forum claimed they lacked authenticity and that several critical documents are yet to be disclosed.

Calling for a comprehensive investigation, ARTIAYF urged the authorities to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public resources within the forest sector. The FIR has been lodged at the Vigilance office, with copies submitted to the Secretary of Environment and Forest, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), and other relevant officials.



DNGC holds career counseling and certificate distribution programme



HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 12: The Arts Club of Dera Natung Government College (DNGC), in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), organized a Career Counseling cum Certificate Distribution Ceremony on May 10 at the College Conference Hall.

Welcoming the attendees, Bombi Riram, Convenor of the Arts Club, outlined the event's objectives and emphasized the significance of career guidance for students.

M Q Khan, Principal of DNGC and Chief Guest of the event, praised the Arts Club for providing a platform to nurture creativity and showcase young talent. Highlighting the value of art in fostering a connection with nature, he encouraged students to remain focused on both their academic and personal development.

The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from nursing professionals, students, and members of the public, all coming together for the life-saving cause of voluntary blood donation.

development.

In his keynote address, Khan underscored the importance of career counseling, urging students to "think big" and stay self-motivated. "The world cannot change you unless you decide to change yourself," he said, stressing that hard work, focus, and time management are crucial to achieving success. He also encouraged students to contribute to society, preserve traditional knowledge, adopt sustainable practices, and prioritize good health.

Offering practical tips for exam preparation, Khan advised students on time management, taking mock tests, understanding question patterns, note-making, regular revision, and maintaining legible handwriting. He also warned against the dangers of substance abuse and urged students to "laminate themselves from all evils," especially drugs, and work toward their goals with positivity. As a token of encouragement, he distributed over 100 copies of his authored books to attending students.

Bige Yomgam, Head of the Department of Education and former Convenor of the Arts Club, spoke as a special invitee. She lauded the students' talents and encouraged them to recognize both their strengths and areas needing improvement. She urged them to nurture their abilities and aim to become responsible, capable citizens.

The programme was coordinated by Bombi Riram, Gopi Riba, and Dr. Chalok Lowang, and concluded with the distribution of certificates to the outgoing members of the Arts Club.

Governor extends greetings on Buddha Purnima

HT Bureau

ITANAGAR, May 12: The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh KT Parinaik, extended warm greetings to the people of the State, particularly the Buddhist community, on the sacred occasion of Buddha Purnima.

In his message, the Governor expressed hope that the auspicious day would continue to inspire all with Lord Buddha's timeless teachings of love, peace, and harmony.

Describing Lord Buddha as the "Light of Asia" and one of the greatest spiritual teachers in history, the Governor highlighted the enduring relevance of his message of compassion, nonviolence, tolerance, and universal brotherhood. He noted that these teachings continue to uplift and guide millions across the globe, offering strength and solace in times of need.

The Governor emphasized the significance of the Eightfold Path—Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration—as a profound guide to ethical and mindful living. These principles, he said, form the core of the Dharma and encourage a life grounded in wisdom and compassion.

Concluding his message, Governor Parinaik wished that the observance of Buddha Purnima may further deepen the bonds of unity, mutual respect, and emotional harmony among all communities, and bring peace and well-being to every corner of society.

Buddha Purnima celebrated with reverence at Gompa Mandir, Itanagar

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 12: Buddha Purnima, commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, was celebrated with profound devotion and spiritual fervor at Gompa Mandir in Itanagar. Devotees from all walks of life gathered to offer prayers and participate in sacred rituals honoring the life and teachings of the Buddha.

The serene ambiance of the temple was filled with the sound of chants and prayers as followers paid homage to Lord Buddha, widely revered as the "Light of Asia" and one of the greatest spiritual teachers in history.

The occasion served as a reminder of the Buddha's timeless teachings—compassion, nonviolence, tolerance, peace, and universal brotherhood—which continue to inspire and guide millions around the world. Attendees expressed hope that these enduring values would lead humanity toward harmony, especially in challenging times.



The celebration concluded with a collective prayer for global peace and well-being, encapsulating the true essence of Buddha Purnima.

Bengia Bado appointed as PPA youth council president



HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 12: In a show of growing support and regional solidarity, businessman and social worker Bengia Bado was accorded a warm reception on Saturday following his appointment as the President of the Youth Council of the People's Party of Arunachal (PPA).

The event, organised by the PPA Kurung Kumey District Unit, marked a significant moment in the party's ongoing efforts to strengthen youth leadership and expand its grassroots presence across the state.

According to an official statement from the PPA, the reception-cum-interaction programme took place at a city resort in Chandannagar, drawing attendance from party leaders, youth members, and supporters from across districts including Kurung Kumey and the Itanagar Capital Complex.

The gathering aimed to celebrate the induction of new state executive members while also outlining the strategic direction of the Youth Council under Bado's leadership.

Addressing the gathering, Bengia Bado expressed his deep gratitude to PPA State President and 14th Doimukh MLA, Nabam Vivek, for reposing trust in him to lead the youth wing of Arunachal Pradesh's oldest regional party.

"The PPA has been tirelessly working for the people of Arunachal since its inception in 1977. I am honoured to be part of a party that holds the genuine aspirations of the people at its core," Bado stated during his speech.

In his remarks to the media, Bado reaffirmed his commitment to serving the state's youth and contributing to social progress through the platform of the PPA.

"We have a responsibility to prepare the younger generation for leadership roles, and I will work diligently to uphold that mission," he said.

Calling upon citizens to support the People's Party of Arunachal, he described the party as the "true regional voice" dedicated to the welfare, identity, and development of Arunachal Pradesh.

The event featured spirited discussions on the future direction of the PPA's youth council, with participants emphasising the need to mobilise young voters, promote political awareness, and address challenges such as unemployment and access to education in remote areas.

Voluntary blood donation camp marks International Nurses Day in Itanagar

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 12: In celebration of International Nurses Day, the Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI), Arunachal Pradesh State Branch, in collaboration with the Arunachal Life Saving Foundation, successfully organized a voluntary blood donation camp at the R.K. Mission Conference Hall. Held under the theme "Our Nurses, Our Future – Caring for Nurses Strengthens Economies", the event highlighted the vital role of nurses in healthcare and society.

The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from nursing professionals, students, and members of the public, all coming together for the life-saving cause of voluntary blood donation.

Ira Singhal, IAS, Secretary of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, attended as Chief Guest and lauded the nursing community for their dedication and compassion. Swami Veda Sarananda, Secretary of Maharaj RKM Hospital, served as the Guest of Honour and echoed appreciation for the selfless service of nurses.

Both dignitaries emphasized the need for continued support to the nursing workforce as a cornerstone for improving healthcare delivery and boosting societal resilience.

The organizers extended heartfelt gratitude to all donors, volunteers, and supporters who contributed to making the event a success, reinforcing the spirit of service and solidarity.



AAPBWS hosts 5th Rongjali Bwisagu celebration in Itanagar

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 12: The All Arunachal Pradesh Bodo Welfare Society (AAPBWS) successfully organised the 5th Rongjali Bwisagu Bidai Fwrbw Celebration on Sunday at the Mising Ground, Zoo Road, Itanagar, drawing a large and enthusiastic crowd to commemorate the rich cultural heritage of the Bodo community.

Er Kago Tabiyo, Chief Engineer of the Rural Works Department (RWD), attended the event as the Chief Guest, while Shri Happy Toko, Advisor to the President of the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU), graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. The celebration was steered by Organizing Chairman Mahanta Brahma, with Santiram Doimari serving as the Overall In-Charge of the event.

The program showcased traditional Bodo dances, songs, and cultural rituals, offering a colorful and vibrant display of the community's traditions. The event concluded on a festive note with active participation and heartfelt appreciation from attendees and dignitaries.



Op Sindoor reflects strength, maturity of new India's security doctrine: Arunachal BJP

ITANAGAR, May 12: Hailing Operation Sindoor as a turning point in India's fight against terrorism, the ruling BJP in Arunachal Pradesh on Monday said it reflected the strength and maturity of "new India's" security doctrine.

State BJP president Kaling Moyong said the operation reaffirmed the philosophy of a "proactive and uncompromising new India", a country that tackles threats at their root, with strategic restraint, strength, and unity.

"This bold and calculated action reflects the strength and maturity of new India's security doctrine, one that goes beyond mere retaliation," he said, lauding the forces for achieving key objectives with surgical precision, avoiding civilian casualties, and steering clear of direct military conflict with Pakistan.

Moyong also lauded the "decisive leadership" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the bold diplomatic steps that he took, including suspending the Indus Waters Treaty. (PTI)

Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi hailed the book as a rare and lyrical preservation of Arunachal's oral traditions

'Tales from the Dawn-lit Mountains' launched in a star-studded literary gathering

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, May 12: "Tales from the Dawn-lit Mountains", a captivating collection of folklore-inspired stories by Subi Taba, Agriculture Development Officer, was officially launched on Sunday at a vibrant literary event hosted at the Jawaharlal Nehru State Museum. The book, published by Penguin Random House, was unveiled in the presence of eminent dignitaries, scholars, and literature enthusiasts.

The occasion was graced by notable personalities including Dani Sulu, Secretary, Disaster Management; Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi, Padma Shri awardee, Sahitya Akademi laureate, and former bureaucrat; Gijum Tali, Director, IPR; Dr. N.T. Rikam, Registrar, Rajiv Gandhi University; Dr. Robin Hissang, Principal, Government College Seppa; Dr. Ashok Pandey, faculty member at Dera Natung Government College; and several members of the Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society (APLS).

In a heartwarming show of support, speakers praised Tales from the Dawn-lit



Mountains for its cultural richness and literary craftsmanship: Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi hailed the book as "a rare and lyrical preservation of Arunachal's oral traditions, infused with deep emotion and timeless wisdom."

Dani Sulu commended Subi Taba's determination in completing and publishing the book with a major publishing house while fulfilling her responsibilities as a government officer. Gijum Tali described the book as "an essential contribution to Arunachali literature."

NT Rikam noted, "The book bridges folklore and literary finesse. It will inspire young minds to reconnect with their roots." Bompi Riba delivered a review of the book, praising its magical realism, lyrical prose, and vivid portrayal of the region's myths and landscapes.

The event, jointly organized by the author and the Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society, featured a thought-provoking discussion moderated by Yater Nyokir, followed by a Q&A session and book signing. The presence of literary stalwarts and cultural custodians made the evening a memorable celebration of Arunachal Pradesh's rich oral heritage and storytelling traditions.

PM Modi delivered on promise of 'revenge beyond the imagination' of terrorists: BJP

NEW DELHI, May 12: The BJP asserted on Monday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has delivered on his promise of inflicting on terrorists behind the Pahalgam terror strike a punishment beyond their imagination and razing to the ground their safe havens.

Addressing a press conference, BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra said Pakistan has lost under Operation Sindoor "nine terror sites, 11 air bases, over 100 terrorists, 50 soldiers and its prestige".

He noted that Modi had vowed that India would take out terrorists in their homes and tear down the terror sites.

"PM Modi's decision and our armed forces' indomitable courage have razed the terror sites to the ground. It was a promise by Modi," he said, adding that Operation Sindoor launched on May 7 has met 100 per cent of its targets.

He noted that the prime minister in his public meeting in Bihar had assured people of fulfilling their wish to attack terrorism and had promised to avenge the killing of 26 civilians, mostly tourists, in Pahalgam on April 22. Modi had



vowed to deliver a revenge beyond the imagination of terrorists and this is what happened, he added.

The kind of military and non-military action India has taken under the operation is unprecedented, and has sent a decisive message in its war against terrorism, the BJP spokesperson said.

Even Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE have backed out, and Pakistan stands isolated globally, Patra claimed, adding that India has shown that no part of the neighbouring country is

beyond its reach.

To a question about the vicious trolling of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri by a section of right-wing activists after India and Pakistan agreed to stop military actions, Patra said his party respects everyone, be it armed forces or bureaucrats, associated with the operation.

Social media is a tool, but it cannot be a basis for the country to decide its course of action, he added.

Misri was forced to make his account on X private, restricting ac-

cess to only confirmed followers, after he and his family members were targeted by trolls.

Patra said India can say with pride that Operation Sindoor met its target 100 per cent and lauded the national unity behind the armed forces' action.

Not only did India kill over 100 terrorists across nine terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, but its subsequent action in retaliation against Pakistan's response destroyed 11 air bases in the country, he said.

In one of these attacks on air bases, over 50 Pakistani soldiers were killed, he claimed, adding that for the first time, a country destroyed the air bases of a nuclear-powered nation.

The BJP leader said India and Pakistan have arrived at an understanding to stop military actions, but India will break it in case of future terror attacks.

Patra said India, under PM Modi, took unprecedented actions, including the decision to put the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance.

Pakistan depends so critically on waters flowing from India that the

neighbouring country's GDP and agriculture will plunge and it will become even more fragile, he said.

Referring to the launch of Operation Sindoor on May 7, he said no other country would have carried out such precision attacks aimed at terrorists and their sites within a span of 23 minutes.

The BJP national spokesperson shared details of the Pakistani air bases and terrorists taken out by India.

He said, "For the first time, India carried out strikes in Pakistan's Punjab province, considered the heart of the country, effectively eliminating terrorists and their camps."

"Operation Sindoor successfully dismantled terror hubs affiliated to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Hizbul Mujahideen."

India, he added, had earlier tried to pressure Pakistan into taking action by giving it dossiers on evidence of terrorist activities emanating from its soil, as was the case after the Mumbai terror attack in 2008, but the neighbouring country paid little heed. (PTI)

War is not Bollywood movie, diplomacy first choice, says ex-Army chief Naravane

PUNE, May 12: Former Indian Army chief General Manoj Naravane has criticised people raising questions about the suspension of hostilities between India and Pakistan, saying war is not romantic, nor is it a Bollywood movie.

Speaking at an event in Pune on Sunday, Gen Naravane said he would go to war if ordered, but diplomacy would be his first choice.

The former Army chief pointed out it has been a tumultuous week, starting with Operation Sindoor, the strikes by the Indian Armed Forces on terrorist camps and infrastructure in Pakistan and POK, followed by four days of intense aerial and some land battles.

"It finally culminated in an announcement regarding the cessation of military action. I would like to repeat that it is only a cessation of military operations, not a ceasefire as such. Watch how things unfold in the days and weeks to come," he said.

He noted that several people have raised questions about the suspension of military hostilities and whether it was a good thing.

"If you consider the facts and figures, particularly the cost of war, you'll realise that a wise person makes that call before the losses become too large or insurmountable," he said.

"I believe we proved to Pakistan — through the strikes we carried out not only on terrorist infrastructure but also on their airfields deep within their territory — that the cost of continuing on their path would be too high. That compelled them and ultimately led their DGMO to call ours to discuss the possibility of a ceasefire," he said.

He added that there is a third aspect, the social component.

"I mentioned strength and destruction, but this social part includes the lives that are lost: children who lose their parents or who themselves get killed in the shelling in border areas. Nobody accounts for that kind of destruction," he said.

He noted that for those who have lost their loved ones, the trauma gets carried through generations.

"There's also something called PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). People who have seen grue-

some scenes wake up in cold sweat even after 20 years and need psychiatric care," he said.

Gen Naravane was speaking at a programme organised by the Institute of Cost Accountants of India.

"War is not romantic. It is not your Bollywood movie. It is very serious business. War or violence should be the last thing we should resort to, which is why our Prime Minister said this is not an era of war. Although war will be forced upon us by unwise people, we should not cheer for it," he said.

"Still, people are asking why we have not gone for a full-out war. As a military man, if ordered, I will go to war, but that will not be my first choice," the former Indian Army Chief said.

Gen Naravane said he would choose diplomacy, settling differences through dialogue and not reaching the stage of armed conflict.

"We are all equal stakeholders in national security. We should try to resolve differences not only between countries, but amongst ourselves, whether in families or between states, regions and communities. Violence is not the answer," he said.

Highlighting the importance of a strong defence budget, Gen Naravane said the debate about "guns versus butter" is as old as time.

"How much should a country spend on defence when there are so many other conflicting priorities? Should you spend on all those things you've seen on the TV screen, or should you spend on education, healthcare, hygiene, sanitation, and so many other equally pressing demands, especially for a developing country like ours?" he said. He pointed out that the defence ministry takes up about 15 per cent of the national budget, and that's the kind of investment which has to be made.

"Now you will ask, is it a worthwhile investment, or is it money down the drain that has to be pumped back up? So, let me put it in two or three different ways. Firstly, I would like to say: look at it as an insurance premium."

The country needs a backup plan for emergencies, and this was starkly evident last week, he said. (PTI)

BrahMos proof of continuity in governance which cannot be denied: Jairam Ramesh

NEW DELHI, May 12: With focus on India's defence arsenal, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Monday said the BrahMos missile is a remarkable proof of continuity in governance which simply cannot be denied or erased, "despite it being the regular habit of today's ruling establishment".

Ramesh said the BrahMos missile was inducted into the Indian Navy in 2005 and Indian Army in 2007, while the air-launched variant of BrahMos appeared in 2012, all during Manmohan Singh's tenure.

"It was his leadership that led to the historic Indo-US nuclear agreement of 2005, paving the way for India finally joining the Missile Technology Control Regime eleven years later. It was also during his tenure that the BrahMos Integration Complex in Hyderabad and the BrahMos Aerospace Thiruvananthapuram Limited were established," the Congress general secretary said on X.

"BrahMos is very much in the news these days. It is named after the Brahmaputra and the Moskva rivers and is an outstanding example



of Indo-Russian collaboration. It is also yet another remarkable proof of continuity in governance which simply cannot be denied or erased — despite it being the regular habit of today's ruling establishment in New Delhi," he said, taking a swipe at the Modi government.

Noting that India's Integrated Missile Development Programme began in 1983, Ramesh said it had great successes.

Sometime in the mid-90s, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam and his colleagues like Dr. Sivathanu Pillai felt the need for collaboration with the

Russians for supersonic cruise missiles, he said.

"An inter-governmental agreement was signed on February 12, 1998 when I.K. Gujral was PM. Incidentally he was India's Ambassador to the USSR 1976-80. Thereafter the first contract was signed on July 9, 1999, when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was PM. The first successful launch took place on June 12, 2001," he said.

The BrahMos headquarters complex that includes design, simulation and aerospace knowledge facilities was inaugurated in New Delhi on December 4, 2004 by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ramesh said.

"Thereafter the missile was inducted into the Indian Navy in 2005 and Indian Army in 2007. The air-launched variant of BrahMos appeared in 2012. All this was when Dr. Manmohan Singh was PM," he said.

His remarks come days after India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea with immediate effect after four days of cross-border strikes that triggered fears of a wider conflict. (PTI)

Those who left their homes due to Pak shelling can return now: J&K CM Omar Abdullah

POONCH/JAMMU, May 12: Asserting that the recent Pakistani shelling in Jammu and Kashmir created a "war-like situation", with Poonch district bearing the brunt of the attack, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said those who had left their homes can return as a military understanding between the two countries is in place now.

Abdullah also dismissed the Pakistani military's ongoing propaganda, saying the neighbouring country will continue to push it, but the reality is known to the world.

"They (border residents) should now try to return to their homes. Eighty to 90 per cent of Poonch town is vacant. They had left their homes when shelling was taking place. Now that the shelling has stopped, they can return to their homes," Abdullah told reporters here.

Accompanied by his cabinet colleague Javed Rana, Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani and MLA Aijaz Jan, the chief minister on Monday reached out to those affected by the Pakistani shelling in the Poonch and Surankote areas, and emphasised the need for setting up bunkers in the region.

Abdullah, who was also accompanied by his sons Zamir and Zahir, described the recent escalation along the Line of Control (LoC) as a "war-like" situation, with Poonch district suffering the heaviest shelling.



"For the last three-four days, there was a kind of war-like atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir. Among all the areas that faced the brunt of the cross-border shelling, Poonch was the worst affected," he said.

The National Conference (NC) leader said this is the first time that shells have fallen right in the middle of towns and heavy bombardment has taken place. "We have lost 13 precious lives. My purpose for coming here today is, at the very least, to reach those homes where this tragedy occurred," he said.

Abdullah met with members of the

local civil society and commended the people of Poonch for maintaining communal harmony in the face of adversity. "Despite the difficult circumstances, they upheld the legacy of unity among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs," he said.

Replying to a question on the indiscriminate nature of the shelling, the chief minister clarified that religious places were not specifically targeted, but areas near madrassas, temples, dargahs and gurdwaras were hit. "Their firing was random and reckless," he said.

Abdullah emphasised the need for preparedness to prevent future casualties. "If such a situation arises again, we

must ensure that such loss of lives does not happen. We have received several constructive suggestions from the civil society and we will begin working on their implementation," the chief minister said.

Replying to a question on Pakistan's motives, he said, "I do not have a magic wand to read their intentions. I can only comment based on ground realities. It has been 24 hours since the ceasefire began and so far, it is holding."

He dismissed the Pakistani military's propaganda, saying, "They will continue to push propaganda, but the reality is known to you, to me and to the world."

Abdullah said the administration in all the affected districts — Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu, Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora — have been directed to assess the structural damage and submit reports for compensation.

"Our priority so far has been saving lives, but now that the ceasefire is in place, assessments will begin and relief will follow. As per the proforma, we will give compensation," he said.

The chief minister rejected reports that officials had deserted their posts during the shelling. "Not a single DC (deputy commissioner) left his station. These rumours being spread by some in the media are unfortunate and untrue," he asserted. (PTI)

Security heightened at Delhi's Tihar prison, terror accused on watch: Sources

NEW DELHI, May 12: Security arrangements have been heightened at Tihar Prison Complex in the wake of prevailing security situation, jail sources said on Monday.

Special focus is being placed on high-risk wards, particularly those housing gangsters and terror accused, they said.

According to the sources, multi-layered security checks, additional CCTV coverage, and stricter monitoring protocols have been implemented as part of the enhanced measures.

"The recent developments have prompted complete security checks. All vulnerable spots are being reinforced, and round-the-clock surveillance of inmates with serious criminal backgrounds heightened," a source said.

High-profile gangsters and terror accused like Tahawwur Rana, Chhota Rajan and Neeraj Bawana are lodged in Tihar Jail — one of India's largest prison complexes.

Mobile signal jammers are being tested and upgraded to prevent any unauthorised communication from inside the prison.

"Surprise checks have also been intensified. We are conducting at least three random checks daily in sensitive barracks to ensure compliance with jail norms," the source said.

Jail staff deployment has been increased during night hours, and movement of inmates within the premises is being closely monitored.

According to officials, the intelligence network within the jail has been activated and informers have been tasked with reporting any suspicious activity immediately.

Coordination between Tihar administration and external law enforcement agencies has also been stepped up, they said.

"We are sharing inputs regularly with the special cell and other investigative wings to ensure that no external influence is able to penetrate jail security," the source said, adding that the heightened security will remain in place until a comprehensive review is completed.

Established in 1958, Tihar Jail comprises of nine prisons spread over more than 400 acres — one prison in Rohini and six prisons in Mandoli. (PTI)

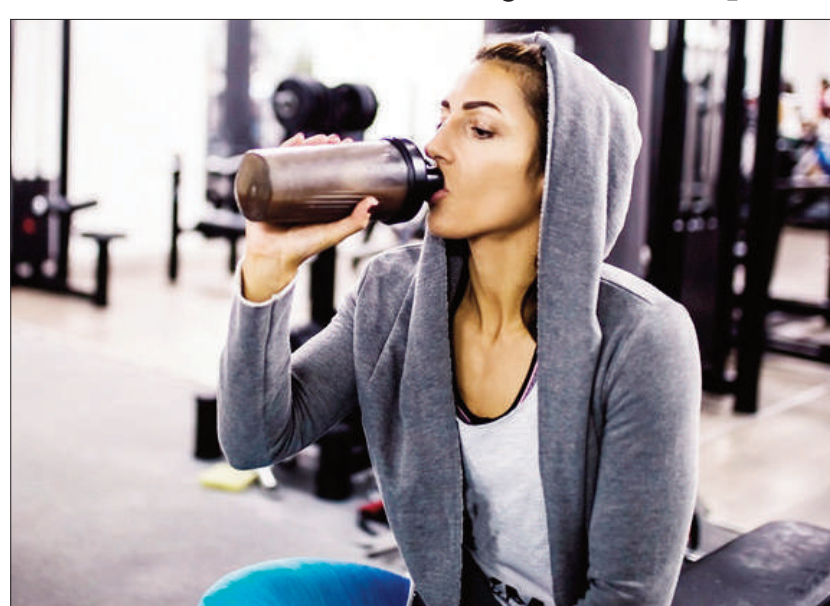
Steroids, protein powders behind alarming rise in hip damage among urban youth, warn experts

NEW DELHI, May 12: Group of orthopaedic experts have raised a serious public health concern, stating the misuse of steroids and unregulated protein powders is severely damaging the hips of young gym-going individuals in their 20s.

This warning came during the 'Delhi Hip 360' conference held in the national capital, where orthopaedic specialists highlighted the alarming rise in cases of Avascular Necrosis (AVN) and early hip degeneration in youth, conditions traditionally seen in older adults.

Dr L. Tomar, the organising chairman of the conference, said, "We are observing a significant surge in hip-related complaints among young patients in recent years. Every week in my OPD, I see two to three patients under the age of 30, many in their early 20s, complaining of persistent hip pain."

"Investigations often reveal Avascular Necrosis (AVN), a condition where blood supply to the hip bone is compromised, leading to bone death. In over 70% of these cases, there is a history of anabolic steroid use or excessive consumption of unverified protein powders," said Dr Tomar, who is



the unit head of orthopaedics and joint replacement at Max Hospital, Delhi.

Recent studies have indicated a rise in hip issues among youth and how alcohol

and steroid use were key contributors to AVN among young adults, he said.

More recently, the Maharashtra FDA launched statewide checks on protein pow-

ders after several brands were found to be spiked with performance-enhancing steroids, many of which are freely available online or at gyms without proper labelling or approvals.

Youth, especially those chasing rapid physical transformation, are unknowingly damaging their bone health, particularly the femoral head of the hip joint, which is uniquely sensitive to blood flow changes, Dr Tomar pointed out.

There is a thriving underground online market for performance-enhancing drugs and muscle-building supplements in India.

Dr Rajiv Jain, senior orthopaedic surgeon, said that steroids, especially when misused or consumed unsupervised, directly impact the blood supply to the bones.

"It (AVN) begins with pain, stiffness, and limping and in many cases, leads to complete collapse of the hip joint. Hip replacements are required for patients whose condition can be treated using medications," Dr Jain stated.

The condition, AVN, is not only painful but also often irreversible if not diagnosed early. In extreme cases, the only treatment

is total hip replacement, a complex procedure typically meant for older patients. Orthopaedic experts say this is becoming disturbingly common in India's urban youth.

Another observation presented by orthopaedic researchers at the conference revealed that over 30 per cent of AVN cases seen in Delhi's tertiary hospitals over the past three years involved patients under 35, and most had a history of either steroid injection, oral steroid abuse or supplement misuse.

Dr Sharad Agarwal, scientific chairman of the conference and senior orthopaedic surgeon, said that fitness has become a booming industry in India, but without proper regulation and education.

"What they don't realise is that behind that muscle, their bones might be silently deteriorating. We urgently need awareness drives, regulation of supplement markets, and basic orthopaedic screening at gyms," Dr Agarwal said. Doctors have urged fitness trainers, influencers and gym owners to educate their clients about the risks of shortcuts like steroid cycles and unverified protein supplements. (PTI)

Telangana number one in attracting investments, managing inflation: Revanth Reddy



HYDERABAD, May 12: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday said that the state is number one in the country in attracting investments, managing inflation and maintaining law and order.

Speaking after inaugurating the new facility of Sonata Software here, he said the state has attracted nearly Rs three lakh crore investment since the Congress assumed office in December 2023.

The government has created more than one lakh jobs in the private sector, he said.

During his trips to the World Economic Forum in Davos and investor meets in the US, South Korea, Japan and Singapore, the government has convinced the world that Telangana means business.

This year at Davos, Telangana was the number one state in attracting investments of about Rs 1.78 lakh crore.

"We are the number one state in India in investments — both domestic and international," he said.

Hyderabad is now a GCC (Global Capability Centre) hub in both software and Life Sciences and the city has also emerged as a leading hub for AI-ready data centres, life sciences and manufacturing sectors.

IT giants like Microsoft, Cognizant, HCL Tech, Infosys and Wipro have all opened newer campuses and are expanding in Hyderabad, Reddy said.

"We are the number one state in policing and law and order, according to the Government of India report. In managing inflation, we are number one. In creating jobs — both government and private sector — we are number one. In tax collections, we are number one," he said.

The state government is also the country's largest entrepreneur funding and mentoring programme — empowering 66 lakh women through Self-Help groups, he said. With the newly-launched 'Rajiv Yuva Vikasam' scheme to promote self-employment, the government is going to fund lakhs of young entrepreneurs across verticals, he said.

The chief minister also highlighted other major initiatives of his government, including building 'Future City', touted as India's most planned city, establishment of Young India Skills University, Young India Sports University and Young India Integrated (social welfare) residential schools.

The Miss World contest is happening in Hyderabad now and the government will ensure more global events in coming days, he said.

"This balance of growth, investments, creation of jobs, building great infrastructure and welfare for all sections is our vision — called Telangana Rising," he said.

Reddy sought the cooperation of companies like Sonata Software to achieve the government's goal of making Telangana a USD one trillion economy or to transform Hyderabad into the "world's most amazing city". (PTI)

'We have to monitor our 7,000 km-long seashore' 10 satellites working continuously to ensure safety, security of citizens: ISRO chairman

IMPHAL, May 12: ISRO Chairman Dr V Narayanan said that 10 satellites are continuously working for a strategic purpose to ensure the safety and security of the country's citizens.

Speaking at the convocation ceremony of the Central Agricultural University in Manipur's Imphal on Sunday, he said India is becoming a "vibrant space power" and will have its first space station by 2040.

"Today, 433 satellites of 34 countries are lifted from India and placed into orbit...I am also happy to inform you that today, 10 satellites are continuously working 24/7 for a strategic purpose to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of the country," the ISRO chief said during the programme.

His comment came amid the military conflict between India and Pakistan. The country launched Operation Sindoor on early May 7 to destroy terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir in retaliation to the Pahalgarh terror attack last month.



India and Pakistan had on Saturday announced reaching an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect.

Narayanan also said, "If we have to ensure the safety of our country, we have to

serve through our satellites. We have to monitor our 7,000 km-long seashore. We have to monitor the entire northern part continuously. Without satellite and drone technology, we can't achieve that."

He said the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is developing a satellite for G20 countries to study climate change and air pollution and monitor weather.

"Today, to our credit, we have developed a generation of launch vehicles. We had our first satellite in 1975. From there, till today we have conceived and built 131 satellites of various types and capabilities," he said.

India and the US would jointly build an expensive and advanced earth-imaging satellite, which will be launched from the country, he said.

The progress that the country has made since Independence is "phenomenal and outstanding", the ISRO chief said.

"When the country attained Independence in 1947, 97.5 per cent of the population were below the poverty line, and the average life

expectancy of Indians was just 32 years. Today, it has gone up to an average of 72 years. There has been growth in every field," he said. In the education sector, the literacy rate was just 12 per cent in 1947, he said, adding that there were hardly 2,825 primary schools, and now the number has grown to 8.4 lakhs.

The ISRO chairman also said the country did not have any space programme in 1947, and the entire space initiative began in 1962.

Narayanan recalled, "1969 was a historic year as the Indian Space Research Organisation was formed in that year. We were 70 years behind advanced countries when we started our space programme...We didn't have any satellite technology."

He said the country needs growth in every factor, and agriculture plays a vital role in the growth of the nation.

"The degrees you received today are of immense national importance. You will play a pivotal role in realising the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047," he told the students. (PTI)

Over half of consumers do not pay energy bills in Tripura: Official



AGARTALA, May 12: More than half of a total of around 9 lakh consumers of the Tripura government-run power utility TSECL have not paid their electricity bills for several years, an official said on Monday.

Only 4,32,045 consumers, mostly from the urban areas, paid their electricity bills to the Tripura State Electricity Corporation (TSECL), the official said.

This trend has led to an accumulation of pending bills amounting to ₹ 475 crore till now.

In tribal areas, most consumers skip paying electricity bills despite repeated appeals. This resulted in the accumulation of pending bills, the official said.

"The state has 9, 27,838 consumers. Of them, only 4,32,045 consumers pay monthly energy bills, around 40 per cent. Off late, the realisation of electricity bills has increased to around 45 per cent," TSECL Managing Director, Biswajit Bose, told PTI.

According to him, the bill payment in urban areas, including Agartala, appears satisfactory, but

it seems disastrous in tribal dominated areas like Tulashikar, Hezamara, Mungiakami and Jatanbari.

"As of today, the amount of pending bills has stood at ₹ 475 crore in the state. We are taking all possible steps to increase the collection of bills. TSECL teams are visiting the consumers and requesting them to clear their pending bills at the earliest. In some cases, we have started disconnecting electricity connections," he said.

Asserting that the TSECL has also been working to take legal action against hooking lines, mostly concentrated in tribal localities.

"More than 10,000 offenders had resorted to hooking the main power lines. The connections were disconnected last year, and fines up to ₹ 3 crore were collected. We are trying to streamline the whole system," he said.

The state power utility company will arrange 372 MW power supply during the summer season - June, July and August, when the power consumption goes up in the northeastern state, Bose added. (PTI)

Students' union stages blockade for delayed road project in Nagaland's Phek



KOHHIMA, May 12: An organisation of students on Monday launched an indefinite blockade on NH-29 in Kikuma area in Nagaland's Phek district to protest against the delay in developing the stretch of the national highway connecting four districts with the state's capital Kohima.

The Chakhesang Students' Union (CSU) blocked the movement of vehicles of the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and its contractor engaged for the 29 km road project - Kohima-Jessami National Highway (Package 2).

The students' union launched the indefinite blockade because of the "failure" of NHIDCL and its executive agency to meet several demands, CSU president Phulo Sara told PTI here.

The CSU has demanded immediate steps to repair potholes, clear debris caused by landslides, ensure proper drainage and accelerate construction work.

"Despite all the representations submitted to the authorities concerned and a recent protest rally, both agencies failed to fulfil their commitments, resulting in immense inconvenience to commuters and the public. Both agencies have not responded to our demands, and therefore, CSU was compelled to launch the blockade," Sara told PTI.

With the monsoon season approaching, the worsening road condition poses a serious threat to commuters, the students' organisation said.

The highway, which connects Kohima to Jessami, is a vital route for the people of Kikuma, Phek, Meluri, and Kiphire districts. (PTI)

2nd quarterly NLA settles 219 cases in Nagaland

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, May 12: The second quarterly National Lok Adalat (NLA) 2025 conducted across Nagaland by district legal services authorities (DLSAs), under the aegis of Nagaland State Legal Services Authority (NSLSA), disposed of 219 cases with a settlement amount of ₹ 2,38,99,111.

Out of a total of 290 cases taken up for settlement, 192 were at pre-litigation stage and 27 cases were at the pending stage. The cases included mostly bank loan recovery, telephone bill, Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal (MACT) and other consumer and civil cases, a release detailing the district-wise settlement of cases and settlement amount said on Monday.

The second quarterly NLA 2025 was conducted across the districts in the state on May 10.



The NLA, also known as the 'people's court', is an alternative dispute resolution (ADR),

which is aimed at reducing court backlog, providing access to justice for marginalised communities, and ensuring that disputes are resolved in a timely and cost-effective manner.

In 2024, the National Legal Services Authority acknowledged the Nagaland SLSA for achieving the highest disposal percentage of pending cases in the first NLA 2024, held on March 9. The performance of Nagaland SLSA in the second and fourth NLA last year also showed the highest improvement in disposal percentage.

The Dimapur District Legal Services Authority took up 133 pre-litigation cases during the second quarterly NLA, out of which 93 disposed of. Besides, 22 pending trial cases were also disposed of. The total settlement amount was ₹ 1,25,65,900, the highest settlement amount in the state.

ENPO waits eagerly for Frontier Nagaland Territory



DIMAPUR, May 12: The Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) has stressed once again "for early solution and materialisation of the long cherished dream of the eastern Nagas" regarding the Frontier Nagaland Territory (FNT).

After "remitting its stance on Frontier Nagaland Territory (FNT) to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) through an official email" on April 28, 2025, the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) had submitted the same to the Government of Nagaland on May 1, 2025, a statement of the ENPO said. The same hard copy had been submitted to the Eastern Nagaland Legislators' Union (ENLU) members on May 5, 2025. The ENPO had also officially sent its stance through the official email of Supongmeren Jamir, MP (Lok Sabha) and S. Phangnon Konyak,

MP (Rajya Sabha) through her OSD on May 7, 2025, the ENPO also said.

The ENPO also "fervently appealed before the MHA, the State Government, the MPs of both the houses (Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha) to actively coordinate in paving the way forward plan for early solution and materialisation of the long cherished dream of the eastern Nagas". The ENPO also "out-rightly" asserted that both the State Government and all the Nagas tribes should understand that "what begets of FNT shall definitely be of a win-win situation for all". The ENPO also urged every Nagas tribe to prayerfully uphold the matter in prayer.

The ENPO, "while positively noting upon K.G. Kenye's statement where he had categorically uttered on a high-level understanding between State Government and

the ENPO on Frontier Nagaland Territory (FNT), out-rightly asserted that there is nothing that transpired/conspired between the ENPO and the MHA and the same will be an open book before the tripartite table".

The ENPO then said that no new draft on FNT had been formulated but had duly inserted its stance/comment under the relevant column and para as envisaged on the MoS draft and the State Government's Comments as follow up of the last tripartite talk.

The ENPO expressed optimism that both the MHA and the Government of Nagaland shall not deviate from the basic principle as envisaged in both the MoS draft and the State Government's comment. "On the contrary, the MHA must also ensure that the offered FNT must espouse utmost integrity that truly reflects the sincerity of the Government of India in letter and spirit on the offered FNT", it added.

On the contrary, the ENPO also said it "sees a positive stance" of the State Government to partner with the ENPO ensuring that the region is no longer subjugated under any political drama. The ENPO said the State Government must play a proactive role in facilitating/elevating the Eastern Nagas at par with the rest of the State as boldly asserted by "our Chief Minister of Nagaland" at several occasions. (NNN)

Govt begins process to hire 432 nursing staff to boost health services: CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, May 12: Chief Minister Manik Saha on Monday announced that the state government has initiated the process to recruit 332 nursing staff to strengthen the healthcare services, stating that nurses have to work continuously in the service of people and that nursing is a very important profession. He said that, in addition, the necessary allocation has been received from the Finance Department to recruit 100 more personnel in the nursing profession on a contractual basis.

"About 153 nursing staff have been recruited in 2024. The state government has initiated the process to recruit 332 nursing staff to strengthen healthcare, and the necessary allocation has been received from the Finance Department to recruit 100 more personnel in the nursing profession on a contractual basis," he said.

Saha made this statement at a program organized on the occasion of International Nurses Day at Rabindra Shatabarshiki Bhavan in

Agartala today. Saha, who is also the Health Minister of the state, said that International Nurses Day is celebrated all over the world on the birthday of the great woman Florence Nightingale.

He said, "We have to give importance to the health, safety, and well-being of those associated with nursing. And this time, this theme has been adopted to make the profession more attractive. Along with this, emphasis has also been placed on its economic importance. If quality care is enhanced through the nursing profession, a strong economy will also be possible. Nursing is an important profession. When a patient goes to the hospital, nurses provide primary care before the doctors arrive. That is, they are the front runners. Nurses are the trust of the dying." Saha added that from checking blood pressure on time to administering medicines and giving injections, nurses take care of the patients.

"Usually, the number of patients is higher than that of nursing staff. In this case, it is being assessed how

many nursing staff should be deployed compared to the number of patients. Those associated with nursing are working for the people. You have the good fortune to serve people. Many children from Tripura are now going abroad by joining the nursing profession. We have to earn people's recognition, respect, and admiration through relentless efforts and service. And that is possible through work. When patients return home after recovering, they always remember the doctors and nurses. Therefore, there is no room to underestimate this profession," he said. The Chief Minister further stated that in the financial year 2023-24, the Nursing Training Institute has been upgraded to Agartala Government Nursing College.

"Now all the facilities including BSc Nursing, BDS, MBBS have been developed in the state. Children from Tripura are now getting the opportunity to study various courses. The 40-seat ANM Nursing Institute in Udaipur has been upgraded to GNM," said Saha.

3 militants arrested in Manipur

IMPHAL, May 12: Security forces have arrested three militants of two proscribed outfits for their alleged involvement in extortion activities in Manipur, police said on Monday. One active cadre of the banned outfit Prepak was apprehended from Porompat DC Road in Imphal East district on Sunday, a senior officer said. The militant was involved in the extortion of money from various shops, government officials and establishments, he said. "Nine demand letters were recovered from his possession," the officer said. The police also arrested a member of the proscribed Kangleipak Communist Party (PWG) from Khurai in Imphal East district on Sunday. (PTI)

MY Bharat urges Tripura youth to join Civil Defence as volunteers

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, May 12: In a significant move to strengthen community-based emergency response mechanisms, MY Bharat—an autonomous body of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India—has urged the young citizens of Tripura to enrol as Civil Defence Volunteers. In a press release Bimal Patrick Shah, State Director, MY Bharat, Tripura, said that this outreach is aimed at mobilising the youth to take up pivotal roles in times of crisis, such as natural disasters, accidents, and other emergencies.

"The initiative seeks to build a robust cadre of trained and responsive volunteers who can assist the civil administration across various domains including rescue and evacuation, first aid, traffic management, crowd control, public safety, and rehabilitation efforts. In light of emerging security concerns and the growing frequency of disasters, MY Bharat emphasised the need for a resilient civilian force that can act swiftly and effectively at the grassroots level. The Civil Defence Volunteer programme not only instils a sense of civic duty but also equips youth with vital life-saving skills and hands-on training," he said in a press release.

He further informed that MY Bharat has called upon its vast network of youth volunteers and enthusiastic young citizens across the country to register through its official portal: <https://mybharat.gov.in>. Both existing volunteers and new entrants are encouraged to join this national cause.

"This is a clarion call to the youth of India to stand up for the nation. Join hands with MY Bharat and become the force that protects and serves during times of need," statement reads.

The campaign aligns with the broader vision of youth empowerment and nation-building, reinforcing the role of young Indians as proactive agents of change and resilience in society.

Hazarika's work has already achieved laboratory-scale validation

Norwegian Embassy selects NU scholar for fellowship grant

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, May 12: Nagaland University PhD scholar Dipankar Hazarika has been selected for the prestigious Energy Innovation Fellowship Grant by the Norwegian embassy in New Delhi for his research on battery technologies.

Hazarika's innovation could play a critical role in enabling flexible, wearable, and sustainable electronic devices and support India's goal for clean and safe energy storage technologies, a Nagaland University release said on Monday.

Hazarika is among the 13 innovators in the country to have been selected for the fellowship grant.

Hazarika, who is doing his research under the supervision of Dr Nurul Alam Choudhury, assistant professor, department of chemistry, Nagaland University, has been granted the fellowship to accelerate community innovations in battery energy storage in India, the release said.

Hazarika's work has already achieved laboratory-scale validation, and an Indian patent has been filed to protect the innovation.

He has already developed a lab-scale pro-



totype, which exhibited excellent physico-chemical and electrochemical performance, including high-rate capability, high areal capacitance and a remarkable cycle life of 51,500 cycles at 2 mAcm⁻² in an all-solid-state supercapacitor.

His research was recently published in the reputed Journal of Power Sources (a Q1 Journal with an Impact Factor of 8.1) in a research paper titled 'An ionically cross-linked chitosan

hydrogel membrane electrolyte for long-lived electrical double layer capacitors' (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpowsour.2024.236037>).

The research paper was co-authored by Hazarika, Duangailung Kamei, Nuphizo Shijoh, and Dr Nurul Alam Choudhury.

Thanking the Norwegian embassy and his university, Hazarika, who is currently doing his PhD research at the laboratory for polymer materials and renewable energy, department of chemistry, Nagaland University, said: "This fellowship will significantly strengthen my research by providing access to expert mentorship and opportunities for industry linkage."

He hoped that it would help translate his research into a product that contributes to sustainable energy solutions.

Hazarika added that they are going to conduct performance testing under real-world conditions and seek industry collaborations to scale up the product and take it to the market so that the country can benefit from this technology.

Nagaland University VC Prof. Jagadish K Patnaik congratulated the research scholar for his path-breaking work.

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E-Tender Notice No.: 07/N-2/APD/J.

Dated: 08-05-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work:

Tender No.: 03-AP-III-2025. Name of Work: Supply of single boulder minimum 35 kg to 55 kg each and unsecured shingle for recoupment of flood reserve stocks at different stations/locations of Alipurduar division. Tender Value: ₹1,59,53,877.11; Earnest Money: ₹2,29,800.00. E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 30-05-2025 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 30-05-2025. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website <http://www.irps.gov.in>

DRM (Works), Alipurduar Jn.

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Tender Notice No.: S. DEE/LMG/07 of 2025-26, dt. 08-05-2025. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: SN-1; Tender No.: EL/LM/24-25/45/R; Name of work: At Guwahati Sub Division Annual Maintenance of Diesel Generating Sets of different make and capacities for a period of 2 years. Tender Value: ₹ 43,57,352/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 87,200/-; SN-2; Tender No.: EL/LM/25-26/06; Name of work: Outsourcing of manpower for maintenance activities of 4 nos electrified tunnel between S. K. Para-Agartala (namely Longtarai Tunnel-Tunnel No. 03 Atharamura tunnel-Tunnel No. 04, Baramura tunnel-Tunnel No. 05) and Agartala-Sabroom section (Shibpur Tunnel-Tunnel No. 01) Under SSE/P/Agartala for 1095 days. Tender Value: ₹ 60,05,796.28/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 1,20,100/-; Date & time of closing of above all tenders at 11:00 hrs. on 30-05-2025 and opening at 11:30 hrs. on 30-05-2025. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.irps.gov.in.

Sr. DEE, Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

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Anushka to Virat Kohli on his Test retirement: You've earned every bit of this goodbye

NEW DELHI, May 12: Hours after Indian cricket star Virat Kohli announced his retirement from Test cricket, his wife and actor Anushka Sharma on Monday said it was a privilege to watch him evolve after every series in the format and come back a "little wiser and humbler".

Kohli, 36, on Monday announced his retirement from Test cricket ending the speculation about his future in the longest format of the sport. He turned up in 123 Tests for India, scoring 9,230 runs with 30 hundreds at an average of 46.85.

Sharma, 37, shared a heartfelt post on Instagram praising her husband.

"They'll talk about the records and the milestones – but I'll remember the tears you never showed, the battles no one saw, and the unwavering love you gave this format of the game."

"I know how much all this



took from you. After every Test series, you came back a little wiser, a little humbler and watching you evolve through it all has been a privilege," she captioned her picture with Kohli.

Kohli will only play in ODIs now, having already retired from T20 Internationals last year.

"Somehow, I always imagined you'd retire from international cricket in whites. But you've always followed your heart, and so I just want to say my love, you've earned every bit of this goodbye," the actor added in the post.

Kohli and Sharma tied the knot in 2017 and share two children – daughter Vamika (four) and 15-month-old son Akaay. (PTI)

TOVINO THOMAS-STARRER 'NARIVETTA' TO HIT BIG SCREEN ON MAY 23



NEW DELHI, May 12: "Narivetta", featuring Malayalam star Tovino Thomas, will release in theatres on May 23.

Thomas, known for films such as "Minnal Murali", "Anweshippin Kandethum", and "Virus", announced the news on his X handle on Sunday.

"#Narivetta in Cinemas from May 23," read the caption of his post.

Written by Abin Joseph, "Narivetta" is directed by Anuraj Manohar. The film also stars Suraj Venjaramoodu of "The Great Indian Kitchen" fame.

It is produced under the banner Indian Cinema Company and has music by Jakes Bejoy.

Thomas was last seen in a cameo in "Maranamass", which he also produced. (PTI)

'Nicole Kidman is a great actress', says Tom Cruise

LONDON, May 12: Hollywood star Tom Cruise says his ex-wife Nicole Kidman is a "great actress", which made him suggest her name for "Eyes Wide Shut".

Released in 1999, the film was directed by Stanley Kubrick and revolved around Cruise's character, Dr Bill Harford, who learns from his wife, Alice Harford (Kidman), that she contemplated having an affair the previous summer.

Cruise recalled meeting Kubrick back then. "I flew out to his house, and I landed in his backyard. I read the script the day before and we spent the day talking about it. I knew all of his films," he told Sight and Sound magazine.

"Then it was basically he and I getting to know each other. And when we were doing that, I suggested Nicole play the role (of Alice). Because, obviously, she's a great actress," he added.

The actor was so excited to make the film that he told the director,



"Whatever it's going to take (to make the movie), we're going to do this." Cruise, 62, and Kidman, 57, were married between 1990 and 2001. They adopted two children during their marriage, Isabella "Bella" Cruise, 32, and Connor Cruise, 30.

Kidman's latest work is "Babygirl". Cruise will next feature in "Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning", which is slated to release in theatres in India on May 17. (PTI)

Jackie Chan calls CGI stunts a 'double-edged sword', says sense of reality is missing

LOS ANGELES, May 12: Action icon Jackie Chan says Hollywood stunt work today doesn't feel as real as it used to be in his heyday as it depends heavily on computer-generated imagery.

Chan, known for doing stunts on his own, said the current situation is like a "double-edged sword" where actors get the opportunity to perform impossible stunts with the help of technology but the audience knows there's little risk involved. "In the old days, the only way to be there and jump; that's it. Today, with computers, actors can do anything, but there's always a sense of reality that you feel is missing."

"It's a double-edged sword. On one hand, actors become more and more capable of doing impossible stunts with the help of technology, and yet, on the other hand, the concept of danger and limit gets blurred and the audience is numb. But I'm not encouraging anybody to risk their lives to do the stunts like I did; it truly is too dangerous," the 71-year-old star told Haute Living magazine. Chan, whose credits include action movies such as "Drunken Master", "Police Story" and "Rush Hour", said he will continue to perform stunts on his own as it's a part of his identity.

"Of course, I always do my own stunts. It's who I am. That's not changing until the day I retire, which is never! And to be honest, when you've done it for 64 years straight, there's no physical preparation anymore. Everything is in your heart and soul; it is muscle memory," he added.

The veteran actor will next be seen in "Karate Kid: Legends" alongside Ralph Macchio and Ben Wang. The film, which is slated to release on May 30, will see Chan reprise his role from the 2010's "The Karate Kid" remake. (PTI)

Film celebrities hail Virat Kohli as batter announces Test retirement

NEW DELHI, May 12: Vicky Kaushal, Ranveer Singh, Farhan Akhtar, and Abhishek Banerjee were among those cinema stars who expressed gratitude to Virat Kohli for his incredible run in Test cricket after the star batter on Monday announced his retirement from the longest format.

The 36-year-old Kohli quit red ball cricket after scoring 9,230 runs from 123 matches with 30 hundreds at an average of 46.85.

Actor Anushka Sharma, who is married to Kohli, said the cricketer had "earned every bit of this goodbye". "They'll talk about the records and the milestones – but I'll remember the tears you never showed, the battles no one saw, and the unwavering love you gave this format of the game."

"I know how much all this took from you. After every Test series,

you came back a little wiser, a little humbler and watching you evolve through it all has been a privilege," Sharma wrote on Instagram.

Kaushal lauded Kohli for doing things in his own way and that way will truly be missed.

"Congratulations on an incredibly inspirational test career and thank you for the memories Champ! @virat.kohli," he wrote on his Instagram Stories.

Since making his debut in 2011, Kohli captained India to the world number one position in the format and fetched a historic series triumph in Australia in 2018-19. Kohli announced his retirement from Test cricket in an Instagram post on Monday.

"It's been 14 years since I first wore the baggy blue in Test cricket. Honestly, I never imag-

ined the journey this format would take me on. It's tested me, shaped me, and taught me lessons I'll carry for life... I'm walking away with a heart full of gratitude – for the game, for the people I shared the field with, and for every single person who made me feel seen along the way," he wrote.

The comments section of the batter's post was flooded with reactions from several fans, including actors Ranveer Singh, Farhan Akhtar, Aparshakti Khurana, Abhishek Banerjee, and Neha Dhupia. "One in a Billion! Go well, King!" Singh wrote.

"Congratulations on an incredible test career and thanks for all the great memories," said Akhtar. Khurana said he is happy to be born in an era "where we witnessed it inch by inch!" "Rabb

Charhdiyaan Kalaan ich rakhey! Always," he added.

"Thanks for making every Indian proud," wrote Banerjee.

Dhupia said Kohli's reign will "never end in our hearts".

Actor Suniel Shetty praised the batter, saying he didn't just play cricket but "lived it".

"You Honoured it, breathed fire, wore your heart on your sleeve and your passion like armour. The roar. The grit. The obsession. The Heart. Take a bow, champ. The red-ball rests, but your legacy races on. @imVkohli," Shetty wrote in an X post.

Actor Prakash Raj thanked Kohli for "all the inspiring moments".

Kohli will only play in ODIs now, having already retired from T20 Internationals last year. (PTI)

MAD RESPECT FOR AUTHORS, WON'T CALL MYSELF ONE YET: SONALI BENDRE



NEW DELHI, May 12: Actor Sonali Bendre, who recently released her second book "A Book of Books", says she has "mad respect" for authors and would not call herself one until she writes at least 20 of them.

Bendre, best known for films such as "Diljale", "Major Saab", "Sarfaroosh", "Zakhm", and "Hum Saath Saath Hain", said being a public figure gives her the "privilege" to write and engage in meaningful conversations though she still primarily views herself as an actor.

"I'll call myself an author only if I write 20 books, not before that. I have some mad respect for authors -- what they do, the way they write, the way an author can transport you somewhere, the way they make you think; only an author can do that. "So, I have really not thought of myself as an author in that sense. I have always looked at myself more as an actor, but it is a creative field. I am a creative person, and there are various ways through which you express your creativity," Bendre told PTI in an interview.

The actor's passion for books led her to launch 'Sonali's Book Club', a digital community that celebrates literature and meaningful conversations. She made debut as an author in 2015 with "The Modern Gurukul: My Experiment with Parenting". Her latest endeavour, "A Book of Books", is intended for everyone -- both avid readers and those less inclined -- and delves into the importance of reading, especially the value of starting young.

Replete with colourful illustrations by Rohina Thapar, it also suggests what to read, with recommendations for children, young adults and adults, across genres and for varied reading interests.

Bitten by the reading bug since childhood, the 50-year-old actor admits she would choose books over movies any day. She also feels that book-to-screen adaptations often fail to capture the true essence of the originals.

However, Bendre said that "Dune", the American epic space opera film franchise adapted from Frank Herbert's 1965 novels, has come close to doing justice to the original work. "I still stand by the fact that no movie can do justice to books, but this ('Dune') comes close," she explained.

That said, the actor has been actively searching for the right book for adaptation -- either for production or one in which she could play a character.

"I haven't found that book yet, but I am looking for it, and I am sure I will find it," she said, adding that in Bollywood, her "Hum Saath Saath Hain" co-star Saif Ali Khan is also a "voracious reader".

"It was good to exchange notes with Saif and have his recommendations in books". Bendre, who is married to producer Goldie Behl, took a break from work after she welcomed her son Ranveer in 2005 and later appeared as a judge on reality TV shows such as "India's Got Talent", "India's Best Dramebaaz" and TV series "Ajeeb Daastaan Hai Ye". She went on a seven-year hiatus in 2018 when she was diagnosed with cancer. During her recovery, Bendre credited reading -- especially a book on tennis icon Serena Williams that detailed her struggles, challenging pregnancies, and triumphant return to championship wins -- as a vital part of her healing journey. "She was such a role model. I thought, 'See what she has gone through, and she has come back to the physical fitness level of winning a championship'. Picking out stories like that, stories that encourage you to heal yourself, to try not just to get back to what you were, but to be better than what you were."

"I really took my illness as a journey that was helping me educate myself, helping me evolve as a person, and because I was looking at it in that sense, the kinds of books I was reading also changed," she added. (PTI)

Semifinal spot booked, India face Nepal with aim to top group in SAFF U19 C'ships



YUPIA (ARUNACHAL PRADESH), May 12: Having already booked a berth in the SAFF U19 Championship semifinals, India will aim to secure the top spot in Group B when they face Nepal here on Tuesday.

India had beaten Sri Lanka 8-0 in their campaign opener last week. On Sunday, Nepal thrashed Sri Lanka 5-0, a result which also guaranteed a semifinal spot for both India and the island nation.

The home team needs just a

draw on Tuesday to finish at the top in the group.

"Both teams won their first games by big margins. But we don't read too much into the scorelines. Every match is different, and Nepal have shown that they are a strong and competitive side," India head coach Bibiano Fernandes said.

"We've analysed their game and know they are well organised. For us, it's about sticking to our strengths, staying focused, and giving our best on the day," he added.

Fernandes also emphasised the importance of not getting carried away after a big victory.

"It's always important to stay grounded, especially after a win like that. The real test is to keep the same intensity and hunger against stronger teams. The message is clear — one match at a time, no complacency, and always respect the opponent. That's how we grow as a team."

The Nepal team has a mix of their U20 and U17 players from last year. They finished runners-

up in the SAFF U20 Championship and were semifinalists in the SAFF U17 Championship, after losing 2-4 to India.

Under Urjan Shrestha, who was in charge of the U20 team last year, Nepal recorded their second-biggest victory in a SAFF men's age-group tournament, mainly thanks to a solid second-half showing against Sri Lanka.

Shrestha's boys are now gearing up for a much tougher challenge in the shape of hosts India.

"It was difficult to break Sri Lanka down in the first half as they were defending with all 10 players behind the ball. But in the end, we did succeed, so we're happy about that," said Shrestha.

"We came to watch the India match. There's a big difference. We are already in the semi-final, but we will play a tough game against India. We will improve on our mistakes in the first game and hope to continue our journey here," the Nepal coach said. (PTI)

Ayush, Unnati aim to continue strong show at Thailand Open

BANGKOK, May 12: Young Indian shuttlers Ayush Shetty and Unnati Hooda will look to build on their recent impressive run, while Lakshya Sen will be eager to regain his rhythm during the Thailand Open Super 500 badminton tournament which gets underway here on Tuesday.

Ayush, 20, and 17-year-old Unnati had reached the semifinals of the Taipei Open Super 300 last week, but they will have to navigate the qualifying rounds to make it to the main draw here.

While Ayush will take on Finland's Joakim Oldorff in his opening qualifying match, Unnati faces Thailand's Thamonwan Nithittikrai in the women's singles qualifiers.

Sen, on the other hand, will open his campaign against Ireland's Nhat Nguyen in the main draw.

The former Commonwealth Games champion will be keen to test his fitness, having missed out on playing any matches at the Sudirman Cup due to an injury.

Priyanshu Rajawat, another rising talent, has struggled for consistency and will hope for a strong showing when he begins his campaign against Indonesia's Alwi Farhan.

In women's singles, Malvika Bansod -- a finalist at the 2022 Syed Modi International and the 2023 Hylo Open, both Super 300 events -- will face Turkey's Neslihan Yigit in her opening match in the main draw.

Former national champion

Anupama Upadhyaya, who beat England's Miu Lin Ngan in the Sudirman Cup, will have a tough task against Thailand's former world champion Ratchanok Intanon in her opening round.

Rakshita Ramraj will open against Singapore's Yeo Jia Min, while Aakarshi Kashyap will face Japan's Kaoru Sugiyama.

In men's singles, former world number one Kidambi Srikanth, currently ranked 82nd, will continue his comeback trail. He faces fellow Indian S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian -- a player he defeated last week in Taipei -- in the qualifiers.

Sathish Karunakaran and Tharun Manneppalli are also in the fray in the men's singles qualifiers.

In the women's qualifiers, Ira Sharma is the only other Indian in the fray, alongside Unnati.

Meanwhile, world No. 10 women's doubles pair Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand are set to return after missing the Sudirman Cup due to injuries. The duo, who broke into the top-10 last year, were forced to take a break due to a back injury to Gayatri and a shoulder issue to Treasa.

They will face the Malaysian pair of Ong Xin Yee and Carmen Ting in the opening round of the main draw.

In doubles, India will also have representation in the men's pair of Pruthvi Krishnamurthy Roy and Sai Pratheek K, and the women's duo of Kavipriya Selvam and Simran Singhi. (PTI)

Arsenal and Newcastle to meet in Premier League showdown as Champions League race intensifies

LONDON, May 12: Arsenal and Newcastle set up a Premier League showdown next weekend as the race for the remaining Champions League spots intensifies Sunday.

After a weekend of upsets and comebacks in the Premier League, the six-way battle to qualify for European club soccer's top competition looks set to go down to the wire.

With the top five qualifying for the Champions League next season, just six points separate second-placed Arsenal and seventh-placed Nottingham Forest with two rounds to go. And only two points separate Arsenal and Newcastle in third ahead of their penultimate league game at the Emirates Stadium next Sunday. Arsenal rallied from two goals down against champion Liverpool to draw 2-2 at Anfield on Sunday, and Newcastle beat Chelsea 2-0.

Manchester City is a point further back in fourth after being held 0-0 by last-placed Southampton on Saturday.

Forest's chances were hit by a 2-2 draw against relegated Leicester on Sunday that led to owner Evangelos Marinakis appearing to remonstrate with manager Nuno Espirito Santo on the field after the match.

Europa League finalists Manchester United and Tottenham maintained their woeful domestic form -- both losing 2-0 at home.

United was beaten by West Ham and Spurs lost to FA Cup finalist Crystal Palace.

Dumped out of the Champions League semifinals by Paris Saint-Germain earlier in the week, Arsenal's main focus now is ensuring a return.

But trailing 2-0 after just 21 minutes against Liverpool, it looked like another sobering day for Mikel Arteta's team, which was already on a run of just one win from its last five league games.

Now it's one in six, but Arsenal successfully avoided defeat after a second-half fightback through goals from Gabriel Martinelli and Mikel Merino, who was later sent off.

The Gunners paid the price for a lackluster start as they conceded twice in quick succession, with goals from Cody Gakpo and Luis Diaz. "What we did in the first half is nowhere near the level, so

to do it after is too late. We reacted, great, but the standards in those 20 minutes were unacceptable," Arteta said.

Six days after confirming that he'll leave Liverpool as a free agent, Trent Alexander-Arnold was given a hostile reception by some Liverpool fans when he was booed when coming on against Arsenal as a second-half substitute.

"I said to everyone that asked me that question (about the reception) that it is a privilege to live in Europe, where everybody can have his own opinion and everybody can express his own opinion," Liverpool manager Arne Slot said. "A few of them were not happy with him. I think all of them are not happy with him leaving the club. But a few of them showed it in a way that they booed him. And a few of them clapped."

Two points will guarantee Champions League soccer for Arsenal next season, but a third straight runner-up spot could be in doubt if it fails to beat Newcastle, which will have second place in its sights after victory against 10-man Chelsea at St. James' Park.

Sandro Tonali fired the home team ahead from close range in the second minute and Nicolas Jackson was sent off for Chelsea in the 35th, following a VAR review, for a foul on Sven Botman.

Chelsea pushed for an equalizer after the break, but Bruno Guimaraes' dipping shot from distance in the 90th killed off the visitors' hopes of a comeback.

"We still have two games to go and lots of twists and turns that could be around the corner," Howe said. "We have to drive forward, reflect on our next game and make sure we're ready for Arsenal because that is a very, very tough match."

Forest's rise from relegation fighter to Champions League contender has been one of the surprise stories of the season.

But it looks in danger of falling away in the final weeks of the season after being held at home by relegated Leicester.

While a point meant Forest will be playing European soccer of some description next term -- in the Europa League or Conference League if it misses out on the big one -- owner Marinakis didn't look to be in the mood to celebrate after the final whistle at the City Ground. (AP)

Sepp Straka wins Truist Championship; Jeeno Thitikul takes Mizuho Americas Open

FLOURTOWN (PENNSYLVANIA), May 12: Sepp Straka seized the lead with a par on the 16th hole and shot 2-under 68, outdueling Shane Lowry on Sunday in the final round of the Truist Championship at Philadelphia Cricket Club for his second victory of the season.

Lowry missed the green on the par-3 16th and failed to convert a 6-foot par putt to fall one shot behind. He also missed a 22-foot birdie chance on the 17. Trailing by one shot, he gunned his 28-foot birdie putt some 8 feet by the hole and three-putted for bogey on the 18th for a 70.

Straka rolled in his 3 1/2-foot par putt for a two-shot victory over Lowry and Justin Thomas (67). He finished at 16-under 264. Straka joined Rory McIlroy (three victories) as the only other multiple winner this year on the PGA Tour. He also won The American Express in January. McIlroy shot 68 and tied for seventh in his tune-up event before the Masters champion goes to the PGA Championship at Quail Hollow, a course where he has won four times.

Jeeno Thitikul of Thailand turned back a pair of challenges and played bogey-free over the final 27 holes at Liberty National, closing with a 3-under 69 for a four-shot victory over Celine Boutier in the Mizuho Americas Open.

Thitikul, who captured the Race to CME Globe and its \$4 million prize to end last season, won for the first time this year and the fifth time in her LPGA Tour career.

Nelly Korda is still trying to win for the first time this year. She was within one shot of Thitikul until driving into the hazard on the par-4 ninth hole and taking bogey. It was a downward spiral from there, as Korda played the back nine with two bogeys and no birdies and was never a factor the rest of the way, closing with a 73.

The final challenge came from Boutier, who was posed to catch the Thai player on the 15th hole until she three-putted from 10 feet and Thitikul made a sensational par save from the bunker. Boutier shot 72 and finished second. Ryan Fox of New Zealand chipped in from just outside 50 feet on the first playoff hole to win the Myrtle Beach Classic for his first PGA Tour title, sending him back to the PGA Championship. Fox closed with a 5-under 66 that looked like it might not be enough when Mackenzie Hughes came to the 18th hole with a one-shot lead. Hughes pulled his drive into the trees, had to pitch out and missed a 10-

foot par putt for a 67 that put him in a playoff at 15-under 269 with Fox and Harry Higgs, who missed a 25-foot birdie putt on the 18th with a chance to win for the first time. Higgs shot 68.

Going back to the 18th for the playoff, Hughes and Higgs found the fairway and each had decent looks at birdie. Fox went from the rough to the collar right of the green. He raised both arms when the chip dropped for birdie. Higgs and Hughes missed their birdie putts.

The 38-year-old Fox had won three times on the European tour, including the flagship BMW PGA Championship in 2023, and has climbed as high as No. 23 in the world. The PGA Championship was holding a spot in the field at Quail Hollow for the winner of the Myrtle Beach Classic.

Martin Couvra of France won his first European tour title when he rallied from four shots behind with a 7-under 64 for a two-shot victory in the Turkish Airlines Open. Couvra opened with four birdies in six holes, and then seized control with four birdies in a five-hole stretch early on the back nine. He finished at 17-under 267 to finish two shots ahead of Jorge Campillo of Spain and Haotong Li of China, who both shot 67.

India names 24-member team for European leg of women's Pro League hockey

NEW DELHI, May 12: India on Monday named a 24-member team for the European leg of the women's Pro League hockey in June with midfielder Salima Tete as the captain.

India will play twice each against Australia, Argentina, Belgium and China in London, Antwerp and Berlin from June 14 to 29.

India will begin their campaign against Australia on June 14.

Experienced forward Navneet Kaur will be Salima's deputy during the assignment.

The team includes goalkeepers Savita and Bichu Devi Khariabam.

Veteran Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam, Jyoti, Suman Devi Thoudam, Jyoti Singh, Ishika Chaudhary, and Jyoti Chhatrui will be in charge of the defensive line.

The midfield will be under the watchful eyes of Vaishnavi

Vitthal Phalke, Sujata Kujur, Manisha Chauhan, Neha, Salima, Lalremisiami, Sharmila Devi, Sunelita Toppo, and Mahima Tete.

The likes of Deepika, Navneet, Deepika Soreng, Baljeet Kaur, Rutaja Dadaso Pisal, Beauty Dugdang, and Sakshi Rana will be in charge of the forwardline.

The standby list includes goalkeeper Bansari Solanki and defender Ajmina Kujur.

Speaking on the squad selection, Indian women's hockey team chief coach Harendra Singh said, "We've gone with a balanced squad that blends experience with young talent. The European leg is a crucial phase of the Pro League, and we are expecting high-intensity matches against some of the best teams in the world."

"Every player selected has shown great commitment and readiness during our recent



camp and Australia tour.

"Also, the Pro League matches in Bhubaneswar showed us both our strengths and the areas where we need to sharpen up. We have taken those lessons seriously, and the group is hungry to raise our performance level. The European leg will be a great

test of our mental toughness and tactical discipline."

India's performance in the Bhubaneswar leg of the league was marked by both resilience and learning moments.

India registered two wins and two draws, accumulating nine points to be placed sixth in the standings. (PTI)

PGA Tour winner Ryan Fox comes from a family of champions in New Zealand

WELLINGTON, May 12: Ryan Fox, who broke through for his first PGA Tour win at the Myrtle Beach Classic on Sunday, comes from a line of sporting champions in his native New Zealand.

Fox's father and sometime caddy, Grant Fox, was a leading rugby player who played 46 times for New Zealand's All Blacks and is fourth on the career scoring list with 645 points.

Grant Fox was a member of the New Zealand team that won the first Rugby World Cup in 1987. He scored 126 points in that tournament, which is still a record for an individual at a World Cup.

Ryan Fox's maternal grandfather was Merv Wallace, a captain and later coach of the New Zealand cricket team. Wallace coached the team that achieved New Zealand's first Test match victory, over the West Indies in 1956.

Grant Fox has spoken about the experience of following Ryan's performances at a distance, often in the small hours of the morning in New Zealand because of time zone differences.

"If he's at the pointy end of the field and there's a chance he's going to get (television) coverage, we're up," Grant Fox said in a 2022 interview. "I'm getting older now and it's getting harder to recover from that. But there's live scoring and my wife follows it religiously. The phone's by the bed at night."

On Sunday, Ryan Fox was in the clubhouse at 15 under after a final-round 66 and got into a playoff after Mackenzie Hughes bogeyed the 18th. Fox chipped in for birdie on the first playoff hole to win and secure a spot in the PGA Championship.

Grant Fox said he was delighted to see his son, now 38, following his own sporting dream.

"All you want for your kids is for them to be happy and healthy and chasing their dream," Grant Fox said. "It doesn't matter how old they are you still want them to be doing that and Ryan's doing it. I love the fact that he's excelling in a sport different from mine."

Fox is the ninth New Zealander to win on the PGA Tour. (AP)

'King' Virat Kohli announces Test retirement; says it's not easy but feels right

NEW DELHI, May 12: India's most successful Test captain and the fulcrum of its batting for over a decade, Virat Kohli announced his retirement from the format on Monday, ending his passionate love affair with the five-day game which celebrated him as its saviour during a global T20 surge.

The 36-year-old Kohli, who admitted that it wasn't an easy call to make, turned up in 123 Tests for India, scoring 9230 runs with 30 hundreds and 31 half centuries at an average of 46.85.

He will now only be seen in ODIs, having already retired from T20 Internationals last year after having a significant role in India's T20 World Cup win in the Caribbean.

"I'm walking away with a heart full of gratitude - for the game, for the people I shared the field with, and for every single person who made me feel seen along the way," Kohli announced on his Instagram page, putting an end to incessant speculation about his future in the format that peaked after the tour of Australia earlier this year.

Since making his debut in 2011 as the nation's Test cap number 269, Kohli captained India to the world number one position in the format and fetched a historic series triumph in Australia in 2018-19.

Under his leadership, India won 40 of 68 Tests, making him the most successful overall, behind South African Graeme Smith, Ricky Ponting and Steve Waugh. He also logged 20 hundreds as captain, making it the highest by an Indian in that position.

"It's been 14 years since I first wore the baggy blue in Test cricket. Honestly, I never imagined the journey this format would take



me on. It's tested me, shaped me, and taught me lessons I'll carry for life," Kohli added.

The megastar's last Test assignment was a largely underwhelming tour of Australia in which he managed just one hundred. He ends his career well short of the 10,000 run mark, which was, at one stage, considered a formality. The right-hander nonetheless signs off as a giant of the format with seven double hundreds, the highest for an Indian and well ahead of the legendary quartet of Sunil Gavaskar (4), Sachin Tendulkar (6), Virender Sehwag (6) and Rahul Dravid (5).

At a time when T20 leagues became the most sought after and watched showpiece in

international cricket, Kohli's aura played a significant role in keeping fans hooked to Test cricket.

This was acknowledged by no less than Sir Viv Richards, with whom he was often compared for his style and aggression, that he dialled down considerably in the last few years. "There's something deeply personal about playing in whites. The quiet grind, the long days, the small moments that no one sees but that stay with you forever," Kohli wrote in his farewell note for the format.

"As I step away from this format, it's not easy — but it feels right. I've given it everything I had, and it's given me back so much

more than I could've hoped for. I'll always look back at my Test career with a smile," he added.

His retirement continues the exodus of Indian bigwigs from the Test arena. Ravichandran Ashwin (in December) and Rohit Sharma (last week) are the others to have called it quits in the format.

In ODIs, Kohli is not expected to wind up before 2027 but his Test departure will leave a huge void in the team that is on the hunt for a new captain in the format after Rohit's sudden retirement.

Kohli recently enjoyed a fairly decent outing during the Champions Trophy, smashing an unbeaten hundred against arch-foes Pakistan and scoring 84 crucial runs against Australia in the semifinals.

India won the trophy, adding another glorious chapter to his storied ODI career of 302 games in which he has amassed 14,181 runs, dotted with a jaw-dropping 51 hundreds, at an average of 57.88.

The BCCI lauded its biggest star of the past decade by declaring that his "legacy will continue forever."

"His contributions to #TeamIndia will forever be cherished!" the Board posted on 'X'.

From 2016 to 2018, Kohli enjoyed a golden run in Tests, averaging over 75 for two consecutive years and scoring 14 of his 30 hundreds in these three years.

His form dipped considerably in the past four years and he stepped down from captaincy in 2022 following a series defeat in South Africa. He later went on to say that the leadership role and the resultant spotlight affected him adversely and he quit to return to a "happy space" mentally. (PTI)

Rajput urges Kohli to stay, backs Bumrah to lead

NEW DELHI, May 12: Former India coach and manager Lalchand Rajput has urged Virat Kohli to play the upcoming Test series against England as he believes the national team cannot "afford to lose" his wealth of experience on such a demanding tour.

Uncertainty looms over 36-year-old Kohli's Test future following Rohit Sharma's red-ball retirement. Speculation is growing that the former skipper may follow Rohit out of the Test arena ahead of India's five-match Test series in England.

He stressed that Kohli's experience, and unmatched batting pedigree are irreplaceable.

"He is one of the greatest players India has produced. If you look at his record, I don't think anybody can come very near," Rajput told 'PTI Videos' in an interview.

The former India captain has 9,230 runs in 123 Tests at an average of 46.85, including 30 centuries. He is also India's most successful Test captain ever, having led the country to 40 wins out of 68 Tests.

"...I feel he should be playing in the England tour. His presence brings calm, authority, and a wealth of knowledge in these demanding conditions," he added.

While Shubman Gill has emerged as a frontrunner for Test captaincy, Rajput believes Jasprit Bumrah should be the preferred for now.

"Whenever Rohit wasn't there, Bumrah captained. Even in the World Test Championship final in

England, he led the team. With that experience, I would look at him as the captain for this tour," Rajput said.

"Shubman Gill is being prepared for future leadership. This is the ideal time to let him grow under Bumrah's leadership. Leading in England is not easy; it affects your batting and requires split-second decision-making," he exclaimed.

Adding to the complexity of the tour is the likely absence of seasoned pacer Mohammed Shami, and possibly even limitations on Bumrah's availability due to his well-documented fitness management. "If both Bumrah and Shami miss matches, it's a major dent," Rajput admitted.

"Bowling in England isn't just about pace -- it's about skill and discipline. We'll lose a wealth of experience if they aren't available." The departure of senior players creates lots of opportunities for younger players and Sai Sudharsan is one of them.

Rajput praised the youngster's temperament and domestic performances, suggesting he could slot into the top three.

"Test cricket is about temperament and scoring big hundreds. Sai (Sudarshan) has shown that in domestic cricket. I would like to see him bat at No.3, with Jaiswal and Gill opening," Rajput said.

"That way, he can handle the new ball if an early wicket falls...Coming straight from the IPL, how quickly he adapts to red-ball cricket and English conditions will be the key," he concluded. (PTI)

8th Hangpan Dada U-16 Football & Volleyball tourney begins

HT Correspondent

DAPORJO, May 12: The 8th edition of the Hangpan Dada Football & Volleyball Tournament (Under-16 category for boys and girls) began here in the Upper Subansiri district on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner of Upper Subansiri Tasso Gambo, kicked off the tournament at the Rijo Outdoor Mini Stadium, Daporijo.

Addressing the inaugural function, Gambo emphasised the importance of games and sports, and encouraged young, talented players to come forward. He stated that such initiatives are crucial for identifying and nurturing promising athletes for the betterment of their sports careers. He also urged the participants to maintain a good sporting spirit and to put forth their best efforts to achieve their goals, not only for themselves but also in the interest of the district and the state as a whole.

District Sports Officer J. Jeram Dubi delivered the welcome address. He mentioned that he is doing his best to adhere to the directives and guidelines of the government and assured that the selection of players will be based on performance in a free and fair manner.

Taw Ekke (DACO), Margo Hai (APO), and several other officers and officials were present at the inaugural function.

Agarkar and Co show spine and foresight in handling Ro-Ko Test retirements

NEW DELHI, May 12: Selecting the forever under scrutiny Indian cricket team can be a "thankless job" and in the recent past, panels have also been labelled "spineless" for not taking tough calls.

However, in a matter of one week, the Ajit Agarkar-led selection has changed that perception by playing a major role in the Test retirements of stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Needless to say, head coach Gautam Gambhir was kept in the loop.

Considering the start of a two-year World Test Championship cycle with the England series beginning June 20, the selectors had conveyed to Rohit of their decision to move on before accepting Kohli's wish to call time on his five-day career, providing another clear indication of their long-term vision for the team.

In a country where it becomes awkward to handle the retirements of legends like Kohli and Rohit, the selectors has shown the required foresight.

Dilip Vengsarkar, someone who understands the pressure of a selector's job rather well having been a chief selector

himself, said the Agarkar and Co deserve credit for professionally handling the Test retirements of the two Indian greats.

"Absolutely. Because selectors are the last people to get any credit for that matter," Vengsarkar told PTI when asked if the selectors should be praised for deftly dealing with Kohli and Rohit.

"Having said that, it is very difficult to compare selection panels. I wouldn't like to do that. Everybody has their own vision," said Vengsarkar, who both tracked Rohit and Kohli in their younger days as a chief selector.

By moving on from Kohli and Rohit, the selectors have taken a huge punt on the younger lot comprising Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant. Gill, who is set to prove himself in SENA countries, is set to be appointed captain with Pant being his likely deputy.

Though K L Rahul has led the Test side in the past, the selectors are more inclined towards Gill, who is eight years younger than the Karnataka batter.

"You have to think long term as a selector and that is why someone like Gill is

being preferred. One could not have made Jasprit Bumrah the full time captain with his lingering injury concerns, therefore, Gill becomes the automatic choice

"He has been around for a while. And now with Rohit and Kohli not there, it presents a massive opportunity for the talented bunch of youngsters," a BCCI official told PTI.

Both Rohit and Kohli had a tough time in Australia, more so the latter who had to drop himself in the final Test due to an extended lean patch. Rohit wanted to test himself in the initial part of the five match series in England but with significant risk of a Sydney like situation surfacing, the selectors took the wise call.

Kohli, on the other hand, was expected to overcome his outside the off stump demons in England after a difficult run Down Under but he has decided to walk into the sunset.

The Indian superstar had overcome the demons of England 2014 in the following series in the UK four years later but this time he was in a different phase of his career. (PTI)

Bound by a thread: Tendulkar recalls Kohli's special gesture on retirement day

NEW DELHI, May 12: He was the heir apparent when Sachin Tendulkar was in the twilight of his career and on Monday when Virat Kohli bid adieu to his storied Test run, the 'Master Blaster' recalled a thread that became a binding force between them.

It was 12 years ago when Tendulkar was playing his last Test in Mumbai when Kohli, then 24, already a world champion and in a nascent stage of his Test career, came up to his idol with a "thoughtful gesture".

"You offered to gift me a thread from your late father. It was something too personal for me to accept, but the gesture was heartwarming and has stayed with me ever since," Tendulkar remembered in a post on X while paying his tribute to the modern day great, who called it quits after 123 Tests and 9230 runs.

"While I may not have a thread to offer in return, please know that you carry my deepest admiration and very best wishes. Your true legacy, Virat, lies in inspiring countless young cricketers to pick up the sport," Tendulkar said.

Kohli lost his father as a teenager and has often talked about the void it created in his life.

Kohli has also never hidden his reverence for the Mumbaikar. He had carried Tendulkar on his shoulders during a victory lap after India won the 2011 World Cup.

This was after famously proclaiming that "Sachin Tendulkar carried the burden of the entire nation for 21 years, so it's time we carried him on our shoulders". (PTI)

35th Rajanikanta Memorial State and Regional Athletics Meet concludes

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, May 12: The 35th Rajanikanta Dev Sharma Memorial State and Regional Athletics Competition, organised by Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam, affiliated with Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan, which began on May 10, successfully concluded at Sankardev Shishu Niketan, Barpeta Road on Monday.

At the closing ceremony, organising Secretary Bidya Bharti Purvottar Kshetra, Dr. Pawan Tiwari, Regional Sports Head, Ranjit Kumar Saikia, and several key officials from the school's management committee distributed prizes among the winning students, Prasar Pramukh of Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam, Mukuteswar Goswami informed the press on Monday.

The top-performing athletes of

the competition have been selected to represent the region at the upcoming Vidya Bharati National Sports Meet. Guwahati division was awarded the Best Team title, Lakhimpur division was recognised for Best Discipline, and Sivasagar division received the award for Best March-Past.

In his valedictory address, Dr. Tiwari emphasised that students have a vital role to play in building a new India. He stated, "Physical education is one of the foundational pillars of a student's holistic development. Through sports, hidden talents can be nurtured, and we can bring pride and glory to our motherland." He encouraged all winners and participants to strive for even better performances in the future and extended his gratitude to all those involved in successfully organising the event.

Kohli follows Rohit into retirement: Can Next Gen stars emulate India's batting luminaries?

BENGALURU, May 12: Virat Kohli sounded almost desolate while talking about his struggles against Fidel Edwards during his debut Test against the West Indies in 2011. It was not the beginning an ambitious young man desired.

Instead of glory, there was anxiety and confusion. He ended that nearly 20 minutes of conversation at a Kingston restaurant with a plain yet powerful message: "Lekin mein chhorunga nahi (I will not leave it)".

He did not leave the fight, hitting peaks between 2014 and 2019 that not many modern day cricketers have climbed.

Runs and centuries flowed as the cricketing world marvelled at the transformation into a batting virtuoso who propelled India to some dizzying heights and memorable wins in Test cricket.

However, it's also a blueprint for some of the young batters who have been tasked to helm the Indian cricket in the post-Kohli and Rohit Sharma era.

Here's a detailed glance at a few of them:

Among the 'Next Generation' stars, none holds more significance than Shubman Gill, potentially India's premier batsman and Test skipper in the coming days.

Perhaps, it's a coincidence but Gill finds himself in the same space as Kohli when he was at 25 — with a middling Test record.

The Punjab man has played 32 Tests for 1893 runs at an average of 35.

But Gill will now go to England where he has a modest record — 88 runs from three Tests at an average of 14.66.

Can the Punjab man emulate his illustrious senior in turning around his fortunes at Old Blighty?

Even without James Anderson and Stuart Broad, England have a capable pace unit and some handy spinners, suiting the home conditions. Like Kohli, Gill will have to bring in that iron-hearted discipline into his batting along with developing the tendency to bat closer to his body to cover the swing.

Jaiswal is certain to open the innings in England and he has already done that job in the West Indies, South Africa, Australia and India. But the task will be different and tougher on his maiden trip to England.

Jaiswal showed his technique and patience while notching up big runs in Australia and the West Indies at an average in excess of 44 and 80. But as a batter who loves the ball coming

onto his bat, Jaiswal will face a sterner challenge in late swing in England.

He will have to check his booming drives and rasping cuts, focusing more on leaves and selecting the right occasion to attack.

It's not much of a technical change, but a mental shift and he can tear a page out of Kohli's playbook.

After a struggle in 2014, Kohli learned how to negate the late swing of Anderson and Broad in 2018, and he made 593 runs from five matches at an average of 59.

They can also refer to the clippings of Sanjay Bangar and Rahul Dravid negating the pronounced swing at Leeds against Andrew Caddick and Matthew Hoggard in 2002.

At 24, Jurel stands a good back-up option behind Rishabh Pant as the second wicket-keeper batter. He was impressive in the debut series against England but could not make much impact against Australia.

Jurel has the requisite guts and skill level to be a long-term servant in Test cricket. He showed his prowess both in attack and defence while making two fifties against Australia in an unofficial Test ahead of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy last year. (PTI)

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