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THE HILLS TIMES

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

Voice of the hills people

Vol .No. XXVI

Issue No. 150

RNI-ASSEN/2000/12862

DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2025

PAGES 12

PRICE ₹ 8

Modi visits crash site, meets injured

Ahmedabad plane crash toll touches 265 • Six bodies handed over to relatives

AHMEDABAD, June 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday visited the site of the Air India plane crash, in which 265 people lost their lives, and met the injured at the civil hospital in Ahmedabad.

A day after the deadly plane crash in the city, the bodies of six victims were handed over to their families after identification on Friday, police said.

In case of the other bodies, which are partially or fully charred, it will take around 72 hours to complete the exercise of matching their DNA samples, police said.

Modi arrived at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Airport in the morning and drove straight to the plane crash site, officials said.

He spent around 20 minutes inspecting the site, where the Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft (AI171) crashed into a complex of B J Medical College in the Meghani-



nagar area shortly after taking off on Thursday afternoon.

Civil Aviation Minister K. J. Somaiya and Gujarat Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi informed the prime minister about how the plane

crashed into the college hostel and mess. Modi later visited the city civil hospital, where he spoke to Vishwas Kumar Ramesh, the lone plane survivor of the tragedy and also met other persons injured in the accident.

The PM visited the C7 ward of the hospital, where 25 injured people are undergoing treatment, and interacted with the doctors.

Modi met state and civil aviation officers at the GujSail office near the Ahmedabad airport and was briefed on the tragedy.

The London-bound aircraft with 242 people on board, including former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, crashed moments after taking off. Of the 265 bodies brought to the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital for post-mortem on Thursday, six victims were identified so far as their faces were intact, police inspector Chirag Gosai said. He said DNA profiling is underway to ascertain the identities of others as their bodies are charred beyond recognition.

"We have handed over the six bodies to the relatives. We have started the process of collecting

DNA samples of relatives for profiling to identify bodies that are charred beyond recognition," Gosai said.

"Relatives of 215 deceased persons have approached us to give their samples," he said. The details are gathered from relatives arriving at the post-mortem room, and the kin are then sent to BJ Medical College to provide their DNA samples, he added.

"It will take nearly 72 hours to complete the exercise of matching the DNA samples. Once there is a match, bodies will be handed over to relatives from the post-mortem room," Gosai said.

A Boeing 787 Dreamliner (AI 171), with 242 people on board, including former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, crashed into a medical college complex in the Meghani-nagar area moments after taking (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Communal tensions escalate in Dhubri after recovery of cow head in front of mandir

CM authorises police to go for 'shoot at sight'



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 13: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday issued a stern warning amid escalating communal tensions in Dhubri district, authorising police to exercise a "shoot at sight" order if necessary to maintain peace and harmony in the region.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to the sensitive border district, Sarma said, "I have instructed the police to take the strictest possible action against anyone attempting to disrupt communal harmony in Dhubri. If the situation demands, shoot-at-sight orders will be enforced at night to deter miscreants and restore peace."

Detailing the recent disturbances, the Chief Minister said the law-and-order situation in Dhubri has been deteriorating since Bakri Eid. "The day after the festival, a severed cow head was found in front of a Hanuman temple. Although members of both communities met and the peace committee intervened, a similar act was re-

peated the next day, followed by stone-pelting incidents," he said.

Sarma further revealed that inflammatory posters calling for Dhubri's inclusion in Bangladesh were found pasted in the district, pointing to the involvement of a "communal group" working to incite unrest.

"We are adopting a zero-tolerance policy against such divisive elements," he asserted.

In response to the volatile situation, Sarma announced the deployment of additional central forces, including the Rapid Action Force (RAF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), to bolster local law enforcement.

He added that all pending criminal cases in the district will be expedited, and stringent action will be taken against offenders.

Commenting on emerging trends, the Chief Minister warned of a "new beef mafia" operating in the area. "Thousands of cattle were procured ahead of Eid, and investigations (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

ONGC well blowout in Assam Uncontrollable gas release continues

SIVASAGAR, June 13: Gas is flowing uncontrollably for the second day in a row on Friday from a crude well of energy major Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in Assam's Sivasagar district after a blowout, officials said.

While ONGC has begun a detailed probe to find out the reason for the blowout on Thursday, an official of the state-run Maharatna company told PTI that the process to control the well is progressing. "The situation remains the same as yesterday. The well has not caught fire yet and no one is injured in the incident. All emergency services have been pressed in the area," he added.

The incident took place at Well No RDS 147A of Rig No SKP 135 of Rudrasagar oil field of ONGC, located in Bhatipara. A private firm SK Petro Services was operating the well on behalf of the state-run Maharatna company.

ONGC in a statement said gushes of gas were observed from the well on Thursday during servicing operations at the unit.

"Upon detection, ONGC immediately activated standard safety protocols. The site was promptly secured, and an emergency response team led by the Asset Manager reached the location without delay... the situation is now fully under control," it added.

Reinforcement teams and technical specialists reached the spot to ensure safe and swift normalisation of the well operations, the statement said.

"ONGC is confident that the situation will be brought back to normal very soon. A detailed investigation has been initiated to

ascertain the root cause of the incident," it added.

The company further said that it remains committed to the highest standards of operational safety, environmental care and community well-being.

"Ensuring the safety of our personnel and the surrounding areas continues to be our utmost priority," it added. Issuing a second statement, ONGC later in the day said that efforts are underway to control the continuous gush of gas from the well.

"The Crisis Management Team of ONGC is on the job, laying out the necessary equipment for bringing the well under control. The required fluids for the subdue operation have been made ready and the next step in the operation is expected to start at daybreak tomorrow," it added.

In view of the presence of gas, entry to the location is being restricted to the concerned operational personnel only, the company said. Another official of ONGC said that it is an old crude well without production and a perforation job was going on for zone transfer at the time of blowout.

"It is a kind of servicing of the well. The production was supposed to start from a new zone after the perforation job. At the time of the incident, the logging perforation operation was going on. Suddenly gas started coming out in an uncontrolled manner immediately after the perforation, leading to the blowout," he added.

Currently, a well killing job is in progress, while some locals in the nearby areas have decided to leave their homes (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

2 NDA candidates elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha from Assam

GUWAHATI, June 13: Two NDA candidates - BJP's Kanad Purkayastha and Asom Gana Parishad's Birendra Prasad Baishya, have been elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Assam, an official said on Friday.

The opposition parties did not field any candidate for the Rajya Sabha elections, he said.

The last date for filing of nomination was Thursday.

"BJP's Kanad Purkayastha and Asom Gana Parishad's Birendra Prasad Baishya have been declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha as there is no opposition candidate," the official said.

The elections to the two Rajya Sabha seats were scheduled for



June 19.

Purkayastha will make his debut as a parliamentarian after winning the Rajya Sabha seat.

He is the son of veteran BJP leader and former union minister Kabindra Purkayastha and hails from Silchar. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India abstains in UNGA on draft resolution demanding immediate, permanent ceasefire in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS, June 13: India has abstained in the UN General Assembly from a vote on a draft resolution that demanded an "immediate, unconditional and permanent" ceasefire in Gaza.

The 193-member UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to adopt the resolution introduced by Spain that demanded an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire, to be respected by all parties and recalled its demand for the immediate, dignified and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups.

India was among the 19 nations that abstained, while 12 nations voted against the resolution, which got 149 votes in favour. Among the nations abstaining were Albania, Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Malawi, Panama, South Sudan and Togo.

In the explanation of vote on the resolution titled 'Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador

Parvathaneni Harish said the resolution comes against the backdrop of worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza.

India is deeply concerned at the deepening humanitarian crisis and condemns the loss of civilian lives, he said.

Harish said India has earlier abstained on resolutions on the Israel-Palestine issue. "Our vote today is in continuation of this in the belief that there is no other way to resolve conflicts but through dialogue and diplomacy. A joint effort should be directed towards bringing the two sides closer. For these reasons, we would abstain on this resolution."

The resolution demanded that Israel, the "occupying power", immediately end the blockade, open all border crossings and ensure that aid reaches the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Gaza Strip immediately and at scale, in line with its obligations under international law and humanitarian principles.

It demanded that the parties fully, unconditionally and without delay implement all the



provisions of Security Council resolution of June 2024, including an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages, the return of the remains of hostages who have been killed, the exchange of Palestinian prisoners, the return of Palestinian civilians to their homes and neighbourhoods in all areas of the Gaza (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam logs 7 new Covid cases: Govt

GUWAHATI, June 13: Seven people tested positive for COVID in Assam over the last 24 hours, official data released on Friday said.

According to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website, there are 20 active cases in the northeastern state, of which seven were detected since Thursday.

Since January, 13 people recovered from the virus in the state, it added. There are 7,131 active Covid cases in India, and one more death has been reported in the last 24 hours, the Ministry said.

Official sources have maintained that most cases are mild and managed under home care. (PTI)

5 arrested with drugs worth ₹ 6.5 cr

GUWAHATI, June 13: Five people were arrested with drugs worth ₹ 6.5 crore in Assam's Sribhumi district, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Acting on intelligence inputs, police seized 44,000 yaba tablets from the Vetebond area and arrested the five suspected peddlers, he said.

Sarma congratulated the police on the success of the operation. Necessary legal procedures have already been initiated, he said on Thursday night in a post on X.

Yaba, meaning 'crazy medicine' in Thai, is banned as it contains methamphetamine, a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act, and caffeine. (PTI)

Post-Sohra murder: M'laya to strengthen resident safety law

SHILLONG, June 13: In the wake of the sensational honeymoon murder in Sohra, the Meghalaya government on Friday decided to strengthen an existing legislation aimed at ensuring the safety of state residents and curbing the entry of criminal elements posing as tourists.

The move comes weeks after the gruesome murder of Indore-based businessman Raja Raghuvanshi, who was killed during a honeymoon trip to Sohra, in a plot orchestrated by his wife and her lover.

"The cabinet today decided to revisit the Meghalaya Resident Safety and Security Act (MRSSA), 2016, an existing state legislation, to add more teeth to this Act to minimise the possibility of criminal elements entering Meghalaya in the guise of tourists," Cabinet spokesperson Paul Lyngdoh said after the cabinet

meeting here. "The government will soon come up with a formal proposal to further strengthen the MRSSA," he said.

The 2016 Act was originally introduced to enhance the security of Meghalaya residents through the vetting of tenants and tourists.

It allows for identity verification through a tourism-specific app and has provisions similar to those under the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system, which the state has long been seeking from the Centre.

According to Lyngdoh, the Assembly had adopted a resolution demanding implementation of the Inner Line Permit in Meghalaya. "The matter is pending before the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. There were several queries from the Ministry which the state government had addressed," (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Arunachal Guv stresses need for innovative approaches to counter hostile threats

ITANAGAR, June 13: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik (Retd) on Friday called for heightened strategic readiness and deepened community engagement among troops, especially in light of the sensitive border dynamics in the region.

Speaking to personnel of the IV Corps at Tezpur in Assam, Parnaik, who is currently on a three-day tour of military establishments across the region, shared his extensive operational expertise, encouraging the troops to remain vigilant, resolute, and forward-thinking in the face of evolving security challenges.

The former Northern Army Commander, who once led the prestigious IV Corps himself, visited key military stations at Rangia, Missamari, Thakubari, and Tezpur, where he held meaningful interactions with

officers, jawans, and local military leadership.

His visit concluded with a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at the 4 Corps War Memorial on Friday, a Raj Bhavan communicate said.

Stressing the need for innovative approaches to counter hostile threats, Parnaik urged military personnel to think beyond traditional doctrines and adapt creatively to modern-day warfare scenarios.

He also emphasised perception management in forward areas, advocating for composed, clear communication in high-pressure environments.

Highlighting ground-level realities of border management, Parnaik advised troops to focus on refining their tactical skills, maintaining operational discipline, and upholding the spirit of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

We get irritated, yes — but we know they raised us with love: A youth 54% elders link ageing with negative feelings; loneliness most common emotion: Study

NEW DELHI, June 13: About 54 per cent of elders associate ageing with negative feelings, with loneliness (47 per cent) being the most common emotion, according to a survey report released on Friday.

A study by HelpAge India, titled 'Understanding Intergenerational Dynamics & Perceptions on Ageing', has revealed gaps between the emotional needs of India's elderly and the perceptions of the youth, despite frequent family interactions.

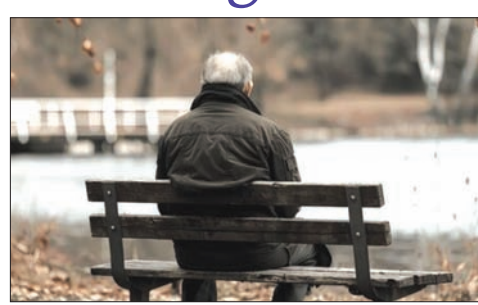
Conducted across 10 cities with 5,798 respondents (70 per cent youth aged 18-30, 30 per cent elders aged 60-plus), the report highlighted the challenges of loneliness, digital exclusion, and diminishing respect faced by urban elders, even as

youth express admiration for their wisdom.

The study, released ahead of the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, looked into urban middle and lower-middle-class households. It found that 54 per cent of elders associate ageing with negative feelings, with loneliness being the most prevalent emotion.

Youth, while an empathetic 56 per cent associate elders with being "lonely" and 51 per cent with "wise", they often underestimate the depth of this distress.

"We are told the plan, not asked. That hurts more than staying silent," said an elder from Madurai during focus group discussions, reflecting a common sentiment of being sidelined despite



living with family.

Daily interactions are common, with 66 per cent of elders and 61 per cent of youth reporting face-

to-face contact, primarily at home through shared meals (71 per cent of youth, 72 per cent of elders) and family conversations (87 per cent of youth, 84 per cent of elders).

However, emotional connection is often lacking. "Even if we live in the same house, we eat alone," an elder from Kanpur said.

Joint families and non-metro cities like Kanpur and Madurai foster stronger bonds, while metro cities like Mumbai and Delhi show less frequent interaction due to fast-paced lifestyles, the study found. A significant digital divide exacerbates this disconnect. While 71 per cent of elders use basic mobile phones, only 41 per cent own smartphones, and just 13 per cent engage with social media or

the internet. Two-thirds find digital tools "too confusing," and 51 per cent fear making errors. Youth, seen as primary digital teachers (54 per cent of children, 52 per cent of grandchildren), often grow frustrated, with 78 per cent believing elders are "disinterested" and 66 per cent thinking they "forget instructions."

Elders, however, cite youth's "lack of patience" (71 per cent) and "fast explanations" (49 per cent) as barriers.

"They won't teach us, just say 'we'll do it for you,'" an elder from Madurai noted. A strong majority of elders (73 per cent) believe digital technology has "definitely" or "to some extent" brought them closer to youth. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Stock markets tumble nearly 1 pc on rising geopolitical tensions, boiling crude oil prices

MUMBAI, June 13: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent on Friday as weak global markets and a spike in Brent crude oil prices after Israel attacked Iran's capital weighed on investor sentiment.

Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex dived 573.38 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 81,118.60. During the morning trade, it tanked 1,337.39 points or 1.63 per cent to 80,354.59.

As many as 2,469 stocks declined while 1,516 advanced and 137 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 169.60 points or 0.68 per cent to 24,718.60.

On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,070.39 points or 1.30 per cent, and the Nifty declined 284.45 points or 1.13 per cent.

Investors stayed away from riskier assets amid fears of a full-blown war between Israel and Iran and foreign fund outflows.

"Rising tensions in the Middle East after Israel attacked key Iranian areas drove investors to safe-haven assets like gold as riskier equities continued to face battering. Along with fresh concerns of the US likely to impose unilateral tariffs over next few weeks and



higher valuations of domestic equities resulted in consolidation of markets," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Among the Sensex firms, Adani Ports, ITC, State Bank of India, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank and UltraTech Cement were the major laggards.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Sun Pharma and Maruti were the gainers.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.32 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.30 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, services tumbled 2.06 per cent,

bankex (1.01 per cent), FMCG (0.94 per cent), financial services (0.85 per cent), metal (0.81 per cent) and power (0.75 per cent).

Healthcare index and realty were the only winners.

"Indian equity benchmarks experienced downward pressure, driven by weak global cues and foreign institutional outflows. Market sentiment was notably impacted by heightened geopolitical tensions following Israel's military strike on Iran, which significantly increased risk aversion among investors. Although India's CPI for May eased below the RBI's comfort threshold, offering a positive macro signal, this was largely overshadowed by external head-

winds.

"Brent crude prices climbed to near USD 76/barrel, their highest this year, raising fears of inflation if tensions persist," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 7.44 per cent to USD 74.52 a barrel.

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

European markets were quoting lower.

US markets ended in positive territory on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,831.42 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, a London-bound Air India plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed in Ahmedabad minutes after taking off from the airport on Thursday afternoon.

Air India has confirmed the death of 241 people in the plane crash. One passenger miraculously escaped.

On Thursday, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 823.16 points or 1 per cent to settle at 81,691.98. The Nifty tumbled 253.20 points or 1.01 per cent to 24,888.20. (PTI)

Garuda Aerospace sets up agri-drones indigenisation facility near Chennai

CHENNAI, June 13: Drone manufacturer Garuda Aerospace has established an Agri-Drone Indigenisation facility near the city to design and manufacture advanced Unmanned Aerial Systems among many others, a top official said on Friday.

The facility, a first-of-its-kind initiative, augments Garuda Aerospace's existing manufacturing unit located near Chennai and a major leap in advancing drone manufacturing. The products that would be produced at the facility include 7 subsystems (of Unmanned Aerial Systems), 33 parts among others. The production would be covered under the Centre's ambitious 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign.

Spread across 35,000 sq ft at Thalambur, near the city, the state-of-the-art facility was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Rural Development Kamlesh Paswan on Thursday.

Garuda Aerospace also launched 300 Centres of Excellence, established in association with various educational institutions and industry partners across the country. It would advance drone innovation, research and skill development.

A Train-the-Trainer programme aimed at enhancing skills on operating the drones was also unveiled on the occasion. "Our new Agri-Drone Indigenisation facility is equipped to manufacture over 33 different parts and 7 subsystems. This reinforces our commitment to self-reliance," Garuda Aerospace founder and CEO Agnishwar Jayaprakash said in a release here.

"All of these efforts and initiatives have powered Garuda Aerospace to become one of India's most valuable drone startups, with a fast-growing global footprint," he said. A live demonstration of Agri-Drones showcasing Garuda Aerospace's commitment to fostering self-reliance and innovation within the burgeoning drone ecosystem was also conducted on the occasion. (PTI)

Wommaniaas hosts 'The Bigg Pop Up' to promote women entrepreneurs in Guwahati

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 13: Wommaniaas, a women-centric organisation focused on empowering domestic working women, has launched a two-day entrepreneurial showcase titled "The Bigg Pop Up" at Roodraksh Mall in Bhangagarh.

The event commenced on Friday with a ceremonial lamp-lighting in front of Lord Ganesha by prominent guests Payal Chaddha, Ritu Banka, Alaknanda Pompi Das, Siddharth-Neha Garodia, and Sanjay Chhabra.

According to an official release, the event aims to promote and support women entrepreneurs by providing

them with a platform to exhibit their products.

Founder Divya Siotia stated that the initiative is designed to highlight the talents of local women entrepreneurs, while co-founder Nupur Agarwala noted the enthusiastic participation from women and girls on the opening day.

City head Sweetie Agarwal informed that the two-day event will conclude on Saturday, crediting the success of the pop-up to the collective effort of Wommaniaas members.

The organisers have invited the public to visit and support the women-led businesses at "The Bigg Pop Up."

Stable Money raises ₹173 crore in Series B funding led by Nilekani's Fundamentum Partnership

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 13: Stable Money — India's first digital platform for booking fixed deposits — has raised ₹173 crore in a Series B funding round led by Fundamentum Partnership, co-founded by Infosys co-founder and Aadhaar architect Nandan Nilekani.

Other participants in the round included Aditya Birla Ventures and existing investors Z47, RTP Global, and Lightspeed.

The fresh funding comes just ten months after the company's Series A round, underscoring strong investor confidence and sustained growth momentum.

Founded in 2022, Stable Money allows users to invest in fixed-income products—such as fixed deposits with interest rates up to 9.1%, secured credit cards backed by FDs, and SEBI-regulated Stable Bonds—entirely online.

The platform enables users to

compare interest rates across 200 banks, book FDs in under three minutes, access a 7-day trial deposit, and make instant withdrawals without the need to open a savings account.

The platform has so far on-boarded over 20 lakh users, with assets under management crossing ₹3,000 crore.

In Assam alone, more than 41,000 users have adopted the platform for stable and predictable returns.

With fixed deposits being the most widely used financial product in India—over 23 crore individuals currently hold FDs—Stable Money aims to digitise and optimise what remains a largely offline ecosystem.

According to RBI data, Assam alone has over 38 lakh fixed deposits amounting to more than ₹1 lakh crore.

However, 94% of FDs in India still earn less than 8% interest,

highlighting a significant gap in access to higher-yielding options.

To address this, Stable Money has partnered with several small finance banks, NBFCs, and scheduled commercial banks offering among the highest FD interest rates in the country.

Deposits booked through the platform come with insurance cover of up to ₹5 lakh per user per bank under the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India.

Through Stable Bonds, operated by Stable Broking Private Limited, investors can also invest in bonds from issuers such as Adani, Muthoot, and IIFL with a minimum investment of ₹1,000, offering returns of up to 12%.

The company stated that its digital approach aims to make fixed-income investing more accessible, transparent and efficient for millions across India.

India's forex reserves jump USD 5.17 bn to USD 696.65 bn

MUMBAI, June 13: India's forex reserves increased by USD 5.17 billion to USD 696.65 billion for the week ended June 6, the RBI said on Friday.

The overall reserves had dropped by USD 1.237 billion to USD 691.485 billion for the week ended May 30. Forex reserves had touched an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September 2024.

For the week ended June 6, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, rose by USD 3.47

billion to USD 587.68 billion, the data released on Friday showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The gold reserves were up by USD 1.58 billion to USD 85.88 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) also rose by USD 102 million to USD 18.67 billion, the apex bank said. (PTI)

Gold rallies ₹ 2,200 to ₹ 1.01 lakh/10 g as tensions in Middle East escalate

NEW DELHI, June 13: Rising for the third consecutive day, gold prices on Friday surged ₹ 2,200 to trade near a record high of ₹ 1,01,540 per 10 grams in the national capital amid heightened tensions following Israel's military strike on Iran, which drove investors to the safe-haven asset.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity rallied by ₹ 1,900 to ₹ 1,00,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). On April 22, the yellow metal had climbed ₹ 1,800 to hit a lifetime high of ₹ 1,01,600 per 10 grams.

In addition, silver prices jumped by ₹ 1,100 to revisit the all-time high of ₹ 1,08,100 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday.

The metal rose by ₹ 1,000 to hit a lifetime high of ₹ 1,08,100 per kg on Monday.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the most-traded August delivery contracts of the precious metal zoomed ₹ 2,011 to hit a record high of ₹ 1,00,403 per 10 grams in the morning trade.

"Gold prices touched a new high and scaled past the ₹ 1 lakh-mark per 10 gram while in the international markets, the bullion soared past USD 3,440 per ounce as investors flocked to safe-haven assets amid mounting global instability," Rahul Kalantri, Vice President of Commodities at Mehta Equities, said.

Later, the yellow metal trimmed its early gains and was trading at ₹ 99,906 per 10 grams. (PTI)

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Modi visits crash site, meets injured

off from the Ahmedabad airport. Bhumi Chauhan, a UK-based woman visiting India, thanked God and her stars for missing the ill-fated Air India plane as she got stuck in heavy traffic and reached the airport late.

Chauhan said she missed boarding the plane by just 10 minutes. "I am shivering after I learnt about the crash. I left the airport at 1.30 pm as I missed the flight due to traffic. I thank God," said Chauhan, who was in India for vacation. At least nine crew members on board, including both the pilots, hailed from Maharashtra, an official said.

He said the aircraft's pilot, Captain Sumeet Pushkaraj Sabharwal (56), was a resident of Jal Vayu Vihar in the Powai area of Mumbai and lived with his elderly parents. The co-pilot of the flight, Clive Kunder, was a resident of the western suburbs of Mumbai, as per his social media account. Cabin crew member Deepak Pathak lived in Badlapur in neighbouring Thane district. Pathak's sister had earlier said he spoke to his mother before leaving for London. He had been working with Air India for 11 years, she said.

Another crew member, Maithili Patil (23), was a resident of Nhava village in Navi Mumbai. Patil joined Air India two years ago, and her father, Moreswar Patil, is a labour contractor with ONGC.

Patil had spoken to her father before her flight to London and promised to call him once she reached the city, a former sarpanch of Nhava said. Aparna Mahadik (43), another crew member, was a resident of Goregaon in the western suburbs, and her husband also works with Air India as a crew member. She was a relative of NCP leader Sunil Tatkar.

Roshni Rajendra Songhare and Saineeta Chakravarti, both crew members, hailed from Dombivli and Juhu Koliwada, respectively. Songhare was also a travel influencer with more than 54,000 followers on Instagram.

The victims also included Mahadev Pawar (68) and his wife Asha (60), who hailed from Hatid village in Sangola of Maharashtra's Solapur district. The Pawars had left Sangola and settled in Gujarat 15 years ago, and they were heading to London to visit their son. One of the passengers, Yasha Kamdar Modha (32), was the daughter of Nagpur businessman Manish Kamdar. She was travelling to London with her son Rudra and mother-in-law Rakshaben, and all three perished in the crash. (PTI)

Two NDA candidates elected

Kanad Purkayastha is now the BJP's state unit secretary. Baishya, the veteran AGP leader and former union minister, will be a member of the Upper House of Parliament for the third time and has also served a term in the Lok Sabha.

Elections to two Rajya Sabha seats in Assam were necessitated with the terms of Baishya and BJP's Ranjan Das ending on June 14. Assam has seven seats in the Rajya Sabha, with four held by the BJP, and one each by its allies AGP and UPPL. One seat is represented by an independent MP. (PTI)

CM authorises police to go

are underway. The perpetrators will be brought to justice," he said. Sarma also hinted at geopolitical influences behind the unrest, citing recent political developments in Assam and Bangladesh.

"A particular section has become hyperactive both online and on the ground, orchestrating deliberate provocations—like the act of throwing beef inside a temple—to create a negative atmosphere," he alleged. The Chief Minister reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to upholding law and order in Dhubri and thwarting any attempts to destabilise communal harmony in the state.

Uncontrollable gas release

temporarily fearing a blast from the blowout site, the official said. This ONGC incident reminded people of the worst industrial disaster of the Northeast in 2020, when an OIL well blowout took away the lives of three employees of the PSU major and injured several others.

The well no 5 at Baghjan in Tinsukia district spewed gas uncontrollably for 173 days since May 27 and it caught fire on June 9, 2020. In a multi-agency effort, the damaged gas well at Baghjan in Assam was 'killed' and the blaze was fully doused on November 15, followed by abandoning of the well on December 3 in 2020 after completing all steps to control it.

India abstains in UNGA on

Strip and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip. Harish stressed that India has always been on the side of peace and humanity and has repeatedly called for the protection of civilians and the upholding of humanitarian obligations as well as for the safe, sustained and timely supply of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. He underscored India's abiding commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, saying the country firmly believes that this is the only way forward. "Continuing accusations and argumentation hinder the path to peace," he said, adding that India has always supported a negotiated two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine issue, leading to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine, living within secure and recognised borders side by side in peace with Israel.

"For this, we need to work towards creating conditions for the early resumption of direct peace negotiations. We hope this august Assembly will send a clear message to expand the prospect for dialogue and diplomacy towards the restoration of peace and bringing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza to an end," he said.

India has always provided humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza, both bilaterally and through the United Nations. "We also believe that the release of remaining hostages and a ceasefire are important to ameliorate the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Our collective voice should echo this," he said.

The UNGA vote came after the 15-nation Security Council failed to adopt a similar resolution last week after the sole veto by permanent member the United States. (PTI)

Post-Sohra murder: M'laya

he said, adding that the Union Ministry had expressed concern since Meghalaya is a transit state to other parts of the North East. The Cabinet minister also informed that the MRSSA is already a very effective legislation, which will need a little bit of "upscale" as of now. The urgency to revisit the Act was triggered by the case involving Sonam, the wife of murdered businessman Raja.

She had allegedly conspired to kill her husband along with her lover and his friends, and entered Meghalaya under the guise of a tourist. According to Lyngdoh, the Cabinet placed on record its gratitude to the entire police department for cracking this case in record time and arresting all the accused, saving the state from a "bad name". (PTI)

Arunachal Guv stresses need

service and honour that defines the Indian Army. "Staying one step ahead of adversaries is not just a goal but a necessity," he said. The governor underscored the strategic importance of building strong bonds with communities living in remote and border areas. "The people in these regions are our extended eyes and ears. A relationship of mutual trust and cooperation is vital for national security," he said.

The governor urged troops to actively engage with local populations, especially in culturally sensitive zones, and work hand-in-hand with civil administrations for the success of the Vibrant Villages Programme, a national initiative to bring development to India's most remote corners.

Citing visible improvements in infrastructure, livelihoods, and basic services, he remarked, "When development reaches the doorstep of our border communities, it strengthens the frontiers of our nation." Appreciating the Army's Sadbhavana (Goodwill) initiatives, the governor lauded efforts in promoting education, healthcare, and community development. He encouraged personnel to motivate local youth to join the Indian Armed Forces, saying that inspiring the next generation of soldiers begins with role models in uniform. (PTI)

54% elders link ageing with

Youth often under-recognise their role in routine financial tasks like ATM withdrawals (55 per cent of elders vs 23 per cent of youth), the study said. Yet, emotional care lags, with only 42 per cent of elders expecting youths to listen to their concerns, compared to 48 per cent of youths who believe they should.

Both generations share fears of loneliness (68 per cent of elders, 69 per cent of youth), poor health (61 per cent of elders, 67 per cent of youth), and financial insecurity (58 per cent of elders, 62 per cent of youth).

While 88 per cent of youth and 83 per cent of elders aspire to live with family in old age, youth are more open to formal care options like paid caregivers (28 per cent vs 18 per cent elders) and old age homes (30 per cent vs 19 per cent elders). "I want to build a bank balance, live alone, no emotional drama," a young man from Kanpur said. The report called for urgent action to bridge these gaps. Recommendations include "ageing sensitisation" curricula in schools to foster empathy, "digital buddy" programmes pairing youth with elders for tech training, and community-based elder support centres offering emotional counselling. "Wisdom Exchange" initiatives, where elders share traditional skills and youth teach modern tools, could strengthen bonds.

"Young adults, especially those aged 18–24, share strong emotional bonds with their grandparents, particularly in multigenerational households. Interestingly, youth living apart often hold more positive perceptions of ageing, showing that distance doesn't always mean disconnect.

"Despite lifestyle differences and digital immersion, youth and elders largely agree on the family's central role in elder care. That's the complexity to collectively address — by strengthening the positives and consciously addressing the gaps," said Anupama Datta, Policy Research & Advocacy, HelpAge India.

With India's elderly population projected to reach 19 per cent by 2050, the study underscored the need for empathy, patience, and inclusive policies to ensure elders feel valued in an urbanising nation.

The younger people's willingness to volunteer (75 per cent) offers hope, as a Mumbai youth noted, "We get irritated, yes. But we know they raised us with love." (PTI)

Middle East tensions bring down stocks of crude oil-sensitive firms; aviation companies

NEW DELHI, June 13: Shares of crude oil sensitive sectors -- oil marketing companies, aviation, paints, adhesives and tyres -- declined on Friday following a spike in global oil benchmark Brent crude prices amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

The stock of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd fell by 1.90 per cent, Indian Oil Corporation dropped 1.78 per cent and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd declined 1.41 per cent on the BSE.

In intra-day trade, BPCL tanked 6.11 per cent, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd tumbled 5.34 per cent and Indian Oil Corporation dropped 3.91 per cent.

Shares of InterGlobe Aviation edged lower by 3.71 per cent and those of SpiceJet dipped 1.95 per cent.

During the day, SpiceJet fell 5.64 per cent and InterGlobe Aviation dropped 5.62 per cent.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 8.39 per cent to



USD 75.20 a barrel.

"Geopolitical tensions are heating up, and it's impacting the oil market! Israel's airstrikes on Iran have sparked fears of supply disruptions, causing crude oil prices to surge. The worry is that the situation could escalate into a full-blown regional crisis, which would have significant implications for global oil supplies," Navneet Damani, Group Senior VP, Head

Commodities Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. Among paints stocks, Indigo Paints went lower by 2.63 per cent, Berger Paints dipped 0.59 per cent and Asian Paints declined 0.14 per cent. Shares of Ceat slipped 1.35 per cent and Apollo Tyres edged lower by 1.13 per cent.

"The economic consequences of Israeli strike can be profound if the attack and counterattack by Iran

lingers long. Brent crude prices have flared up around 12 per cent to USD 78. The impact on market will depend on how long the conflict lingers.

"In the near-term the market will be in a risk-off mode. Sectors that use oil derivatives as inputs like aviation, paints, adhesives and tyres will be hit hard. Oil producers like ONGC and Oil India will remain resilient," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent on Friday as weak global markets and a spike in Brent crude oil prices after Israel attacked Iran's capital weighed on investor sentiment. "Crude oil futures surged over 10 per cent to USD 76 per barrel, the highest in two months, as escalating tensions between Israel and Iran sparked fears of severe supply disruptions," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities, Mehta Equities Ltd, said. (PTI)

Sepoy Sunilal Muchahary laid to rest with full military honours



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, June 13: Sepoy Sunilal Muchahary of The Madras Regiment, who lost his life in a catastrophic landslide while on active duty in the high-altitude operational zone of Chatten, North Sikkim, was laid to rest on Thursday with full military honours at his native village in Assam's Chirang district.

Born on May 20, 1990, in Pub Makra village, Bijni Tehsil, Sepoy Sunilal was inducted into the Indian Army on June 24, 2012, and served the nation with distinction for nearly 13 years. Known for his quiet professionalism, outstanding marksmanship, and unwavering sense of duty, he was also a gifted sportsman, bringing pride to his battalion in various competitive events.

The landslide that claimed his life triggered a large-scale search and recovery operation by the Indian Army, which lasted nine days. Specialized teams braved extreme conditions, using advanced radar systems and engineering support to locate and retrieve his mortal remains—an effort that underscored the camaraderie and resolve of the forces.

His mortal remains were transported with military precision from Sikkim to his native village, where a solemn and dignified cremation was held in the presence of civil and military officials, grieving villagers, and family members. The ceremony bore testimony to the nation's gratitude for his service and sacrifice.

"The nation lost a dedicated soldier. His sacrifice and service will always be remembered," said a senior district official from Chirang, reflecting the collective sorrow and pride felt by the local community and the nation at large.

Sepoy Sunilal Muchahary's untimely demise serves as a solemn reminder of the perils our soldiers face daily, even in times of peace. His courage and selflessness will remain etched in the annals of military valour, representing the finest traditions of the Indian Army and the enduring spirit of "Service Before Self."

Jirim Bazaar land dispute deepens amid claims of mismanagement

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, June 13: A fresh controversy has erupted in Jirim Weekly Bazaar, West Karbi Anglong, after former Committee members and local settlers countered recent allegations of encroachment on over 10 bighas of market land made by the current Bazaar Management Committee based in Hawaipur.

Addressing a press conference at Jirim village, Ajay Das, Cashier of the former Bazaar Committee, dismissed the encroachment claims, asserting that no land dispute exists and that the contention arose from the current Committee's unilateral decision to construct a market office without consulting existing stakeholders.

Das stated that the earlier Committee, formed in January this year with 13 members, had resolved to identify an appropriate vacant plot for building the Bazaar Committee office—either adjacent to the temple or within the market itself. "We had agreed to discuss with the respective landowners, and if needed, approach the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) for further guidance," he said. However, Das alleged that the Committee was later altered without public consensus, and new members were introduced, allegedly from outside the local community.

The former members expressed dismay that the new Committee, led by President Bronson Kramsa, had moved ahead to claim and occupy market land without proper verification. Das criticized Kramsa's declaration of certain settlers as "encroachers," stressing,

Manxho celebrates 5 years of revolutionising Northeast cuisine from Dibrugarh



HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, June 13: In the heart of Assam's tea country, a culinary revolution has been quietly taking shape. Born out of passion and cultural pride, Manxho—a brand founded by three childhood friends from the remote village of Khowang in Dibrugarh—this week marks its fifth year of bringing the smoky, earthy flavours of traditional Assamese meats to dining tables across India.

Launched in 2020 by Jitu Bora, Diganta Saikia, and Vardhan Saikia, Manxho began as a humble initiative to preserve their ancestral recipes and food traditions. What started in a small kitchen with locally sourced meat and firewood has today become a nationally recognized food enterprise, delivering ready-to-eat, shelf-stable smoked meat products to customers from Bangalore to Ladakh.

"Every Assamese family has a connection to smoked meats. But

these flavours were locked in our kitchens, never reaching beyond our region," said Jitu Bora, recalling the early days of their journey. "We wanted to change that narrative—without compromising authenticity."

The trio's relentless commitment to tradition and innovation paid off in 2022, when they were awarded the prestigious Son of the Soil Award by Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. This accolade further validated their vision and propelled them toward scaling operations. With pioneering food processing techniques, they developed India's first commercially viable, non-refrigerated smoked meat line—ideal for travel, long-term storage, and modern lifestyles.

"One of our proudest moments," said Bora, "was hearing from an Assamese student in Bengaluru who felt like he was home again, just by adding hot water to our smoked pork."

Manxho's success lies in its unique ability to blend age-old tribal wisdom with contemporary food science. While the meats are still smoked using traditional wood like hilikha, tita phool, and bonsum, the process now meets stringent food safety and hygiene norms. The brand not only ensures product integrity but also supports a grassroots supply chain—working directly with local farmers and meat processors, many of whom had never previously engaged with formal markets.

"We're building something much bigger than a business," said Vardhan Saikia. "Each packet of meat tells the story of our land, our culture, and the people who still live by its rhythms."

As Manxho celebrates its fifth anniversary on June 14, it is poised for its next phase of growth. The company is expanding its digital footprint, ramping up production capabilities, and entering retail chains and food delivery platforms. Discussions are underway with major supermarket brands, and plans for exports to select international markets are on the horizon.

"This is just the beginning," said Diganta Saikia. "Our dream is to see Northeastern flavours take their rightful place in Indian cuisine—on par with butter chicken or biryani."

From a kitchen in Dibrugarh to plates across the nation, Manxho stands as a shining example of how cultural heritage, entrepreneurial vision, and community-driven values can combine to create a truly transformative brand—one smoky bite at a time.

Darrang College signs MoU with Edupur Foundation to boost student employability

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, June 13: In a landmark step towards augmenting career readiness among students, Darrang College (Autonomous), Tezpur, signed a special Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Edupur Foundation on Friday. The agreement marks a strategic collaboration focused on enhancing student placement services, career counseling, and professional training within the college.

The MoU signing ceremony was held on the college campus in the presence of distinguished dignitaries. Among those present were Dr. Palashmoni Saikia, Principal of Darrang College; Amit Raj Konwar, Director of Edupur Foundation; Sweta Mahanta, IQAC Coordinator of the college; and Subhasish Ghosh, Project Head at Edupur Foundation, along with other faculty members and institutional representatives.

The collaboration is designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world employment scenarios. Through this partnership, Edupur Foundation will extend its expertise in employment services and skill-based training to students across multiple disciplines, offering struc-

tured, industry-aligned programs aimed at improving their employability quotient.

Dr. Palashmoni Saikia, while addressing the gathering, stated, "This MoU will open new pathways for our students and equip them with the necessary skills and exposure needed in the professional world." He emphasized the college's commitment to holistic student development and expressed confidence in the partnership's long-term benefits.

Echoing similar sentiments, Amit Raj Konwar said, "We are committed to offering tailored training and placement solutions, and we believe this partnership will create meaningful career trajectories for the youth of Darrang College."

The agreement signifies a shared vision of both institutions—to empower students with relevant career competencies, facilitate smoother industry transitions, and foster a culture of guided professional development. The initiative is expected to significantly contribute to enhancing the institution's placement ecosystem and shaping a future-ready student community.

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, June 13: The Chirang District Administration, in collaboration with the National AYUSH Mission, Assam, is all set to inaugurate the newly upgraded Yoga Park on Monday, June 16. The event will be celebrated with a district-level Yoga Asana Competition, aiming to promote holistic health, physical discipline, and traditional wellness practices among all age groups.

The competition will adhere to the Common Yoga Protocol established by the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), New Delhi, and will be conducted in four age-based categories. Category I: Up to 10 years of age Category II: Above 10 and up to 18 years Category III: Above 18 and up to 35 years Category IV: Above 35 years



While the first two categories will compete at the Parade Ground in Kajalgaon, the remaining two will take part at the newly inaugurated Yoga Park.

inaugurated Yoga Park.

This wellness-centric initiative is being spearheaded by ADC (Health) Silpika Kalita, with key support from Dr. Raju Kumar Das, AYUSH nodal officer for the district. The duo has been instrumental in coordinating efforts to integrate yoga and traditional healthcare systems into the lives of the local populace.

The upgraded Yoga Park is envisioned as a community space that will serve as a hub for promoting yoga, meditation, and sustainable living. The District Administration has extended a warm invitation to the public to join the event and celebrate the fusion of fitness, culture, and community spirit.

Folk Culture Day to be celebrated on June 21 at Mangaldai College

HT Correspondent

MANGALDAI, June 13: Preparations are in full swing for the celebration of Folk Culture Day on June 21, to be held at Mangaldai College under the auspices of Darrang Jankrishti Samaj. The event commemorates the birth anniversary of the late Dr. Nabindra Sarma, a revered scholar and researcher in the field of folk culture.

According to Secretary Dwijendra Mohan Deva Sarma, the programme will begin at 1 PM and will be chaired by Dr. Bijoy Kumar Sarma. The ceremonial lamp will be lit by Basanti Devi, the wife of the late Dr. Sarma, in a gesture symbolizing the continuation of his legacy and the cultural spirit he embodied.

The event will feature a brief discussion on the life, works, and philosophy of Dr. Nabindra Sarma, who made significant contributions to the understanding and preservation of Assamese folk traditions. A special lecture session on Traditional Knowledge will be one of the highlights of the programme, aiming to delve into the value of indigenous wisdom in contemporary times.

Speakers at the session will include Dr. Manika Begum, a subject teacher at Puthimari Higher Secondary School; Dr. Kamla Kanta Borah, Principal of Mangaldai College; and Dr. Kandarp Kumar Sarma, Controller of Examinations at Gauhati University. Each will bring a unique perspective to the discussion, reflecting the multifaceted nature of folk heritage.

Organizers expect the event to draw cultural scholars, students, and members of the community, serving as both a tribute and a platform for knowledge-sharing. The celebration stands as a testament to Dr. Nabindra Sarma's enduring impact on Assam's cultural and intellectual landscape.

Capacity building training for media held in Diphu

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, June 13: A one-day Capacity Building Training Programme for Print and Electronic Media Persons was held today at the Arboretum Cum Craft Centre, Diphu, Karbi Anglong. The initiative, aimed at strengthening the role of the media in combating drug abuse, brought together media representatives from Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, Hojai, and Nagaon districts.

The event was jointly organized by the Directorate of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of Assam, in collaboration with the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), the District Administration of Karbi Anglong, and the Committee on Socio Economic and Health Development Assam (COSE-HDA).

The programme commenced with an introduction by Ms. Anamriya Baruah, Project Coordinator of the State Level Coordinating Agency (SLCA) on Drugs Prevention for Assam and Meghalaya, and was anchored by Ms. Annay Alexander. The keynote address was delivered by Bhaskar Jyoti Manta, Additional Secretary and Director, Directorate of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of Assam.

KAAC Chief Executive Member Dr. Tuliram Ronghang, in his inaugural remarks, emphasized the critical role of the media in addressing the growing drug menace in the region. "We want a sports culture, not a drugs culture in Karbi Anglong," Dr. Ronghang declared. Highlighting the high incidence of drug-related crimes in areas like Lahorijan, Dilai, and Khakhati, he urged the media to actively contribute to awareness-building and prevention.

The session was attended by KAAC Executive Members Rina Terangpi, Titluma Hasnu, and Kache Rongpipi, along with MACs Pawan Kumar, Headings Rongphar, Phenpiga Rengma, and several other dignitaries.

Dr. Sondeep Hanse, State Coordinator for the National Drug Survey under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and chief functionary of SLCA, served as the key speaker. He provided insights into the ground-level realities and data-driven approaches to tackling substance abuse.

Guest speaker Thaneshwar Kalita, retired District Sessions Judge and Professor at the Department of Law, Royal Global University, discussed the media's responsibility in reporting offenses under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS)



Act, 1985. He also cautioned media professionals about the potential for human rights violations under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) due to irresponsible reporting.

An interactive session allowed media professionals to engage directly with key officials, including Sanjiv Saikia, Superintendent of Police, Karbi Anglong; Hanse; and Kalita. The session promoted meaningful dialogue on challenges, ethics, and strategies for responsible journalism in combating drug abuse.

The programme saw the participation of Nirola Phangchopi, ACS, Deputy Commissioner of Karbi Anglong, along with the Additional District Commissioner and the Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime), underscoring a unified administrative push towards drug prevention in the region.

Aranyak installs 30-km solar fencing to curb human- elephant conflict

Intervention is projected to directly benefit approximately 5,000 individuals across 1,047 households

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, June 13: In a major step toward mitigating the longstanding human-elephant conflict in the Konwarpur-Desangmukh region of Assam, premier environmental organization Aranyak has successfully completed the installation of 30.1 km of solar-powered fencing around eight vulnerable villages. The initiative aims to safeguard villagers' crops from repeated depredations by wild elephants, which have caused significant damage during the harvesting seasons over the years.

The solar fencing now encircles the villages of Hatisal Chapori, Sagunpara, Bejor Chiga, Jopong Gaon, Tinigharia, Sumoni Chapori, Major Chapori, and Suwal Bagh Gaon. These areas have faced annual invasions by herds of over a hundred elephants, resulting in the destruction of livelihoods and posing safety risks to the villagers.

According to renowned environmentalist and activist Padum Saikia, the project has been undertaken by Aranyak in collaboration with Darwin Initiative and British Asian



Trust for Elephant Family. The combined efforts of these organizations aim to not only deter elephant incursions but also foster peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife. The intervention is projected to di-

rectly benefit approximately 5,000 individuals across 1,047 households in the region.

It is pertinent to note that this landscape—stretching towards the Panidihing Bird Sanctuary (formerly the Maranani Reserve

Forest)—historically served as a vital elephant corridor. From prehistoric times, herds of elephants used to traverse this region freely, particularly the Brahmaputra chaporis (riverine sandbars). However, with increasing human encroachment, expansion of agricultural activities, and degradation of natural habitats, elephants have been pushed out of their traditional migratory routes. This ecological imbalance has led to a growing number of man-elephant confrontations in the area.

The solar fencing initiative is part of a larger conservation strategy to reduce conflict while preserving the ecological integrity of the region. Community engagement and local participation have also been key components of the project, ensuring a sense of ownership among the residents and long-term sustainability of the intervention.

As Assam continues to face the dual challenge of wildlife conservation and rural livelihood protection, initiatives like this mark a hopeful and practical step forward in achieving harmony between nature and human development.

Eri Silk spinning training empowers women near Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, June 13: A five-day training programme on Eri silk spinning concluded successfully today at Ouguri, under the aegis of the Ouguri Eco Development Committee, situated on the periphery of the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. The initiative was jointly organized by the Assistant Director of Sericulture, Morigaon, and the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary authorities, with the aim of fostering sustainable livelihoods for women living in fringe forest communities. This marks the first collaborative initiative by the Sericulture Department and the Range Office of Pobitora WLS to revive Assam's traditional silk heritage—Eri, Muga, and Pat—while providing eco-friendly income alternatives to forest-adjacent populations. Eri silk, noted for its environmentally conscious production methods involving organic farming, sustainable fuel, and manure generation, presents a viable and ethical source of livelihood for rural communities.

The training programme was tailored for ten women weavers from the Ouguri Eco Development Committee. It focused on imparting practical, hands-on skills in Eri silk spinning—an artisanal craft that holds both cultural and economic value. Participants received certificates upon completion of the training from key dignitaries including Nirupam Roy Choudhury, In-Charge Assistant Director of the Morigaon Sericulture Division; Pranjal Baruah, AFS and Range Officer of Pobitora WLS; Sajeeta Saikia, Extension Officer, Sericulture; and Nripen Chandra Nath, Sericulture Inspector. The technical sessions were led by Master Trainer Ms. Zaheda Begum, Assistant Manager at the Eri Spinning Training Center, who was supported by trainer Anita Borah. Their expert guidance provided the participants with vital techniques and knowledge that will empower them to take up silk spinning as a meaningful occupation.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I have never in my life learned anything from any man who agreed with me -Dudley Field Malone

Changing demography

India's demography is changing faster as per the UNFPA's 2025 State of World Population (SOWP) report which has estimated it reached 146.39 crore by April 2025 compared to the India's own technical group of experts projection of 141 crore. Faster than expected growth rate is but only one part of the challenges ahead. The report has actually revealed a host of real crisis that India will have to face in the years to come. The most striking change is the declined fertility rate (TFR) to 1.9 falling below the replacement level of 2.1. Nevertheless, population would grow to 170 crore in about 40 years from now before starting to decline. SOWP 2025 says non-realisation of the fertility goals as the real crisis, not underpopulation or overpopulation. The most accurate picture on population would be known by March 2027, when India has scheduled to complete its Census, though with a delay of about 6 years. This means that India will have increasingly more stomach to feed and will require more resources for its healthcare, education, and the means of livelihood. Though the World Bank has said in its June 2025 update that India has been able to considerably reduce the extreme poverty level from 27.1 per cent in 2011-12 to 5.3 per cent, the challenges remain, will be even more difficult to overcome. It should be noted that the World Bank's poverty line is still at Rs250 per day (\$3). Moreover, the consumption level included all the government's welfare schemes including the free foodgrain to about 80 crore people of the country, who are still not able to purchase foodgrain since they don't have enough means of livelihood.

Social welfare schemes make poverty just more tolerable, but it was counted as poverty alleviation. Actual position is that poverty reduces only when the poor person starts earning enough for their survival. His poverty remains as it is if he depends on others for survival, and has not his own income. The challenges on the ground remain, and with increasing population, these would be multiplied. India would have to prepare for this—delivery of food, healthcare, education, and the means of livelihood. SOWP 2025 say as that in the 1970s, women in India on average had nearly five children. Now, they have close to two. Though this milestone reflects progress in health and education, but masks regional diversity in fertility rates. Fertility has fallen below the replacement level (2.1) in 31 States/UTs, but remains high in Bihar (3.0), Meghalaya (2.9) and Uttar Pradesh (2.7). Urban-rural gaps persist, and seven states have yet to reach replacement TFR in rural areas.

The gaps have other dimensions too. Many want children but cannot have them when they want; while others want to avoid pregnancy but cannot. And both issues may affect many people in the course of their lifetime. As for adolescent fertility rate, it remains high at 14.1 per 1000 women aged 15-19, which endangers both maternal and child health and affects education and employment outcomes.

In the crucible of inherited economic turmoil, institutional skepticism, internal strife, hostile borders, global pandemics, and relentless ideological opposition, India's trajectory since 2014 under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has been nothing short of a civilizational pivot. Confronted with a nation branded as one of the "Fragile Five" economies in 2013—plagued by high inflation, faltering investment sentiment, and paralyzed decision-making—the government responded not with timidity but with audacious clarity. Today, India stands as the world's fastest-growing major economy, sustaining a remarkable 7%+ growth rate despite global slowdowns, a feat that has eluded even the most affluent nations. From the fifth-largest economy globally, poised to overtake Japan and Germany by 2027, to doubling its GDP since 2014 and amassing foreign reserves exceeding \$650 billion, India's resurgence is a testament to resolve, reform, and relentless execution.

This transformation was not serendipitous. It was forged through politically fraught decisions that reshaped India's economic architecture. Demonetisation, though controversial, disrupted entrenched cash-based corruption. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) unified a fragmented market, streamlining commerce across states. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code restored fiscal discipline, while a sweeping banking sector clean-up addressed non-performing assets, revitalizing financial institutions. These reforms, coupled with forward-looking initiatives like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, Make in India, and Digital India, catalyzed a structural shift. India is no longer merely a consumption-driven economy but a builder's economy, manufacturing its own smartphones, exporting defense equipment, attracting semiconductor plants, and leading the world in digital payments through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). The nation's ascent in the Ease of Doing Business rankings reflects restored investor confidence, with massive capital inflows into manufacturing and infrastructure reigniting an investment engine that once sputtered.

At the heart of this transformation lies a governance model that rejected the antiquated top-down patronage system in favor of saturation delivery, ensuring welfare reached the furthest margins. The results are staggering: over 12 crore tap connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission have brought clean water to rural households;



more than 11 crore toilets under Swachh Bharat have revolutionized sanitation; over 9 crore households have received free LPG connections through Ujjwala, empowering women; and more than 3 crore houses have been sanctioned under PM Awas Yojana, providing dignified housing. The Ayushman Bharat scheme has extended healthcare coverage to 50 crore Indians, while during the COVID-19 pandemic, the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana ensured free rations for 80 crore people. These initiatives, underpinned by the JAM trinity (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) and Direct Benefit Transfer, eliminated middlemen, transforming welfare from a favor-based system to a rights-based one. The Antyodaya Yojana, embodying the philosophy that no Indian be left behind, represents a profound correction to a history where poverty and neglect were normalized.

Security, both internal and external, has been another cornerstone of this era. The abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, once deemed an intractable issue, integrated Jammu and Kashmir into the national mainstream peacefully and constitutionally, defying predictions of chaos. Five years on, Kashmir has seen record tourist footfalls, burgeoning investments, and a resumption of political dialogue devoid of separatist influence. The ecosystem of terror-financing and stone-pelting has crumbled, marking a decisive shift. Similarly, Left-Wing Extremism, which once gripped over 150 districts, has been reduced to a handful through coordinated security operations, infrastructure development, and targeted welfare. India's counter-terror doctrine has evolved from reactive to pre-emptive and punitive, exemplified by the surgical strikes of 2016, the Balakot airstrikes of 2019, and Operation

Sindoor in 2025, which targeted terror infrastructure across the Pakistan border following the Pahalgam massacre. Military modernization, including Rafale jets, S-400 systems, indigenous drones, and anti-satellite (ASAT) capabilities, has bolstered India's defense posture, while the Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative has transformed it from an arms importer to a defense exporter.

Globally, India has redefined its role through strategic autonomy, navigating a multipolar world with pragmatism. Eschewing the constraints of traditional non-alignment, India has balanced relationships with dexterity—procuring Russian oil when necessary, supporting Palestine while maintaining ties with Israel, and engaging with both the Quad and BRICS without being tethered to either. During the pandemic, India's vaccine diplomacy aided the Global South while Western nations hoarded supplies, earning it goodwill. The G7's invitation to Prime Minister Modi for the 2025 summit in Canada, under Prime Minister Mark Carney, signals a recalibration of global perceptions. Once viewed with skepticism by Western media and governments, who labeled Modi as divisive, India now commands respect as a power to align with, particularly after Operation Sindoor underscored its resolve.

Domestically, the government has faced relentless ideological scrutiny, with reforms often met with alarmism and assertions of national identity branded as authoritarian. Yet, it has remained steadfast, grounding its actions in constitutional legality and democratic mandate. Welfare delivery has been inclusive, cutting across caste and religious divides—gas cylinders in Mewat, toilets in Dantewada, and healthcare for all. This governance-over-grievance approach has earned the trust of Indian voters and the grudging respect of critics. However, challenges persist, notably in employment. India's demographic dividend is both a strength and a stress point. The government has shifted the paradigm from state-dependent jobs to entrepreneurship, with over 40 crore loans disbursed under Mudra Yojana, empowering micro-enterprises. Start-Up India and Skill India have fostered rapid innovation, while formalization through EPFO registrations reflects steady progress. Critics citing jobless growth often overlook this transition to a self-driven, enterprise-led workforce.

On climate, India has emerged as an un-

expected leader, maintaining one of the lowest per capita emissions among major economies. Initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure have set global benchmarks, while the Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) movement, championed by Modi, reframes climate action as personal responsibility—a model now emulated worldwide. Digital governance, often overshadowed, has been transformative. The JAM trinity, faceless tax assessments, DigiLocker, and One Nation One Ration Card have expanded the tax base, enhanced transparency, and ensured portability of benefits, ensuring no Indian is denied their due because of geography.

Judicial reform remains a critical frontier. While tribunal reforms and uniform service conditions have been pursued, court pendency continues to hinder timely justice. The ongoing deliberation on the Uniform Civil Code signals progress toward constitutional equality. Meanwhile, India's private sector has transitioned from perceptions of cronyism to a vital partner in nation-building. Through PLI schemes, ease-of-doing-business reforms, and National Logistics and Infrastructure Policies, industries like electronics, green energy, and semiconductors have flourished, with India now home to over 100 unicorns—a once-unimaginable milestone.

Social cohesion, a perennial battleground, has been navigated through governance rather than grievance. Welfare schemes have been religion-blind and caste-agnostic, fostering unity through development. India's cultural assertion has also gained global prominence, from the International Day of Yoga at the UN to the celebration of Ram Mandir in diplomatic missions. Sanskrit, Ayurveda, and Indic philosophy have transitioned from private rituals to pillars of public diplomacy, reflecting a nation no longer culturally defensive but proudly expansive.

This era, driven by Modi's vision and a dedicated Prime Minister's Office, has introduced a new operating system for Indian democracy—decisive yet inclusive, nationalist yet global, growth-oriented yet welfare-focused. Challenges in jobs, judiciary, climate, and social cohesion persist, but the direction is unmistakable. From a nation questioned for its potential in 2014, India in 2025 is a global exemplar of grit, reform, and resurgence. The world no longer asks if India can deliver—it marvels at how it has risen so swiftly. *(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpld@gmail.com)*

From fragile five to global force

Eleven years of Modi governance

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

Flight Air India 171: A journey cut short

Dreamliner or Deathliner? When flying becomes the ultimate journey

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

On the afternoon of June 12, 2025, the city of Ahmedabad witnessed an unthinkable tragedy that shook the nation and the world. Air India Flight AI 171, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, took off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, bound for London Gatwick, carrying 242 passengers and crew. What should have been a routine flight turned into a catastrophic disaster within moments of ascent. This tragedy is now etched into the collective memory as a painful reminder of life's fragility, the unpredictability of fate, and the profound impact such events have on families, communities, and nations.

Flight AI 171 was more than just a plane in the sky. It was a vessel carrying hopes, dreams, and futures. Each of the 230 passengers and 12 crew members had their own story—families waiting to reunite, professionals embarking on new ventures, students chasing education abroad, and travelers setting out on vacations. Among them was the respected former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, whose untimely death deepened the grief across the state. The flight was a mosaic of humanity, representing different nationalities and backgrounds, connected by a shared journey that was cruelly cut short.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner has long been celebrated as a marvel of modern aviation technology, known for its fuel efficiency, advanced systems, and passenger comfort. Since its launch in 2009, it maintained an exceptional safety record worldwide. The crash of AI 171 marked the first fatal accident involving the Dreamliner, sending shockwaves through the aviation community and raising difficult questions about aircraft safety, design, and operation.

Eyewitnesses and radar data reveal a haunting sequence of events. The aircraft lifted off at 13:38 local time, but within thirty seconds, it suddenly lost altitude and crashed into the Meghani Nagar neighbourhood of Ahmedabad, devastating the BJ Medical College hospital and nearby residential buildings. The site was engulfed in flames, and the rescue efforts began immediately amid thick smoke and chaos. The scene was one of destruction—wreckage scattered, buildings damaged, and lives irrevocably changed.

The toll was devastating. Out of the 242 aboard, 241 lost their lives, leaving only a single survivor—Vishwash Kumar Ramesh, a British citizen of Indian origin seated in 11A. His survival is nothing short of miraculous. In his hospital bed, Ramesh recounted how the plane violently broke apart in mid-air, ejecting him before it slammed into the ground. Despite sustaining serious injuries, his story offers a glimmer of hope in an otherwise



dark tragedy. On the ground, the crash claimed the lives of medical students residing in the hostel and injured many others, further amplifying the scale of loss.

The tragedy sent shockwaves far beyond Ahmedabad's borders. Families in India, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Canada, and other nations mourned loved ones who never returned. The global aviation community was confronted with the stark reality that even the most advanced aircraft and rigorous safety protocols could sometimes falter. The grief was compounded by the loss of a political leader and the toll on innocent civilians caught in the disaster's path.

Immediate questions arose about what led to such a sudden and catastrophic failure. Investigations revealed unusual flight behavior moments before the crash, with the plane climbing steeply, then descending rapidly, and the landing gear and flaps remaining extended—conditions inconsistent with normal takeoff procedures. A distress call to air traffic control confirmed the crew's awareness of a critical emergency, yet the rapid descent and erratic movements left little room for recovery.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau of India, supported by experts from the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries, quickly launched a detailed inquiry. The flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder were recovered, providing essential clues for understanding what transpired. The investigation focuses on multiple angles, including possible flight control system failures, mechanical malfunctions, pilot actions, maintenance history, and environmental factors such as bird strikes or wind shear.

While these technical inquiries are underway, the human dimension of the tragedy remains at the forefront. Air India, privatized in 2022 and striving

for renewal, faced its gravest crisis yet. The airline expressed deep sorrow and pledged full cooperation with investigators, while also activating helpines and support centers to assist families devastated by the loss. Emotional and financial support, along with transparent communication, are critical to helping those affected navigate this overwhelming grief.

Ahmedabad, a city known for its vibrancy and spirit, was brought to a halt. Meghani Nagar residents, students, and emergency responders faced unimaginable scenes of destruction. Firefighters, soldiers, doctors, and volunteers worked tirelessly amid smoke and ruin, rescuing survivors and recovering bodies. Their bravery and compassion are a testament to human resilience in moments of crisis. Yet, the scars left on the community's heart and landscape will take years to heal.

In the days that followed, leaders across India and around the world expressed solidarity. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered condolences and assured government support for the investigation and relief efforts. The United Kingdom, home to many of the passengers, pledged close cooperation, and dignitaries including King Charles III and Queen Camilla sent heartfelt messages of sympathy. This tragedy underscored the interconnectedness of the global community, reminding us that loss and suffering transcend borders.

Flight AI 171 serves as a solemn reminder of the fragile thread on which human lives depend when entrusted to air travel. It calls for a renewed commitment to safety, thoroughness in maintenance, rigorous pilot training, and readiness for emergencies. While technology has made flying safer than ever before, this catastrophe reveals that vigilance and continuous improvement are essential.

The investigation's outcome will undoubtedly lead to important lessons for the aviation industry. It is imperative that the findings translate into stronger safeguards, enhanced protocols, and a culture of safety that prioritizes every passenger's life above all else. Air India and other airlines must rebuild confidence through transparency and steadfast dedication to the highest safety standards.

For the families who lost loved ones, for the survivor who bears the scars of that day, and for the community that stood in solidarity, Flight AI 171 is more than an incident—it is a profound loss that demands remembrance. Memorials, scholarships, and initiatives to honour those affected can offer a measure of solace and ensure their memories endure.

As Ahmedabad and the nation grieve, the tragedy also invites reflection on the preciousness of life and the courage of those who serve in the face of disaster. The firefighters who battled the flames, the doctors who treated the wounded, the volunteers who comforted the bereaved—all embody the best of humanity amid heartbreak.

Flight AI 171's journey was cut tragically short, but the spirit of those on board and those who responded will continue to inspire resilience, hope, and a commitment to preventing future tragedies. Their legacy is a solemn call to action: that safety in aviation, care for human life, and compassion in crisis must always be paramount.

In honoring the memory of those lost and supporting the survivors and their families, we reaffirm our shared responsibility to protect life and learn from every tragedy. Flight AI 171 will forever remain a stark reminder of this duty—a journey cut short, but not forgotten. *(The author can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com or 9954812261, 9864000260)*

By: Privanka Saurabh

It was a normal morning in Ahmedabad. People were busy with their daily routine. No one had thought that this day would leave a dark stain on India's civil aviation system. On June 12, 2025, Air India flight AI-171, which was flying from Ahmedabad to London's Gatwick Airport, crashed just minutes after takeoff. This accident not only took 242 lives but also shook the soul of an entire nation.

There were 230 passengers and 12 crew members in this plane. Everyone had their own stories. Some were going abroad for the first time, some had to attend their daughter's wedding, some were leaving for London for a job, and some were just going to meet their son. Someone might have looked back while closing the door, someone might have said "call me" for the last time. But this time no one got a chance.

The accident site is an area of Meghani Nagar where a medical hostel is also located. A large part of the plane fell on the same hostel, killing six students living there. These were the children who could have saved someone's life in the future. Unfortunately, their own lives could not be saved. The pictures of the accident site were horrific, but even more horrifying were the scattered slippers, burning bags, half-burnt files and faces lost in smoke. Perhaps Mamta's 'missed call' is still visible on some mobile screen, "send a message as soon as we land" is still written on someone's WhatsApp.

Dying in an accident is one thing, but leaving this world without saying goodbye is an unimaginable sorrow. This Air India Dreamliner plane was said to be equipped with the 'latest safety technology'. The Dreamliner 787 is considered reliable in the aviation world. Then the question arises—how did this accident happen? Was there any technical fault in the plane beforehand? Was there negligence in maintenance? Or was it an unfortunate coincidence?

Captain Sumit Sabarwal, who was flying this plane, was a senior pilot with 8200 hours of flying experience. He was accompanied by co-pilot Clive Kundu, who also had ample flying experience. Both of them tried to control the plane till the last moment. The recording found from the black box has the captain's last voice recorded in which he gave a 'Mayday' call and informed about the plane's altitude falling rapidly. This makes it clear that the plane suddenly lost control and there was very little time.

The administration wasted no time in starting the rescue operation. The fire brigade, NDRF, police and local citizens reached the spot and started removing the bodies from the debris. But the real tragedy began when the cries of the relatives were heard outside the hospitals. Those who had happily dropped off their loved ones at the airport a few hours ago were now identifying bags of ashes in the hospitals.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer have expressed deep condolences over the accident. Air India has announced a compensation of ₹ 50 lakh for the victim families and the central government has ordered a high-level inquiry. But history shows that in most cases such inquiry reports remain pending for months, and are eventually forgotten. It is important that this time not only an impartial investigation should be conducted into the causes of the accident, but it should also be found out whether this accident could have been prevented.

This is not just a technical failure, it is also a failure of our system. What was the role of DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation)? Was the plane properly tested before takeoff? Did the ground staff overlook any problem? All these questions are now of the public, and the public wants answers too.

After accidents, we often express our condolences, light candles, post on social media and then forget. But this time something has to change. This is not just an accident, but a warning. It tells us that even if modern technology and shiny airplanes fly with carelessness in the system, then they do not just become a flight, but an end.

There are many families whose sole earning member died in this accident. There are some in which three members were on the flight together and now there is no memory of them. The picture of a 6-year-old girl who was going abroad for the first time with her grandparents is going viral. Now her pink doll has been found in ashes. A newlywed woman, who had left for her in-laws, will now return in a coffin. These are not just statistics, but human stories—ones we should never forget.

After this accident, we must do two things—first, the victim families should be given all possible government, legal and mental support. And second, it should be ensured that any flight from India is checked a hundred times before flying the next time.

I remember a line in a poem—
"Those who were going to fly like stars,
They are now just marks in the ashes."

For us, this is not just a time of mourning, but also of responsibility. If we just grieve and remain silent, these accidents will happen again. Air travel is no longer just a matter of comfort, it is now becoming the biggest challenge to safety and life.

We also need to worry whether privatisation of civil aviation in India and low-cost competition is compromising passenger safety? Are pilot burnout, shortage of technical staff and hunger for profits leading to such tragedies? If yes, then we have to decide—safety first or convenience?

This accident is a tribute to all those passengers who set out with only the hope of reaching their destination, and have now become a part of our memories. They will not return, but if we make the system better in their memory, then perhaps their departure will have some meaning. *(The author is an independent journalist, poet and social analyst)*

11 years of Modi: Transforming India

By: Satyabrata Borah

On June 9, 2025, the Narendra Modi-led government marked 11 years in power, a period that has undeniably reshaped India's political, economic, social, and cultural landscape. Since assuming office on May 26, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has steered the nation through a series of bold reforms, ambitious initiatives, and transformative policies, positioning India as a global player while addressing domestic challenges. This milestone, coinciding with one year of Modi's third term, offers an opportunity to reflect on the achievements, challenges, and criticisms of his administration, as well as the road ahead for a nation aspiring to become a global leader by 2047, the centenary of its independence.

The journey began in 2014 when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), under Modi's leadership, secured a historic mandate, ending a decade of coalition governance led by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). With a promise of "Ache Din" (good days), Modi's vision centered on development, governance, and a strong, self-reliant India. His first term focused on laying the groundwork for structural reforms, while the second and third terms built on these foundations, navigating global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions. Over these 11 years, the government's mantra of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" (Together with All, Development for All, Trust of All) has guided its policies, aiming for inclusive growth and empowerment.

One of the hallmark achievements of the Modi government has been its push for economic transformation. When Modi took office, India was grappling with policy paralysis, high inflation, and a reputation as one of the "Fragile Five" economies. Over the past decade, India has climbed from the 10th to the fourth-largest economy globally, with a GDP of \$4.2 trillion as of 2025, poised to surpass Japan and Germany in the coming years.

This growth, averaging 6.4% annually since 2014 and reaching 7.4% in the latest quarter, reflects resilience despite challenges like demonetization in 2016, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rollout in 2017, and the pandemic. The GST, often called the "reform of reforms," unified India's fragmented tax system into "One Nation, One Tax," simplifying compliance, reducing cascading taxes, and boosting revenue collection. By April 2023, GST collections hit a record ₹1.87 lakh crore, with large states reporting over 20% growth, signaling robust economic activity. Similarly, the Make in India initiative, launched in 2014, aimed to transform India into a global manufacturing hub. It attracted foreign direct investment (FDI), streamlined regulations, and promoted indigenous production, with FDI inflows rising from \$45 billion in 2014-15 to \$84.83 billion in 2021-22, though dipping to \$70 billion in 2022-23. Defense exports also surged, reaching a record ₹23,622 crore in 2024-25, underscoring India's growing self-reliance in a critical sector.

Infrastructure development has been a cornerstone of Modi's vision, redefining India's physical and digital landscape. National highways expanded from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1,46,204 km in 2024, with construction speed rising from 12 km/day to 34 km/day. The UDAN scheme, launched in 2016, democratized air travel, increasing operational airports from 74 to 160 by 2025, with a vision to reach 300 by 2047. Urban transformation progressed through the Smart Cities Mission, with over 8,000 projects and investments worth ₹1.64 lakh crore, while the Delhi Metro and other systems expanded mass transit in 15 cities. The railway sector saw modernization with the introduction of Vande Bharat trains and the renovation of old stations, alongside the merger of the Railway Budget with the Union Budget and a shift in the financial year from July-April to April-March. Digitally, the India Stack comprising Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker revolutionized payments and governance. UPI



facilitated digital transactions even in rural areas, with 90 million e-way bills generated in March 2023, an 11% increase from the previous month. The Jan Dhan Yojana, part of the JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) trinity, brought financial inclusion to millions, opening bank accounts for 99% of adults and saving \$27 billion through Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT), which reduced leakages and corruption in subsidy delivery.

Social welfare and poverty alleviation have been central to the government's agenda. Official data indicates that 17.1 crore people were lifted out of poverty between 2013-14 and 2022-23, with the poverty rate dropping from 29.17% to 11.28%, a remarkable feat. Schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana provided over 3 crore homes to rural and urban poor, while the Ujjwala Yojana delivered 10.33 crore LPG connections, empowering women with smoke-free kitchens. The Swachh Bharat Mission constructed 11.72 crore toilets, improving sanitation and health, though challenges persist in ensuring usage and addressing corruption allegations in construction. The PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana provided free foodgrains to 80

crore people during the COVID-19 crisis, extended through 2022, showcasing the government's commitment to the marginalized. Ayushman Bharat, a flagship health scheme, offered affordable healthcare, though public health experts have criticized initial budget cuts and a shift toward private providers. The healthcare budget, after a 15% reduction in 2015-16, rose by 19% in 2017 and 11.5% in 2018, with ₹20 billion allocated for government-funded health insurance.

National security and foreign policy have also seen bold shifts. The abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, a landmark decision, ended Jammu and Kashmir's special status, integrating it fully into India by creating two Union Territories: Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. This move, coupled with peace efforts in the Northeast and a crackdown on Naxalism, reflects a muscular approach to security. Operations like Sindoor, launched in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack, targeted terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, signaling India's proactive stance. Defense modernization included agreements with General Electric and Alstom for 1,000 diesel locomotives and a high-speed rail project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad with Japan. On the global stage, India's stature grew, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar noting a shift in perception after India supplied COVID-19 vaccines to over 100 countries. From 17 passport centers in 2014, the number grew to 527, easing access for citizens. Modi's vision of "Viksit Bharat" by 2047 emphasizes self-reliance, start-ups, and new skills, positioning India as a voice on climate change and digital innovation.

Cultural and civilizational revival has been a key focus, blending tradition with progress. The consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya in January 2024 fulfilled a decades-long aspiration, boosting religious tourism and national pride. The Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi and the Mahakal Lok Corridor in Ujjain revitalized sacred sites, combining heritage with modern infrastructure. The Agnipath Scheme, introduced in 2022, reformed defense recruitment, offering youth a four-year stint as Agniveers, with 25% retained based on merit, equipping them with skills and a ₹11.71 lakh exit package. These efforts underscore a commitment to cultural pride and nation-building.

But the 11-year journey has not been without challenges and criticism. The 2016 demonetization, aimed at curbing black money, led to a cash shortage, slowing GDP growth from 6.98% in 2016 to 5.56% in 2017. Unemployment peaked at 8.72% in January 2016, per the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, and remains a concern, though urban rates dropped to 6.8% in early 2023. Inequality has surged, with reports suggesting it's at an all-time high, a challenge for inclusive growth. The lack of transparent poverty and employment data since 2011 has drawn criticism, with the government's 2022 factsheet claiming historic poverty lows but withholding raw data for scrutiny. Rural distress is evident in the rise of NREGS beneficiaries, peaking at 7.55 crore in 2020-21 during the pandemic and remaining above 6 crore in

2022-23. The Congress party has accused the government of undermining democracy, weakening constitutional institutions, and eroding federalism by ignoring states' rights. Demonetization, unfulfilled promises of 2 crore jobs annually, and the failure to double farmers' income by 2022 have been points of contention. Initiatives like Smart Cities, the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and cleaning the Ganga have faced setbacks, with critics labeling them incomplete or ineffective.

The Modi government's governance style has also sparked debate. The first year of Modi's third term, starting June 9, 2024, saw a coalition government, a shift from the BJP's earlier majorities. Centralization of power, evident in ordinances passed due to a lack of Rajya Sabha majority and increased control over judicial appointments, has raised concerns about democratic checks and balances. Yet, supporters like Union Home Minister Amit Shah call these 11 years a "golden period" of service, security, and governance, citing economic revival, social justice, and cultural pride. BJP president JP Nadda echoed this, contrasting Modi's achievements with the UPA's alleged corruption and scams.

As India looks ahead, the Modi government's legacy is a blend of transformation and contention. Its outreach, including nationwide press conferences from June 9 to 11, 2025, and a booklet titled "Viksit Bharat Ka Amrit Kaal, Seva, Sushasan, Garib Kalyan ke 11 Saal" (11 Years of Developed India's Amrit Kaal, Service, Good Governance, and Welfare of the Poor), aims to highlight progress. The vision of a self-reliant, aspirational India, poised for global leadership, rests on addressing jobs, inequality, and compliance burdens while deepening global supply chain integration. After 11 years, Modi's leadership has inspired millions, delivered tangible gains, and set a bold path yet the journey to fully realize "Ache Din" remains a work in progress, balancing ambition with the complexities of a diverse, dynamic nation.

Youth empowerment: Key to national development

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The journey of a nation toward progress and prosperity is deeply interlinked with the strength and dynamism of its youth. As the most vibrant and energetic segment of any society, the youth not only represent the future of a nation but also shape its present through their choices, actions, and aspirations. Youth empowerment, therefore, is not a luxury or a secondary consideration—it is a foundational necessity for national development. When young people are educated, skilled, healthy, and meaningfully engaged in socio-economic processes, they become powerful agents of change who can transform the trajectory of a country's development in fundamental ways.

India, with over 65% of its population below the age of 35, is uniquely positioned to leverage the demographic dividend. This demographic advantage, however, is not an automatic guarantee of development. It demands deliberate, sustained efforts to empower the youth, enabling them to overcome challenges and contribute meaningfully to national growth. Empowerment in this context means much more than providing education or employment; it means equipping the youth with the tools, opportunities, and confidence to think independently, act decisively, and innovate constantly.

At the core of youth empowerment lies education. An accessible, inclusive, and quality education system lays the foundation for a knowledgeable and skilled generation. But merely focusing on academic excellence is not enough. What is equally important is fostering critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, and a sense of responsibility among students. The New Education Policy 2020 attempts to address some of these aspects by emphasizing holistic development, vocational training, and flexibility in subject choices. However, translating policy into action requires strong political will, effective implementation, and a concerted effort to address disparities in educational access, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Skill development is another critical pillar of youth empowerment. In a rapidly evolving global economy, traditional degrees are no longer sufficient to secure meaningful employment. The gap between the education system and industry requirements has resulted in a paradox where thousands of graduates remain unemployed, while industries struggle to find skilled manpower. Bridging this gap necessitates revamping training programs, aligning curricula with market needs, encouraging entrepreneurship, and expanding access to internships and hands-on experiences. Government initiatives like Skill India, Startup India, and the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana have made initial strides, but the outreach and effectiveness of such programs must be amplified.

Beyond education and employment, empowering youth also involves nurturing their physical and mental well-being. A healthy population is a productive one. This means investing in healthcare infrastructure, raising awareness about nutrition, promoting mental health, and addressing issues like substance abuse and depression, which have increasingly plagued young people, espe-

cially in urban and semi-urban settings. The stigma around mental health must be broken through sustained awareness campaigns, school-based counseling programs, and community engagement, so that youth can access help without fear or shame.

Civic engagement and participation in decision-making are also essential aspects of youth empowerment. When young people feel that their voices matter, they are more likely to take an active interest in societal affairs. This, in turn, leads to a more informed, involved, and resilient democracy. Encouraging youth to participate in local governance, policy dialogues, and community service fosters a culture of accountability and inclusiveness. Platforms like youth parliaments, model United Nations, social media activism, and volunteering opportunities offer avenues through which the younger generation can express their opinions, challenge injustice, and champion causes they believe in.

One cannot ignore the role of technology in modern youth empowerment. In today's digital age, access to the internet and digital literacy has become a necessity. From online education to remote work opportunities, from civic tech platforms to digital startups, technology offers immense potential to level the playing field. However, digital divides still persist between rural and urban populations, and between different socio-economic classes. Closing this gap is vital to ensuring equitable empowerment. Government policies should focus on expanding broadband connectivity, making devices affordable, and training youth in digital skills, including cybersecurity and data literacy.

Empowering youth also involves instilling in them a strong sense of values and ethics. In the race for economic success, moral and civic responsibilities must not be forgotten. Education and family institutions must collaborate to inculcate qualities such as honesty, compassion, respect for diversity, and environmental consciousness. These values not only guide personal behavior but also shape the kind of society and nation that the youth will help to build. The growing climate crisis, rising social inequalities, and increasing polarization demand a generation of young people who are not only capable and ambitious, but also thoughtful and empathetic.

The role of youth in nation-building becomes even more evident during times of crisis. Be it natural disasters, pandemics, or socio-political upheavals, the resilience and innovative spirit of the youth often come to the forefront. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, countless young volunteers, medical students, tech innovators, and social entrepreneurs played key roles in relief efforts, awareness campaigns, and digital innovations. Their contributions demonstrated that when given space, support, and trust, youth can become an indomitable force in overcoming national challenges.

However, despite their potential, many young people in India and across the world continue to face systemic barriers. Poverty, gender discrimination, caste bias, regional inequalities, and lack of infrastructure often limit the opportunities available to them. Girls and young women, in particular, face additional layers of marginalization. Ensuring gender-sensitive policies, enforcing

anti-discrimination laws, and actively promoting inclusivity are crucial to ensuring that all youth—not just the privileged few—can contribute to and benefit from national development.

Political leadership must take youth empowerment as a long-term investment and not just a campaign slogan. Regular consultations with youth leaders, representation of young voices in legislative bodies, and youth-targeted policies should become institutionalized norms. Political parties should go beyond tokenism and actively promote young leaders, both at the grassroots and national levels. Moreover, electoral reforms that promote transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct can inspire greater political engagement among the youth.

The private sector, too, has a significant role to play. From offering internships and apprenticeships to supporting skill development centers and innovation labs, businesses must view youth not merely as consumers but as collaborators and creators. Public-private partnerships can amplify the impact of youth-centric initiatives and ensure that industry needs are matched with the skills being cultivated on the ground. Philanthropic organizations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives must also prioritize youth empowerment in their agendas.

Media and popular culture shape the aspirations, behavior, and identity of the youth in profound ways. Responsible media representation, meaningful storytelling, and platforms that celebrate youth achievements can motivate millions. At the same time, it is essential to counter narratives that glorify violence, substance abuse, or superficiality. A balanced and constructive media environment can serve as both a mirror and a mentor to young minds navigating a complex world.

In the global context, empowered youth can become ambassadors of their nation's values and culture. Through student exchange programs, international competitions, scientific collaborations, and cultural forums, Indian youth can project a positive image of the country, build bridges across borders, and contribute to global peace and innovation. In an era where soft power matters as much as hard power, a confident, informed, and engaged youth population can elevate India's standing on the world stage.

Ultimately, youth empowerment is a continuous and collective process. It cannot be outsourced, nor can it be reduced to slogans. It must be embedded in the ethos of governance, education, economy, and culture. It must be approached with sincerity, sensitivity, and strategic vision. The future of India—and indeed of any nation—rests not in the hands of a few policymakers or elite leaders, but in the collective dreams and determined steps of its youth.

Investing in the youth today is investing in a better, stronger, and more equitable tomorrow. As the torchbearers of national aspirations, the youth must be given not just hope, but also opportunities. Not just rights, but also responsibilities. Empowering them is not an act of charity—it is a fundamental obligation of society and a cornerstone of sustainable national development. (The author can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com or 9954812261, 986400026)

Viksit Bharat 2047: A journey towards sustainable development

By: Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit

Viksit Bharat 2047 is the government's vision to transform the country into a self-reliant and prosperous economy by 2047. Viksit Bharat 2047 is indeed a visionary plan by the Indian government to transform the country into a self-reliant and prosperous economy by 2047, marking the 100th year of India's independence. This initiative focuses on sustainable development, economic growth, and improving the quality of life for all citizens. Viksit Bharat means 'Developed India'. Viksit Bharat 2047 is the government's vision to drive the mission of making India a completely developed nation by its 100th anniversary of independence in 2047. The vision is based on four pillars: Youth, Poor, Women and Farmers.

In 2013, the BJP gave the slogan 'acche din aane wale hai', and now, after 11 years, we can say that 'acche din aye hai'. PM Narendra Modi, marking 11 years of his leadership, affirmed that India has emerged as the fastest-growing major economy and a key global voice on critical issues such as climate action and digital innovation. Reflecting on the journey, he has emphasized that a strong focus on good governance, social justice, and inclusive development has driven the government. Our PM aims to deepen public understanding of India's development story and inspire greater citizen participation as the country moves forward with its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047. India has progressed from 11th step to the 4th major economy under PM Modi's leadership. India is at a turning point in its history.

In the last 11 years, there has been an effective government, it is decisive, brought in economic discipline; it's a government formed with people's participation. It's a government of transparency. PM Modi gave India a clear vision, a strong direction, and an unwavering commitment to public welfare and nation-first governance. Reflecting on the achievements PM has clearly stated that the past decade has seen rapid changes across diverse sectors, driven by the guiding philosophy of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas. Viksit Bharat's primary goal is to transform India into a developed nation by 2047 through inclusive economic participation for all citizens. It aims to take India's economy to \$30 trillion within just two decades.

From economic growth to social upliftment, BJP Government focus has been all-round and inclusive and India today is not only the fastest-growing major economy but also a key voice in the global arena, particularly on issues like climate action and digital innovation. India has been transformed on many fronts and is ready for take-off. There has been a massive expansion in social and economic infrastructure through policies and schemes in past years. The last decade has witnessed a phenomenal demonstration of our capabilities to transform India. Programmes such as Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana, and Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi have uplifted millions, placing the welfare of people with low incomes at the centre of governance.

There is no doubt that zero Poverty in Viksit Bharat 2047 is achievable through a multi-dimensional approach towards empowering the underprivileged and promoting inclusive development. About ₹ 630 crores has been disbursed as the first instalment for the chosen PM SHRI schools, and 12 institutions have been announced as Institutions of Eminence. PM Awas Yojana (Gramin) has provided more than 2.5 crore houses, while SBM Gramin and its Phase II have enhanced sanitation through large-scale toilet construction and women-led waste management. The PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission and Digital Mission are strengthening public healthcare and digital connectivity, with thousands of health centres and millions of registered health accounts. The country's robust defence capabilities are attested by the induction of indigenously developed Light Combat Helicopters and the

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pioneering Agnipath scheme, which modernises the armed forces with young, high-tech soldiers.

The 11 years of the PM Modi-led government will be written in golden letters because it ushered in changes with wider ramifications on polity, society and economics, and laid the foundations of Viksit Bharat. The abrogation of Article 370, that gave the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir its special status; outlawing Triple Talaq, and passage of the Waqf (amendment) Bill are the illustrations of the government's bold decisions.

PM Modi has given a "responsive and responsible government to reform, perform and transform". One would have observed that in the last 11 years, there has not been a single allegation of corruption against the Modi government. As India celebrates 11 transformative years of governance, this moment signifies more than just a milestone — it marks the nation's inspiring journey towards building a Viksit Bharat. Under the leadership of PM Modi, the Amrit Kaal of a developed India is progressing with a focus on service, good governance, and welfare for the poor.

One must not forget that during the COVID-19 crisis, India led the world as a pharma hub and also ensured free vaccination for over 220 crore doses within the country. Digital health services like e-Sanjeevani conducted over 37 crore teleconsultations. Free COVID treatment and vaccines saved countless lives.

Schemes like PM SVANidhi and Stand-Up India empowered small vendors and entrepreneurs, while over 55 crore Jan Dhan accounts and 77 crore Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries are testimony to a government working for every Indian. June 21 is now celebrated worldwide as International Yoga Day, an enduring symbol of India's cultural resurgence.

As India's ruling party celebrates more than a decade in power, the diverging narratives reflect the country's complex political landscape. Prime Minister's vision is to actively involve the youth of the country in formulation of national plans, priorities and goals of the country. In line with this vision, 'Viksit Bharat @2047 : Voice of Youth' initiative will provide a platform to the youth of the country to contribute ideas to the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. One must remember that it is very important to channelize the innovative ideas of youth into nation-building by inviting them to ideate and contribute to the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

As India works towards realizing the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, it is clear that the future holds immense promise and potential for growth and development. With collective effort and determination, India can achieve its goal of becoming a self-reliant and prosperous nation by 2047 as the journey to Viksit Bharat 2047 is a testament to India's resilience and determination, and its success will depend on the active participation of all its citizens. (The author is a freelance journalist, writer & cartoonist, a Limca Book of Record Holder (7 Times). He can be reached at dixitpatkar@yahoo.in)

Israel attacks Iran's nuclear, missile sites, prompting Iranian drone-strike retaliation

'The Islamic Republic of Iran has no choice but to respond to this political resolution'

DUBAI, June 13: Israel attacked Iran early Friday in strikes that took out top military officers and hit nuclear and missile sites, raising the potential for an all-out war between the two bitter Middle East adversaries. It appeared to be the most significant attack Iran has faced since its 1980s war with Iraq.

Simmering tensions over Iran's rapidly advancing nuclear program boiled over and Iran quickly retaliated, sending a swarm of drones at Israel as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned of "severe punishment".

Countries in the region condemned Israel's attack, while leaders around the globe called for immediate deescalation from both sides.

Israel's military said about 200 aircraft were involved in the initial attack on about 100 targets. Two security officials said the country's Mossad spy agency was also able to position explosive drones inside Iran ahead of time and then activate them to target missile launchers at an Iranian base near Tehran.

They said Israel had also smuggled precision weapons into central Iran as well as strike systems on vehicles, which were activated as the attack began to hit Iranian air defences.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the highly secretive missions and it was not possible to independently confirm their claims. There was no official comment.

The Israeli attack hit several sites, including Iran's main nuclear enrichment facility at Natanz, where black smoke could be seen rising into the air. Later in the morning, Israel said it had also destroyed dozens of radar installations and

surface-to-air missile launchers in western Iran.

Among those killed were three of Iran's top military leaders, one who oversaw the entire armed forces, Gen. Mohammad Bagheri, one who led the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Hossein Salami, and another who ran the Guard's ballistic missile programme, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh.

Iran confirmed all three deaths, which were a significant blow to Tehran's governing theocracy and will complicate efforts to retaliate against Israel.

Khamenei said other top military officials and scientists were also killed.

In its first response, Iran fired more than 100 drones at Israel, with both Iraq and Jordan confirming they had flown over their airspace. Israel said the drones were being intercepted outside its airspace, and it was not immediately clear whether any got through.

In his first public comment about the attacks, US President Donald Trump again urged Iran to reach a deal with Washington on its nuclear programme, warning on his Truth Social platform that Israel's attacks "will only get worse".

Without saying whether he was privy to specific Israeli plans, Trump said "there is still time to make this slaughter, with the next already planned attacks being even more brutal, come to an end".

"Iran must make a deal, before there is nothing left, and save what was once known as the Iranian Empire," he wrote.

"No more death, no more destruction, JUST DO IT, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE." Washington had cautioned Israel against an attack during continued negotiations over Iran's nuclear enrichment



program. It stressed the US had not been involved and warned against any retaliation targeting US interests or personnel.

It seemed likely the US suspected an attack could be in the offing, however, with Washington on Wednesday pulling some American diplomats from Iraq's capital and offering voluntary evacuations for the families of US troops in the wider Middle East.

Israel calls attacks preemptive strikes on Iran's nuclear programme

Israeli leaders cast attack as necessary to head off an imminent threat that Iran would build nuclear bombs, though it remains unclear how close the country is to achieving that or whether Iran had actually been planning a strike. Iran maintains its nuclear programme is for civilian purposes only.

"It could be a year. It could be within a few months," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed as he vowed to pursue the attack for as long as necessary to "remove this threat". "This is a clear and present danger to Israel's very survival," he said.

Over the past year, Israel has been targeting Iran's air defences, hitting a radar system for a Russian-made air defence battery in April 2024 and surface-to-air missile sites and missile manufacturing facilities in October.

Nervous Israelis rushed to supermarkets in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and elsewhere to buy bottled water and other supplies, and circulated messages on WhatsApp groups advising each other to prepare

their shelters for potential long-term use. In Iran, meanwhile, museums were shut down and began transferring valuable items to secure vaults to protect them, the state-affiliated Borna news agency reported.

Iran claims Israel targeted residential areas

Israel "opened its wicked and blood-stained hand to a crime in our beloved country, revealing its malicious nature more than ever by striking residential centres", Khamenei said in a statement.

For Netanyahu, the operation distracts attention from Israel's ongoing and increasingly devastating war in Gaza, which is now over 20 months old.

There is a broad consensus in the Israeli public that Iran is a major threat, and Israel's opposition leader, Yair Lapid, a staunch critic of Netanyahu, offered his "full support" for the mission against Iran. But if Iranian reprisals cause heavy Israeli casualties or major disruptions to daily life, public opinion could shift quickly.

The Iran-backed Lebanese militant group Hezbollah issued a statement that offered condolences and condemned the attack, but did not threaten to join Iran in its retaliation. Hezbollah's latest war with Israel — which killed much of the group's senior leadership — ended with a US-brokered ceasefire in November.

Netanyahu expressed hope the attacks would trigger the downfall of Iran's theocracy, saying his message to the Iranian people was that the fight was not with them, but with the "brutal dictatorship that has oppressed you for 46 years".

"I believe that the day of your liberation is near," he said.

Multiple sites in the Iranian capital were hit in the attack, which Netanyahu said targeted both nuclear and military sites. Also targeted were officials leading Iran's nuclear program and its ballistic missile arsenal.

The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed that an Israeli strike hit Iran's uranium enrichment facility at Natanz and said it was closely monitoring radiation levels.

The strike on Iran pushed the Israeli military to its limits, requiring the use of aging air-to-air refuellers to get its fighter jets close enough to attack. It wasn't immediately clear if Israeli jets entered Iranian airspace or just fired so-called "standoff missiles" over another country. People in Iraq heard fighter jets overhead at the time of the attack. Israel previously attacked Iran from over the border in Iraq.

Tension had been growing for weeks ahead of attacks

The potential for an attack had been apparent for weeks as angst built over Iran's nuclear programme.

Once the attacks were underway, the US Embassy in Jerusalem issued an alert telling American government workers and their families to shelter in place until further notice.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Israel took "unilateral action against Iran" and that Israel advised the US that it believed the strikes were necessary for its self-defence.

"We are not involved in strikes against Iran, and our top priority is protecting American forces in the region," Rubio said in a statement released by the White House. (AP)

South African president to visit flood sites with death toll at 78



CAPE TOWN (South Africa), June 13: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will visit the sites on Friday of devastating floods that have left at least 78 people dead in the southeast of the country as search and rescue operations continue for a fourth day and authorities say they expect the death toll to rise.

Ramaphosa's office said he will travel to the town of Mthatha in Eastern Cape province, where the floods hit hardest when they began in the early hours of Tuesday.

Ramaphosa's visit will come amid criticism of authorities' early response to the disaster, which was caused by an extreme weather front that brought heavy rain, strong winds and even snow to parts of the province. Forecasters warned about the extreme weather last week.

The head of the provincial government said the rescue effort was "paralysed" in the first few hours after the floods because of a lack of resources like specialised search and rescue teams, divers and K-9 dog units in one of the country's poorest regions.

Eastern Cape Premier Oscar Mabuane said the province of 7.2 million people has just one official rescue helicopter, which had to be brought from another city more than 500 kilometres away.

The floods in the predawn hours caught many unaware, with victims washed away along with parts of their houses and other debris. Authorities said they expected more bodies to be recovered as rescue teams search the floodwater and what is left of damaged houses and other structures to look for those still missing. Many children are among the dead.

"I need psychological help because I saw people dying in front of me. They were being dragged by the water along with the corrugated iron," said Zinathi Vuso, a resident of Mthatha.

"Others tried to hold or climb onto something, but it would break and they ended up dead. That is why you are seeing people still getting recovered and others are yet to be found."

Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa, who led a national government team deployed to the province earlier in the week, said on national broadcaster SABC late Thursday that authorities were appealing for residents to report missing people so rescuers could get a better idea of how many people they were still looking for.

"We are in a crisis. A real disaster," Hlabisa said. "The more water subsidies, the more people will be found." (AP)

As legal fight over Guard deployment plays out, Noem vows to continue Trump's immigration crackdown

LOS ANGELES, June 13: Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem pledged to carry on with the Trump administration's immigration crackdown despite waves of unrest across the US.

Hours after her comment on Thursday, a judge directed the president to return control to California over National Guard troops he deployed after protests erupted over the immigration crackdown, but an appeals court quickly put the brakes on that and temporarily blocked the order that was to go into effect on Friday.

The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals scheduled a hearing on the matter for Tuesday.

The federal judge's temporary restraining order said the Guard deployment was illegal and both violated the Tenth Amendment and exceeded President Donald Trump's statutory authority. The order applied only to the National Guard troops and not Marines who were also deployed to the LA protests. The judge said he would not rule on the Marines because they were not out on the streets yet. Gov. Gavin Newsom who had asked the judge for an emergency stop to troops helping carry out immigration raids, had praised the order before it was blocked saying "today was really about a test of democracy, and today we passed the test" and had said he would be redeploying Guard soldiers to "what they were doing before Donald Trump commandeered them".

In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump

thanked the appeals court Friday morning.

"If I didn't send the Military into Los Angeles, that city would be burning to the ground right now," he said.

White House spokesperson Anna Kelly said the president acted within his powers and that the federal judge's order "puts our brave federal officials in danger. The district court has no authority to usurp the President's authority as Commander in Chief".

The developments unfolded as protests continued in cities nationwide and the country braced for major demonstrations against Trump over the weekend.

This is only going to continue,' DHS chief says of raids

Noem said the immigration raids that fuelled the protests would move forward and agents have thousands of targets.

"This is only going to continue until we have peace on the streets of Los Angeles," she said during a news conference that was interrupted by shouting from US Sen. Alex Padilla, a California Democrat who was forcibly removed from the event. Newsom has warned that the military intervention is part of a broader effort by Trump to overturn norms at the heart of the nation's democracy. He also said sending Guard troops on the raids has further inflamed tensions in LA. So far the protests have been centred mostly in downtown near City Hall and a federal detention centre where some immigrants are being held. Much of the sprawling city has been spared from the protests.

On the third night of an 8 p.m. curfew, Los Angeles police arrested several demonstrators who refused orders to leave a street downtown. Earlier in the night, officers with the Department of Homeland Security deployed flash bangs to disperse a crowd that had gathered near the jail, sending protesters sprinting away.

Those incidents were outliers. As with the past two nights, the hours-long demonstrations remained peaceful and upbeat, drawing a few hundred attendees who marched through downtown chanting, dancing and poking fun at the Trump administration's characterisation of the city as a "war zone".

Elsewhere, demonstrations have picked up across the US, emerging in more than a dozen major cities. Some have led to clashes with police and hundreds have been arrested.

Noem calls action in LA a blueprint

The immigration agents conducting the raids in LA are "putting together a model and a blueprint" for other communities, Noem said.

She pledged that federal authorities "are not going away" even though, she said, officers have been hit with rocks and bricks and assaulted. She said people with criminal records who are in the country illegally and violent protesters will "face consequences".

Mongolia gets new prime minister who pledged to address economic demands of protesters

ULAANBAATAR (Mongolia), June 13: The new prime minister of Mongolia has pledged to address the economic demands of protesters after their daily rallies led to the fall of his predecessor.

Lawmakers approved former parliament speaker Zandanshatar Gombojav as prime minister by an overwhelming majority in a vote late Thursday night.

His election appeared to mark the end of several weeks of political uncertainty in a still-young democracy of 3.4 million people that is sandwiched between much larger China and Russia. The new leader faces multiple challenges including high inflation, a looming government budget deficit and fears of power shortages this winter.

Speaking ahead of the vote in parliament, Zandanshatar said this year's government spending needs to be reduced by about USD 640 million to avoid a significant revenue shortfall.

"Revision of the budget has become inevitable," the former banker said, saying he would submit a revised budget to parliament next week.

Zandanshatar, 45, studied economics at university in Russia and was vice director of one of the largest commercial banks in Mongolia. (AP)

Activists stopped in Libya, Egypt ahead of planned march on Gaza

RABAT (MOROCCO), June 13: A planned march protesting aid restrictions on Gaza faced uncertainty on Friday as organisers in Cairo awaited Egyptian approval and Libyan authorities blocked a convoy of activists en route.

Activists from 80 countries planned to march to Egypt's border with Gaza to spotlight the deepening humanitarian crises facing Palestinians since Israel began blocking aid trucks from entering the coastal enclave in March. It slightly eased restrictions last month, allowing limited aid in, but experts warn the measures fall far short.

The Global March on Gaza was slated to be among the largest demonstrations of its kind in recent years, coinciding with other efforts including a boat carrying activists and aid that was intercepted by Israel's military en route to Gaza earlier this week.

Organisers said hundreds arriving in Cairo had been detained and deported to their home countries in Europe and North Africa. They said they planned to gather at a campsite outside of Cairo on Friday to

prepare for the Sunday march, noting that authorities had not yet granted them authorisation to travel through the Sinai, which Egypt considers a highly sensitive area.

"We continue to urge the Egyptian government to permit this peaceful march, which aligns with Egypt's own stated commitment to restoring stability at its border and addressing the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza," they said in a statement.

Hicham El-Ghaoui, one of the group's spokespeople, said the group would refrain from demonstrating until receiving clarity on whether Egypt will authorise their protest. The planned demonstrations cast an uncomfortable spotlight on Egypt, one of the Arab countries that has cracked down on pro-Palestinian activists even as it publicly condemns aid restrictions and calls for an end to the war. The government, a major recipient of US military aid that maintains ties with Israel, has arrested and charged 186 activists with threatening state security since the war began, according to a June tally by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. (AP)

British Indians mourn lives lost in Ahmedabad-London plane crash

LONDON, June 13: Britain's Indian community was understandably shaken by the tragic loss of lives in the London-bound Air India plane crash, with temples around the UK on Friday witnessing impromptu prayers and vigils in memory of the victims.

The Ahmedabad-Gatwick flight route is a popular one for the diaspora with families in both countries, especially Britain's estimated 600,000-strong Gujarati community. The National Council of Gujarati Organisations UK (NCGO-UK) described it as a "dark and tragic day" for the community as it has been co-ordinating plans for a vigil in memory of the lives lost.

"This is a dark and tragic day for our community. Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families, and all those affected by this heartbreaking incident. The Gujarati and wider Indian communities across the United Kingdom and around the world are united in grief over this unimaginable loss," noted the NCGO-UK.

The family of Vishwash Kumar Ramesh in Leicester expressed their relief at his miraculous escape as the sole survivor of the crash, while still in anguish at his missing brother Ajay. "We were all in shock as soon as we heard what happened, just utter shock; speechless," Nayan Kumar Ramesh told the BBC. "He [Vishwash] himself has no idea how he survived, how he got out of the plane. When he called us, he was just more worried about my other brother, like 'Find Ajay, find Ajay'. That's all he cares about at the moment," he said.

India Global Forum's annual UK-India Week, which begins next week and is set to be addressed by leading ministers and policymakers from both governments, announced a commemoration of the victims of the tragedy.

"As we come together next week for our annual UK-India Week, we will take a moment to reflect on this loss, commemorating those who perished and reaffirming our commitment to the

living bond between our countries," said IGF's British Gujarati founder and chairman Manoj Ladwa.

"The passengers on board, spanning generations and professions, from students and business people to tourists and families, were a living embodiment of the bridge that binds the United Kingdom and India. This heartbreaking tragedy only reinforces the human dimension of that bond," he said.

Leicester East member of Parliament, Shivani Raja, who is of Gujarati heritage, has opened up her constituency office in the city for those affected by the tragedy.

"This flight route is very popular amongst the British Gujarati community, and many have been left understandably shaken by today's horrific events. My office remains open to support local residents who have been impacted," said the Conservative Party MP.

Fellow Gujarati-origin Tory MP and shadow foreign secretary Priti Patel also expressed her concerns for the victims and "British nationals involved" in Parliament.

Shree Jalaram Mandir in Leicester was among the temples that witnessed devotees flocking for prayers as news of the tragedy unfolded. In London, the heavily Gujarati hub of Harrow witnessed chants and prayers at the Palmerston Road Temple, with local MP Bob Blackman among the mourners.

"A third of my constituents emanate from Gujarat, so my thoughts and prayers are with the families and relatives who are obviously concerned about the plight of the 242 passengers on that flight. I understand that the plane came down in a residential area, so the people who live there will also be affected," Blackman said in the House of Commons on Thursday.

"As a person of Gujarati heritage and an MP who represents a large number of Gujarati constituents, I, too, would like to express my shock, horror and sympathies over the devastating news coming out of India," noted Independent MP Shockat Adam. (PTI)

IMEEC to have profound impact on world connectivity, says Jaishankar

MARSEILLES (France), June 13: Terming connectivity as an important part of diplomacy, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said the IMEEC once completed will offer a significant land- and sea-based connectivity to Europe all the way up to the Pacific.

The India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) will comprise two separate corridors, the east corridor connecting India to the Gulf and the northern corridor connecting the Gulf to Europe.

Highlighting the need for land, sea, and air connectivity "in as many options and as many variants as possible," Jaishankar told a panel discussion at the inaugural Raisina Mediterranean 2025 here, "The connectivity initiatives, I think, have become a very important part of diplomacy today."

Even when the IMEEC is not in place as yet, Europe has a "fairly ready and efficient access" to

India's western coast, despite the threats by Houthis to shipping, he said. "We are making very major investments in railways, and then trying to connect eastern India all the way to Vietnam."

Reminding the audience how the Suez Canal took ages to make, he said, "But once it was done, you see what a profound impact it's had on the world. So actually, if we can pull that (IMEEC) off, you will get from Europe a route all the way to the Pacific, which will be significantly land based, but partly sea based."

"And in some ways, it would be a counter to the reliance on the Arctic, whenever the Arctic opens up. The connectivity game is a long game," he said.

On the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi in 2023, India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE and the US announced



an MoU committing to work together to develop the IMEEC.

The two corridors intend to enhance connectivity, increase efficiency, reduce costs, secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility and generate jobs, resulting in a transformative integration of Asia, Europe and

Middle East, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

The panel discussion was themed "The Next Special Relationship: Deepening the Strategic Partnership between the Indo-Pacific and Europe."

Jaishankar was joined by Ararat Mirzoyan, the Minister of Foreign

Affairs of Armenia; Abigail Vasselier, Director Policy & European Affairs; Head of Programmes, Foreign Relations, Mercator Institute for China Studies, Germany, and Francesco Parisi, President and Managing Director of the Parisi Group of Companies, Italy.

While answering a question by the moderator and without taking names, Jaishankar indicated trust-based equations with countries such as who stands by in times of difficulty will have consequences on choices for trade too.

"Trust means, intuitively, we are comfortable with each other ... by having similar values, similar approaches, sometimes by saying, okay, in my difficulty, who supported me, or in my security needs, who was willing to go the extra mile? It makes a difference."

"So, let us say we've just come out of some security episodes right now. When I look at who stood by

us, who would I trust, with whom am I comfortable, it will surely have consequences on my choices and on my decisions," Jaishankar said, apparently referring to the recent India-Pakistan conflict post the April 22 Pahalgalam terror attack.

He had also pointed out how there's a realisation in Europe that a lot of its problems and solutions will have to be analysed and thought through by Europe itself and said, "A Europe which is today more self aware, which is more self reliant, which is more strategically autonomous, will obviously want to look for partners who think similarly and can work with Europe in that respect."

"And I think that gives a kind of an additional impetus to India-Europe relations which were evolutionary, but I predict a very sharp acceleration in that," the EAM added. (PTI)

Bid to showcase history of Burma Campaign Arunachal govt to develop World War II museum



ITANAGAR, June 13: The Arunachal Pradesh government will develop the World War II museum at Jairampur in Changlang, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein said, emphasising the region's importance in the Burma Campaign.

The museum is located at the historical Stilwell Road, a strategic World War II route. Chairing a meeting here on Thursday, Mein noted the historical significance of the Pangsau Pass and the Stilwell Road.

"This area is of immense historical value,

and we aim to develop a one-of-a-kind museum to preserve and showcase this legacy while transforming it into a major heritage-cum-tourism hub," he said.

The deputy CM said the collection of artefacts needs to be enhanced so that a dedicated gallery showcasing the contributions of the indigenous people can be developed, noting the role played by people of the Singpho, Khamti, Adi, Nocte, Mishmi, and Naga tribes, who served as soldiers and porters during what is popularly known as the 'Burma War'.

During the Pangsau Pass Winter Festival, a Willy Jeep rally from the Hump WWII Museum in Pasighat, East Siang district, to Pangsau Pass, as well as a supercar rally, have been planned to attract tourists and history enthusiasts.

For this, a dedicated committee has been constituted with Research Minister Dasanglu Pul as the chair, Mein as the chief advisor, and MLAs Laisam Simai and Oken Tayeng as advisors, besides Research Secretary BJ Duai as member secretary.

Mein was speaking at the meeting of this committee.

Lt Col TC Tayum made a detailed presentation on the artefacts collected so far for the museum. (PTI)

Khandu expresses condolences on tragic Air India Flight accident in Ahmedabad



HT Bureau

NAMSAL, June 13: Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu, has expressed his heartfelt condolences on the tragic Air India flight accident that occurred earlier today in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

In his condolence message, Chief Minister Khandu said, "I am deeply shocked and saddened by the loss of precious lives in the Air India flight tragedy in Ahmedabad. On behalf of the people of Arunachal Pradesh, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the be-

reaved families. We share in their grief and stand in solidarity during this painful time."

He further added, "May the departed souls rest in eternal peace. I pray to the Almighty to give strength and courage to the families and loved ones of those who have perished in this tragic incident."

The Government of Arunachal Pradesh stands united with the nation in mourning this heartbreaking loss and extends prayers and support to all those affected by the tragedy.

A revolver, a hand grenade, live ammunition, organisation stamps and ₹ 1.5 lakh in cash were recovered from his possession

NSCN operative arrested in Arunachal



ITANAGAR, June 13: Arunachal Pradesh Police has arrested a National Socialist Council of Nagaland (K-YA) operative in Tirap district, an official said.

Acting on intelligence input by Assam Rifles, the state police's Tirap unit carried out an operation earlier this week that resulted in the arrest of NSCN (K-YA) cadre self-styled captain Kamwang Chakhtey, SP Singjalia Singpho said on Friday.

He said Chakhtey had been involved with the group since 1995.

A revolver, a hand grenade, live ammunition, organisation stamps and ₹ 1.5 lakh in cash were recovered from his possession, the official said.

The SP said the arrest delivers a major blow to the outfit's local network and reinforces public confidence in the security forces' dedication to peace and security. (PTI)

ArSRLM conducts orientation workshop for prospective employers under DDU-GKY 2.0



HT Bureau

NAMSAL, June 13: The Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM) successfully organized an orientation workshop for prospective Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) 2.0 on June 12, 2025, at the ArSRLM Office in Itanagar. This initiative marks a proactive and strategic move by the state to strengthen the rural skilling ecosystem through deeper engagement with potential partners from both local and national levels.

The workshop was specifically designed to provide comprehensive insights into the newly revamped DDU-GKY 2.0 framework. Key topics covered during the orientation included the process of applying for Permanent Registration Numbers (PRNs), detailed protocols for project application submission, and a thorough understanding of the overall project life cycle. By focusing on the operational and compliance dimensions of the scheme, the event aimed to equip interested PIAs with the necessary knowledge to effectively partner in its successful

implementation.

A total of ten reputed organizations representing various industries and domains participated in the workshop. These included notable institutions such as FlyWings Simulators Training Center Pvt. Ltd., All India Education Health and Social Development Council, and Topu Bui Multipurpose Welfare Society. The event provided these stakeholders a vital opportunity to familiarize themselves with the expectations, operational frameworks, and opportunities associated with becoming PIAs under DDU-GKY 2.0. It also served as an important platform for introducing the scheme to several local institutions that were engaging with it for the first time.

The workshop was held under the visionary leadership of Ms. Sangeeta Yirang, APCS (AG), CEO-cum-State Mission Director of ArSRLM, whose guidance has been instrumental in driving skilling initiatives across the state. She was ably supported by Ruzing Bellai, Chief Operating Officer (Skills), ArSRLM, who played a key role in conceptualizing and overseeing the event. The successful execution of the workshop was

meticulously coordinated by Nabam Ompi, State Mission Manager (Mobilization, Placement & Branding), ArSRLM.

A highlight of the event was the technical session delivered by Shashank Gahlot, Program Manager at Ernst & Young LLP, who provided detailed guidance on the operational nuances and compliance requirements under DDU-GKY 2.0. His insights were especially valuable to first-time participants and local stakeholders seeking clarity on project execution under the revised guidelines.

In addition to the orientation workshop, a significant milestone was achieved with the signing of a non-financial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ArSRLM and the Skill Development Network (popularly known as the Wadhvani Foundation). Facilitated by Ernst & Young LLP and coordinated under the guidance of the COO (Skills), the MoU aims to enhance the employability of DDU-GKY candidates in Arunachal Pradesh by leveraging digital learning platforms and blended training methodologies. This collaboration is expected to play a crucial role in bridging the skills gap and improving placement outcomes for rural youth in the state.

The orientation workshop and the associated MoU represent a transformative step in Arunachal Pradesh's ongoing commitment to rural empowerment. By aligning with national frameworks like DDU-GKY 2.0 and actively building capacity among prospective implementing partners, ArSRLM is paving the way for a more inclusive, digitally enabled, and placement-oriented skill development ecosystem across the state.

Rainfall to revive in Arunachal after week of hot, dry conditions: Met dept



ITANAGAR, June 13: After a week of hot and dry conditions, Arunachal Pradesh is likely to receive a much-needed spell of rainfall across the state till June 19, the meteorological office here said on Friday.

Weather activity is expected to intensify significantly from June 16 onwards, bringing scattered to widespread rain and thunderstorms to several districts, the State Disaster Management Department said in a statement.

According to district-wise forecast, Tawang, Kurung Kumey, West Kameng, Papumpare, Namsai, Changlang, and Longding are likely to witness frequent and widespread showers on some days.

Meanwhile, East and West Kameng, Kra Daadi, Kamle, and

Pakke Kessang — regions that began the week with minimal or no rain — are expected to experience a marked increase in rainfall.

Rainfall is also likely to pick up in Upper and Lower Subansiri, Siang, and West Siang districts, the statement added.

The eastern and central belts, including Upper Siang, Dibang Valley, Lohit, and Anjaw, will particularly see a rise in rainfall between June 17 and 19. Residents in these areas are advised to remain alert to the risk of thunderstorms and lightning, it added.

From June 1 to 11, the state recorded 81.7 mm of rainfall, 39 per cent below the long period average (LPA) of 134.7 mm. The week between June 5 and 11 was even drier, with just 11.2 mm of

rainfall, a staggering 88 per cent shortfall from the normal weekly average of 94.5 mm.

While rainfall from June 13 to 19 is still expected to remain below normal at 53.7 mm, the situation is projected to improve significantly in the subsequent week.

Between June 20 and 26, rainfall is expected to exceed the average, reaching approximately 130 mm compared to the normal 106.5 mm, it said. Temperature patterns have reflected the dry weather. Over the past week, maximum temperatures were above normal in several parts of the state.

On June 12, the maximum temperature in Itanagar touched 39.7 degrees Celsius, 7.8 degrees above normal, while Pasighat recorded 38.6 degrees, 7.6 degrees above average.

These unusually high readings are largely attributed to weak monsoonal activity, dry continental easterly/northeasterly winds, and clear skies that allowed higher solar insulation, the statement said.

The forecast suggests that daytime temperatures may continue to rise 2–3 degrees Celsius above normal in many areas over the next 24 hours, resulting in hot and humid conditions, especially across the plains.

However, maximum temperatures are likely to return to near-normal levels as the rain sets in.

Minimum temperatures will remain normal to slightly above normal through the forecast period. (PTI)

Widespread village-level outreach and farmer-centric impact

Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan concludes in Arunachal Pradesh

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, June 13: The Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan (VKSA), a first-of-its-kind, farmer-centric initiative spearheaded by the Government of India, concluded its extensive campaign across Arunachal Pradesh on June 12, after a vibrant and impactful fortnight-long outreach from May 29. The campaign, aimed at transforming agriculture through technological dissemination and grassroots participation, touched the remotest corners of the state—including high-altitude frontier villages—setting a remarkable benchmark in inclusive agricultural development.

The campaign was launched at the national level by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare & Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and was coordinated in Arunachal Pradesh by the ICAR-Agricultural Technology Application Research Institute (ATARI), Zone VI, Guwahati. Key implementing partners included the line departments of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, ICAR institutes, and the Colleges of the Central Agricultural University, Imphal. Playing a pivotal role in on-ground execution, all 17 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) across the state actively participated and ensured the campaign's reach into every district.

In a state where difficult terrain and sparse connectivity often challenge service delivery, the VKSA remarkably managed to connect with over 1.24 lakh farmers—comprising 54,421 males and 69,881 females—across approximately 2,291 villages. The near-equal gender

representation further underlined the inclusivity of the campaign. Anchored around climate-resilient, region-specific, and organic farming solutions, the initiative promoted sustainable practices suited to Arunachal Pradesh's diverse agro-climatic zones and ecologically sensitive environment.

A key highlight of the campaign was the symbolic and strategic launch of the VKSA Krishi Rath, carried out in partnership with Indian Army personnel from frontier villages such as Zemithang, Kaho, Kibithoo, Taksing, Lapra, and Aropo. These villages, located along the international borders with China, served as the starting points for the Krishi Rath's journey—carrying essential information, best practices, and agricultural technologies to farmers in the remotest locations. The Rath's outreach not only brought agricultural extension services closer to people but also strengthened national visibility and integration of the border regions.

Throughout the campaign duration, 34 multidisciplinary field teams comprising scientists and departmental officials undertook an impressive total of 845 events across the state. These included a range of dynamic activities such as demonstrations on improved cultivation techniques, farmer-scientist dialogues, and participatory data collection exercises. Notable among these was the Seed Exchange Program, during which around 40 farmers participated in exchanging over 20 indigenous and improved varieties of rice, pulses, vegetables, and horticultural crops—preserving biodiversity while promoting farmer-to-farmer knowledge



sharing. Additionally, Animal Health Camps and distribution of critical agricultural inputs were conducted to support both crop and livestock productivity.

The VKSA's approach was not limited to top-down knowledge dissemination. It actively encouraged two-way learning—empowering farmers with hands-on training while also enabling scientists to gather on-ground insights, traditional practices, and feedback that will help shape future agricultural strategies tailored to local contexts.

Reflecting on the initiative, Dr G Kadirvel, Director of ICAR ATARI Zone VI, said, "This is not just a campaign—it's a step toward agricultural self-re-

liance. When frontier villages like Kibithoo and Taksing host seed exchanges and Krishi Rath campaigns, it signals not only inclusion but a bold march toward Atmanirbhar Krishi. Arunachal Pradesh has shown that geographical remoteness is no barrier to innovation and enthusiasm."

The VKSA's culmination in the state marks a dynamic synergy between scientific innovation, public policy, and indigenous agricultural knowledge. The campaign's resounding success reaffirms the strength of the "One Nation, One Agriculture, One Team" approach, reflecting the central government's vision for an empowered, self-sustaining agri-

cultural sector.

Meanwhile, the VKSA—launched nationwide from Itanagar on May 29—concluded today with successful state-level events across Arunachal Pradesh. The 12-day campaign focused on raising awareness about improved kharif crop technologies, promoting natural farming practices, guiding scientific crop selection based on soil health data, and encouraging balanced fertilizer usage. It also aimed to bridge the gap between government schemes and farmers, ensuring better implementation and understanding of both central and state programs.

Particularly notable was the distribu-

tion of Soil Health Cards and maize seeds to farmers, an initiative that drew significant appreciation from participants and stakeholders alike. In Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district, the VKSA was carried out across all six blocks, covering 220 villages and directly benefiting 7,748 farmers. The initiative was led by the Subject Matter Specialists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Papum Pare, supported by district-level teams from the Departments of Agriculture, Horticulture, and Veterinary Sciences, Central Agricultural University, Pasighat, and Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM).

The concluding ceremonies were held at Dirga village in Kakoi Circle and Hawa Camp in Kimin Circle. The events witnessed the presence of key dignitaries including State President of BJMKM Arunachal Pradesh, Shri Gumsen Lollen; Director of Agriculture, T.D. Neckom; Director of Horticulture, Karyom Doji; Assistant Agricultural Marketing Adviser (In-Charge Northeast) from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Shri Tapash Bhattacharjee; Jt. Director (PP) cum Nodal Officer VKSA, Shri Mark Boje; DAO Maze Piel; DHO Joram Bath; DVO Dr. Takio Taram; Senior Scientist & Head of KVK, Dr. Bangkeng Perme, as well as local panchayat leaders, officials, and farmers.

The collective participation and cross-sectoral collaboration throughout the campaign underscore Arunachal Pradesh's commitment to inclusive agricultural development and serve as a replicable model for similar initiatives in challenging terrains.

Trump repeats his India-Pak claims for 'nth time', PM Modi silent: Cong

NEW DELHI, June 13: With US President Donald Trump repeating his claim that he "stopped a war between India and Pakistan", the Congress on Friday said Trump continues to make his claims for the "nth time" and Prime Minister Narendra Modi continues to be silent on them.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared a video clip of Trump's remarks on X in which he repeated his claim that he "stopped a war between India and Pakistan" and stopped it "with trade".

Ramesh said that as India is engulfed in grief over the Ahmedabad aircraft tragedy, President Trump continues to make his claims on India and Pakistan for the "nth time".

"This was at the Kennedy Centre in Washington DC yesterday. And the Prime Minister continues to be silent on these claims," the Congress leader said.

Asserting that he "can solve anything", Trump on Thursday

said India and Pakistan have had a long time rivalry over Kashmir and he will bring the two nations together. India has been maintaining its stance that Kashmir is a bilateral issue not open to third-party mediation.

"We are going to get those two (India and Pakistan) getting together," Trump said in response to a question during a bill signing ceremony in the White House.

"I told them, India and Pakistan, they have had a long time rivalry over Kashmir and I said I can solve anything", he said.

Trump said he asked the countries how long has this rivalry been going on and they said 2,000 years, to which he replied, smiling, oh, that's a problem. The US president repeated his claim that he stopped a war between India and Pakistan with phone calls and trade.

"I stopped a war between India and Pakistan, and I stopped it with trade. I don't think I've ever seen a story written about it, but it was



pretty, pretty cool. They were getting ready," he said.

He said it was "Pakistan's turn to hit, and eventually they're going to go nuclear. And I stopped it. I called each, I respect each leader greatly. I know them, and I spoke to them, and I talked about trade."

Trump said he told the leaders of India and Pakistan that they are not "trading with the US if you're going to go to war, if you're going

to start throwing nuclear weapons around".

"And I said it to both of them, and they were both unbelievable. Actually, they understood it exactly. They stopped. I stopped that war with phone calls and trade."

"And India is here right now, negotiating a trade deal, and Pakistan is coming, I think, next week. And I'm very proud of that," Trump said.

Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, with India carrying out precision strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the early hours of May 7. Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9, and 10. The Indian side responded strongly to the Pakistani actions.

The on-ground hostilities ended with an understanding of stopping the military actions following talks between the directors general of military operations of both sides on May 10.

Trump has repeatedly been claiming that the US has stopped India and Pakistan from fighting. However, India has been consistently maintaining that the understanding on cessation of hostilities with Pakistan was reached following direct talks between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two militaries.

The Congress on Thursday claimed India has suffered three

"huge diplomatic setbacks" from the US which is constantly hypenating India and Pakistan and that the Modi government's foreign policy has "failed" as it is driven by domestic political considerations.

Congress general secretary Ramesh had said the US' recent statements were both a "challenge and a warning" and required serious thinking "when the PM is only interested in playing divisive politics". He had also said Prime Minister Modi should leave aside his "stubbornness" to call an all-party meeting and a special session of Parliament.

Ramesh had said US Army General Michael Kurilla calling Pakistan a "phenomenal partner" in the counterterrorism world, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir's reported visit to Washington DC for the US Army Day celebrations later this week and the recent remarks by a Trump administration spokesperson were "three huge setbacks" to India. (PTI)

PM Modi meets family members of ex-Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani



AHMEDABAD, June 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday met the family members of former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani, who died in the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad, and remembered him as a humble and hardworking leader.

Rupani, 68, was among the 241 passengers of the London-bound flight who died in the horrific crash on Thursday afternoon.

PM Modi on Friday visited the site of the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad and met the injured victims at the civil hospital here. After that, he also met the family members of Rupani in the city.

"Met the family of Shri Vijaybhai Rupani Ji. It is unimaginable that Vijaybhai is not in our midst. I've known him for decades. We worked together, shoulder to shoulder, including during some of the most challenging times," Modi said in his posts on X.

"Vijaybhai was humble and hardworking, firmly committed to the Party's ideology. Rising up the ranks, he held various responsibilities in the Organisation and went on to serve diligently as Gujarat's Chief Minister," he said.

In every role assigned, he distinguished himself, be it in the Rajkot Municipal Corporation, as Rajya Sabha MP, as Gujarat BJP President and as Cabinet Minister in the state government, Modi said.

"Vijaybhai and I also worked extensively when he was Gujarat CM. He ushered in many measures that enhanced Gujarat's growth trajectory, particularly in boosting Ease of Living. Will always cherish the interactions we had. My thoughts are with his family and friends in this hour of grief. Om Shanti," the PM said.

The PM met the former chief minister's wife Anjali Rupani and other family members at GujSail building near the airport. Rupani was CM of Gujarat for two terms from August 7, 2016 to September 11, 2021, after winning the Gujarat assembly elections from Rajkot West seat. He was presently the BJP's in charge for Punjab. (PTI)

'Nomadic Elephant', 'Khaan Quest' exercises significant milestone in India's defence diplomacy: MoD



NEW DELHI, June 13: India-Mongolia bilateral military exercise 'Nomadic Elephant' and upcoming multinational exercise 'Khaan Quest' in that country mark a significant milestone in India's "expanding defence diplomacy" and underscore the strategic importance of its partnership with Mongolia, the defence ministry said on Friday.

The 17th edition of Exercise Nomadic Elephant concluded today at Ulaanbaatar while Exercise Khaan Quest will kick off in Mongolia from June 14.

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh along with Lt Gen Pushpendra Singh, Director General Operational Logistics and Strategic Movement, attended the closing ceremony of exercise 'Nomadic Elephant'.

"The conduct of exercises Nomadic Elephant and Khaan Quest marks a significant milestone in India's expanding defence diplomacy and underscores the strategic importance of its partnership with Mongolia," it said in a statement.

The Indian Army contingent, comprising 45 personnel predominantly from a battalion of the Arunachal Scouts, actively participated in the two-week-long exercise in Ulaanbaatar.

"The focus of the joint training was to enhance interoperability between the Indian Army and the Mongolian Armed Forces while operating as a combined task force in semi-conventional scenarios in semi-urban and mountainous terrain under United Nations mandate," it said.

Defence Secretary Singh commended the professionalism, dedication and conduct of the Indian soldiers during Exercise Nomadic Elephant.

He said this exercise is a "testament to the enduring bond of friendship, mutual trust and shared cultural linkages between India and Mongolia".

It served as a platform for meaningful military co-operation and demonstrates India's unwavering commitment to regional peace and stability, Singh was quoted as saying in the statement.

He added that the Indian Army's contribution to such joint initiatives not only "enhances operational readiness but also reinforces India's role as a responsible stakeholder in global peacekeeping efforts".

The defence secretary is also scheduled to attend the opening ceremony of the multinational joint military exercise 'Khaan Quest' 2025 at the same location tomorrow, in which an Indian Army contingent is also participating.

The annual joint military exercise, scheduled to be held from June 14-28, will bring together military forces from around the world to collaborate and enhance their peacekeeping capabilities.

The Indian Army contingent is being represented mainly by troops from a battalion of the Kumaon Regiment along with personnel from other services, the ministry said on June 11.

"One woman officer and two women soldiers will also form part of the contingent," it had said. The previous edition of this exercise was conducted in Mongolia from July 27 to August 9, 2024. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, June 13: It is the duty of the State to ensure the safety and well-being of prisoners in its custody and "gangs" are not permitted to proliferate in jails, the Delhi High Court has said while granting compensation to the kin of a person who died in a fight between two groups of inmates in prison.

The high court said the State, owing a duty to ensure the security of the general public, including persons who are incarcerated, has a responsibility to compensate in cases of unnatural deaths in custody. Justice Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar directed the Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) to pay ₹ 3 lakh compensation to the kin of deceased Javed, out of which ₹ 1 lakh was earlier paid to his mother (now deceased).

"This court is of the firm opinion that it is the bounden duty of the State to ensure the safety of persons who are in its custody. While the deceased victim may have been a person with criminal antecedents, the State is not absolved of its duty to ensure the safety and well-being of the prisoners in its custody," the high court said in its judgment passed on Thursday.

The court said the fact that two 'rival gangs', according to the contention of the authorities, chose to



have an altercation and that the victim participated in it, "would not absolve the authorities of their bounden responsibility" to carry out their duty of ensuring the safety and security of prisoners.

The court was of the view that part of the duties of the State is to ensure that such "gangs" are not permitted to proliferate in jails and certainly to ensure that such gang rivalries are not permitted to come to the fore.

The court said the fact that such an altercation took place and two "rival gangs" had access to weapons or tools, by which they have been able to cause injuries to each other, leading to the death of Javed, speaks highly of the manner

in which the jail authorities have discharged their duties.

The petition seeking compensation was initially filed by Javed's mother who said he had served seven-year imprisonment in a criminal case and was to come out from jail on May 5, 2013.

However, on May 3, 2013, she was informed of the death of her son and the cause was apparently a fight between two groups of inmates in the jail. The woman, who was granted an interim compensation of ₹ 1 lakh, died in 2016.

Thereafter, Javed's siblings and their children pursued the litigation and urged the court to grant them compensation on the claim that they were dependent on him. (PTI)

'Every AIIMS serves as centre of healthcare innovation, learning'

NEW DELHI, June 13: Strategically located to address regional disparities, every AIIMS serves as a centre of healthcare innovation and learning, delivering equitable, affordable and evidence-based healthcare services, Union Health Minister J P Nadda said on Friday.

These institutions reflect the government's commitment to strengthen public health systems, raising standards of care and nurturing a new generation of healthcare leaders, he said.

Nadda made the remarks while virtually addressing the first edition of a conclave on "Best Practices" organised by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Nagpur.

The two-day conclave seeks to showcase the exemplary practices adopted by various AIIMS institutions, with a focus on patient-centric care, operational efficiency, digital transformation, and academic excellence.

AIIMS institutes from across the country -- AIIMS Bhopal, AIIMS Jammu, AIIMS Bilaspur, AIIMS Jodhpur, AIIMS Nagpur, AIIMS Deogarh, AIIMS Patna, AIIMS Gorakhpur, AIIMS Guwahati and AIIMS Raipur -- along with the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) division and the Ministry of Defence collaborated in the conclave.

Underlining the significance of AIIMS, Nadda said "each AIIMS, established as an institute of national importance, integrates advanced clinical care, high-quality medical education and research excellence."

Nadda emphasised the importance of sharing the best practices and innovations of each new AIIMS with other AIIMS for their wider adoption and utilisation.

He also commended AIIMS Nagpur for "taking a lead and organising the first conclave on best practices".

Highlighting the importance of the conclave, Nadda said it is a "pioneering initiative that seeks to consolidate rich experiences of AIIMS in three key domains: teaching-learning and research;



hospital services; and governance and patient convenience".

He also underlined the significant role played by AIIMS in readying doctors to meet future healthcare challenges.

Nadda added that "in the domain of teaching-learning, adoption of competency-based medical education curriculum, investment in digital learning, state-of-the-art simulation laboratories and implementation of structured mentorship programmes signal a deep commitment to educational excellence".

The health minister also highlighted that "new AIIMS are increasingly contributing to India's scientific advancement through regionally relevant studies, ethical clinical trials and translational research".

"It is encouraging to see the efforts to foster interdisciplinary collaborations, as these will be key to solve complex public health problems in the years to come."

"AIIMS campuses are redefining patient care by offering high-quality, evidence-based and affordable treatment through advanced infrastructure and a wide spectrum of specialties," Nadda said.

"Use of e-governance tools, transparent administrative frameworks, and patient-focused innovations such as Jan Aushadhi Kendras, digital registration systems and dedicated helpdesks demonstrate that efficiency and compassion can coexist in public healthcare settings," he added. (PTI)

MUMBAI, June 13: Before her flight to London, Air India crew member Maithili Patil had made a final, comforting promise to her father, Moreshwar Patil, that she would call him once she reached the city. But the call did not come.

Patil, 23, is among 12 crew members of ill-fated Air India's Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft (AI-171) that crashed immediately after taking off from Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon.

A resident of Nhava village, Patil joined Air India two years ago and is the daughter of an ONGC labour contractor, former sarpanch of Nhava Jitendra Mhatre told PTI.

Mhatre, who is also Patil's relative, recalled that she had called her father minutes before the tragedy, assuring him that she would call once she reached London. It is estimated that nine crew members, including the two pilots, were from Maharashtra.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft (AI171) with 230 passengers and 12 crew members crashed into the complex of a medical college moments after taking off from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad on Thursday afternoon.

One person survived the crash, while 241 on board were killed, of whom 12 were from Maharashtra, an official said.

He said the aircraft's pilot, Captain Sumeet Pushkaraj Sabharwal (56), was a resident of Jal Vayu Vihar in the Powai area of Mumbai and lived with his elderly parents.

The co-pilot of the flight, Clive Kunder, was a resident of the western suburbs of Mumbai, as per his social media account.

Cabin crew member Deepak Pathak lived in Badlapur in neighbouring Thane district.

Pathak's sister had earlier said he spoke to his mother before leaving for London. He had been working with Air India for 11 years, she said.

Aparna Mahadik (43), another crew member, was a resident of Goregaon in the western suburbs, and her husband also works with Air India as a crew member.

She was a relative of NCP leader Sunil Tatkare. Irfan Samir Shaikh, one of the cabin crew members of the flight, had joined the aviation industry only two years ago and had big dreams, which are now shattered, his family member said.

Twenty-two-year-old Shaikh's family resides in the Pimpri Chinchwad area near Pune city.

Shradha Dhavan, a resident of Kalp Nagari complex in the Vaishali Nagar area of Mulund, was also a crew member who perished in the crash, a police official said.

A pall of gloom descended on the housing complex after the news of her death came in, and her family members have rushed to Ahmedabad to provide samples for DNA test, he said.

Roshni Rajendra Songhare and Saineeta Chakravarti, both crew members, hailed from Dombivli and Juhu Koliwada, respectively.

Songhare was also a travel influencer with more than 54,000 followers on Instagram.

The victims also included Mahadev Pawar (68) and his wife Asha (60), who hailed from Hatid village in Sangola of Solapur district. (PTI)

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Monsoon likely to cover most parts of northwest India by June 25: IMD

NEW DELHI, June 13: The southwest monsoon, which regained momentum this week, is expected to cover most parts of northwest India, including Delhi, by June 25, well ahead of the usual dates, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The primary rain-bearing system reached Kerala on May 24, marking its earliest onset over the Indian mainland since 2009, when it arrived on May 23.

Aided by strong low-pressure systems over the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the monsoon advanced quickly over the next few days, covering parts up to central Maharashtra, including Mumbai, and the entire northeast by May 29.

However, it stalled from May

28-29 until June 10-11 before becoming active again.

The lack of rainfall since early June led to a sharp rise in temperatures, triggering heatwave conditions across large parts of northwest and central India since June 8-9.

According to the IMD's extended range forecast, the monsoon is now likely to cover the remaining parts of central and eastern India and some areas of northwest India by June 18.

It is expected to advance over most of northwest India between June 19 and June 25. An IMD official said the system is likely to reach Delhi by June 22-23, ahead of the normal onset date of June 27.

Meteorologists say the date of monsoon onset does not directly



correlate with the total seasonal rainfall. An early or delayed arrival in Kerala or Mumbai does not necessarily indicate similar progress in other parts of the country.

They say the monsoon is influ-

enced by complex global, regional and local factors, marked by significant variability.

In May, the IMD forecast that India is likely to receive 106 per cent of the long-period average

rainfall of 87 cm during the June-September monsoon season.

Rainfall between 96 and 104 per cent of this 50-year average is considered "normal".

Above-normal rainfall is expected in most parts of the country, except Ladakh, adjoining areas of Himachal Pradesh, the northeast, and some parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha.

Some isolated areas in Punjab, Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu may record below-normal rainfall.

The monsoon is crucial for India's agriculture sector, which supports the livelihood of around 42 per cent of the population and contributes 18.2 per cent to the GDP. It also plays a key role in replenishing reservoirs essential for drinking water and power generation. (PTI)

Meghalaya Police reveal malicious plans post Raja Raghuvanshi's murder

Raj mastermind, Raja's killers planned to murder a woman and pass her body as that of Sonam: Police

SHILLONG, June 13: The killers of Indore-based businessman Raja Raghuvanshi had a plan to murder any woman and burn her body to pass it as that of his wife Sonam so that she would be able to be in hiding for a few more days till the truth is known, a Meghalaya police officer said.

The police also found out that Raj Kushwaha, a suspected boyfriend of Sonam, was the mastermind in the murder plot, and she is the co-conspirator.

On the first day of interrogation of Sonam, Raj and three others, who were arrested in connection with the killing of the Raja Raghuvanshi, also revealed that she fled from Meghalaya in a burqa and reached the Madhya Pradesh city using various modes of transport like taxi, bus and train.

"The conspiracy to eliminate Raja was hatched in Indore, shortly before his wedding with Sonam on May 11, and the mastermind is Raj while the woman had agreed to the plot," East Khasi Hills district Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem



told PTI. A few days after the wedding, Raja (29) and Sonam (24) had come to picturesque Sohra in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district and went missing on May 23. His body was found in a gorge near Weisawdong Falls on June 2, while a search continued for Sonam. She emerged in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur, around 1,200 km away, in the early hours of June 9 and surrendered. The police had also arrested her alleged boyfriend, Raj Kushwaha and three others — Vishal, Akash and Anand — who, till

now, were suspected to have been contract killers.

"The three young people were friends, and one of them is a cousin of Raj. It was not a typical contract killing. Yes, the plan was to kill and they did it as a favour to their friend Raj," Syiem said. Raj had given them ₹ 50,000 for the expenditures, he said.

The planning started in February in Indore and they had thought of ways about how Sonam would disappear after the killing of Raja.

"One plan was to make people

believe that she would wash away by a river. Another plan was to murder any woman, burn the body and claim that it was of Sonam. However, none of the plans fructify," the police officer said.

The group had come a few days before the newly-wed couple reached Assam on May 19 and they had initially planned to eliminate Raja somewhere in Guwahati.

As that did not work for some reason, Sonam planned to go to Shillong and Sohra, and according to understanding, all met at Nongriat, the officer said.

Syiem said they started together for Weisawdong Falls, and there all three hit Raja with a machete they bought in Assam and killed him in front of Sonam between 2 pm and 2.18 pm on May 23 before throwing the body in a gorge. (PTI)oon murder in Sohra, the Meghalaya government on Friday decided to strengthen an existing legislation aimed at ensuring the safety of state residents and curbing the entry of criminal elements posing as tourists. (PTI)

Tripura to sign MoU for liver transplant facility: CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, June 13: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday said that the government has made unprecedented progress in health services in the state over the last seven years and initiatives have been taken to improve the infrastructure of district and sub-division hospitals to provide access to health services for everyone.

Saha informed that a MoU will be signed with Mohan Foundation for liver transplant in Agartala in the near future. Saha, who is also the Health Minister of the state, said this while inaugurating the new Cancer Care Facility at ILS Hospital in Agartala today.

At the event, Saha congratulated everyone present on the addition of another new wing to ILS Hospital.

He said, earlier it was believed that cancer had no answer. But in the modern era, with the advancement of science, if cancer is identified at the right time, there is indeed an answer.

"And the ILS authorities have started that work from today. ILS Hospital is providing various services. Along with this, it has created job opportunities for many youth of the state of Tripura. Every Wednesday, many patients from all over the state come to me during the Mukhyamantri Samipesu program. Most of them are from poor sections. Many people sell their land and jewelry and go outside the state for treatment. I tell them that we have all kinds of facilities here as well. The government is trying its best to improve the health sector," he said.

He added that ILS Hospital offers various facilities, and today a state-of-the-art cancer care facility has been opened by ILS.

At the event, Saha said that cancer is the second leading cause of death in the world.

"There are different types of cancer—such as breast cancer, oral cancer, lung cancer, blood cancer, etc. Cancer can also be caused by smoking and consuming tobacco products. More awareness programs need to be conducted



to prevent cancer. The ILS authorities should also come forward in this regard. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Regional Cancer Hospital was inaugurated in Tripura on September 16, 2019. Prime Minister Narendra Modi allocated Rs 42 crore for the infrastructure development of the cancer hospital. State-of-the-art medical equipment including MRI and CT scan were installed there. The success rate of the cancer hospital so far is 27%. Our goal is to make it 50%," he said. The Chief Minister also said that recently a delegation led by the Director of AIIMS came to the state to look into issues related to health services.

"They provided key suggestions, including the introduction of a hospital management course. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will soon be signed for the training of nursing staff and senior resident doctors. Now, all types of treatment including cardiology, nephrology, neurology, urology, plastic surgery, and neurosurgery are being done at GB Hospital," he said.

He informed that state government contemplating to introduce MD Course on Hospital Administration and Management as suggested by AIIMS team.

Saha said that there are now 400 MBBS seats in Tripura. There are 63 seats in the Government Dental College, which will be increased to 100 seats in the future.

Air India cabin crew from Manipur, Lammunthem Singson, was only earning member of family: Cousin

IMPHAL/ KANGPOKPI,

June 13: Twenty-six-year-old Lammunthem Singson, who was one of the two crew members from Manipur and killed in the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad, was the sole earning member of her family, which had faced the brunt of the ethnic violence in the northeastern state. She had last talked to her widowed mother over the phone on June 11, her cousin said on Friday.

Singson told her mother that she would fly to London on Thursday and wanted to sleep early the previous night, he said. The third child among four siblings, Singson was the "only daughter and their widowed mother had struggled much to raise all of them", her cousin Lun Kipgen said.

"The 26-year-old was the sole earning member of the family. Her eldest brother is unemployed and suffering from a chronic disease, while two other brothers are studying," Kipgen told PTI. Though unwell, her eldest brother is already on his way to Ahmedabad, while another brother and a cousin went from Kangpokpi to Nagaland's

Dimapur, and will go to the Gujarat city, he said.

Kipgen said, "We are devastated by the news. Her mother is in deep shock and refused to eat since the crash reports surfaced." Air India authorities called Singson's family late on Thursday and said her body was yet to be identified, he claimed. Singson was among the 242 people onboard Air India Flight AI 171, which crashed minutes after take-off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad on Thursday afternoon. "There has been no survivor except one passenger," Kipgen said.

"Singson last talked to her mother on Wednesday around 11 pm. She had said that she would fly to London the next day and wanted to sleep as early as possible because she had to report for duty early on Thursday. Singson and her mother held routine prayers over the phone. They used to pray jointly over the phone regularly before sleeping," he said.

Singson belonged to a Kuki family whose members had to flee their homes during the ethnic violence in the northeastern state, her cousin said. (PTI)

Honeymoon horror: Raja, Sonam paid ₹ 1,380 for stay, last dinner at Nongriat homestay in Meghalaya

NONGRIAT (MEGHALAYA), June 13: A day before he was murdered, Indore businessman Raja Raghuvanshi and his now-arrested wife, Sonam, had disappeared for several hours after checking into a homestay here before returning late for dinner, its owner said on Friday. The Indore couple checked in at our property on May 22 and ordered a coffee each, Constantine, the owner of Shipara Homestay, told PTI.

"They then went out without a guide. I assume they went to see the root bridge like every other tourist who came to the village," he said, adding that Raja had paid ₹ 1,000 for the room, ₹ 80 for the coffee and ₹ 300 for dinner.

Crew member Nganthoi's family leave for Ahmedabad for DNA tests

IMPHAL, June 13: A sister and a cousin of Kongbrailatpam Nganthoi Sharma, who was among the 12 cabin crew members onboard the Air India flight that crashed a day ago, left for Ahmedabad for DNA testing, family members said on Friday.

"A doctor from Gujarat called us and said Nganthoi's name was not on the list of injured persons. He asked us to reach Ahmedabad for DNA tests to identify her body," cousin N Khenjita told PTI. Twenty-year-old Nganthoi was among the 242 people onboard Air India Flight AI 171, which crashed minutes after take-off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

Khenjita said they left Manipur and will reach Ahmedabad via Guwahati. "Had today's visit to Ahmedabad been for meeting her, I would have been so happy. The dress I am wearing now was purchased by her last time," Nganthoi's elder sister K Geetanjali told PTI, as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Nganthoi's father Nandeshkumar Sharma said, "Her mother has not eaten since we received the news yesterday. She is currently under medical observation. Our daughter had last visited us in March." Nganthoi was a crew member for the last three years. Another cousin of the cabin crew member said her last message before take-off was, "I'm going to London. In a few minutes, we'll take off. We may not be able to talk for a while." (PTI)

Ex-CM Biren Singh condoles death of 2 Manipuri crew members in Air India plane crash

IMPHAL, June 13: Former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh has condoled the death of two crew members from the state in the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad on June 12.

Air India has confirmed that 241 people on board its London-bound flight were killed when the aircraft crashed shortly after take-off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday.

"It is heartbreaking to share that two young cabin crew members from Manipur, Kongbrailatpam Nganthoi Sharma and Lammunthem Singson, were among those who lost their lives in Air India (plane) crash in Ahmedabad," he said on X on Thursday.

The Boeing 787-8 aircraft was carrying 230 passengers and 12 crew members. Singh also said, "Both were full of life, serving with dedication and pride. Their sudden passing is a huge loss for their families, friends, and for all of us back home. May their souls rest in peace and may their loved ones find the strength to get through this unimaginable pain."

Rajiya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba said, "May the two young souls (Cabin Crews of ill-fated Air India Flight AI 171) from Manipur rest in peace together." (PTI)

Mizoram Power minister discusses steps towards corporatisation of department



AIZAWL, June 13: Mizoram Power and Electricity minister F Rodinglianga on Friday held a meeting with senior officials and discussed important steps towards corporatisation of the department, an official statement said.

He said in the meeting that corporatisation of the Power and Electricity department is one of the state government's key objectives, aiming at better administration and improving services for both the public and the government.

He urged departmental officers to actively support and implement the initiative.

The meeting reviewed the Ministry of Power's guidelines for corporatising the state power department and outlined a roadmap for unbundling and corporatisation.

As per the proposed plan, the unbundling process will begin by separating the Power and Energy department into three key functional segments—Generation, Transmission, and Distribution, the statement said.

These segments will function as separate Strategic Business Units (SBUs), each managing their own assets and operations independently, it said.

In line with this, departmental restructuring will be undertaken, and where feasible, greater implementation of outsourcing and franchising models is also envisaged.

This reform aligns with the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003, and the Central Government's policy direction.

The creation of SBUs will promote professionalism and will manage their own specific functions allowing them greater autonomy in decision-making, leading to improved service delivery for the public, according to the statement. (PTI)

Assam Rifles seized cannabis worth ₹ 30 lakh from Tripura

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, June 13: In a swift and decisive operation against narcotics smuggling, Assam Rifles, in close coordination with representatives of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), successfully seized approximately 195 kg of marijuana from the general area of Taranagar, Agartala during the early hours of 12 June.

The seized contraband is valued at approximately ₹ 30 lakhs in the local market.

As per Assam Rifles this operation underscores the commitment of Assam Rifles to combat the menace of drug trafficking in the region and to safeguard the youth from the perils of narcotics abuse.

"This successful interdiction is part of the sustained efforts by Assam Rifles to curb illegal activities along the Indo-Bangladesh border and uphold national security. Assam Rifles continues to maintain a high level of vigilance to disrupt the activities of smuggling networks operating in the Northeast", said Assam Rifles

MANUFACTURING, SUPPLY AND STACKING OF MACHINE CRUSHED TRACK BALLAST

E-Tender Notice No.: 38/W-2/ APDJ: Dated: 10-06-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Tender No: 13-AP-II-2025. Name of Work:** Manufacturing, supply and stacking of machine crushed track ballast including recoupment of ballast in running line in connection with estimate No. 56/Engg/AP/II of 2024-25, 52/Engg/AP/II of 2024-25 & 03/Engg/AP/II of 2025-26 under DEN/III/Alipurduar Jn. Tender Value: ₹2,77,03,516.34; Earnest Money: ₹2,88,500.00. E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 03-07-2025 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 03-07-2025. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website <http://www.teas.co.in> ORN (Works), Alipurduar Jn. **NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY** "Serving Customers with a smile"

PUBLIC NOTICE

No. SSA-15015/73/2024- (SSA) I/1107741/2025/

In pursuant to the advertisement published vide No. SSA- 15015/73/2024-ESTABLISHMENT-Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) 1/786820/2024 dated 25.10.2024 and public notice vide No. SSA 15015/73/2024-ESTABLISHMENT-Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)I/1075869/2025 dated 20.05.2025, it is information to all selected candidates that the interview for the post of Electronic Data Processor will be held on 19.06.2025 at 10.00 am. The candidates who were selected are requested to appear in the interview before the State Level Selection Committee at 10.00 am on 19.06.2025 in the State Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19 with original certificates/ testimonials & experience certificates.

Sd/-

Executive Director
Samagra Shiksh Axom
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

DIPR /DF/HLT/443/14-Jun-25

No.: JDB/6th-ASFC/2/2025-26/1096

Date 10/06/2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed Tenders affixing a non-refundable Court fee stamp amounting Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only with a validity period of 180 Days which will subsequence to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered Contractor of Class-I (A, B, C), Class-II, Class-III category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC for the following works under 6th-ASFC fund for the year 2023-24 during 2024-25 under Jaladh Dev. Block of BTC area. The Tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2.30PM on 02/07/2025 and will be opened on the same date & place at 3.30PM.

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Tender Value (In Rs.)	Bid Security	Cost of BID documents (D/D) @ 0.03% (Approx.)	Time of Completion
1	Const. of Culvert at Kamlabari	Rs.3,00,000/-	Rs. 3,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 6,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 150/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order
2	Const. of Slab Culvert at Bortari near Modan Gohai Namghar	Rs.4,50,000/-	Rs. 4,500/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 9,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 195/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order
3	Const. of Culvert at Laxmatari village near Gobinda Mandir	Rs.3,00,000/-	Rs. 3,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 6,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 150/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order
4	Const. of Culvert at Kanthalguri village	Rs.3,00,000/-	Rs. 3,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 6,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 150/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order
5	Anti Erosion Measures to protect village Arkora on L/B river Kaldia	Rs.9,00,000/-	Rs. 9,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs.18,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 270/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order

Details NIT may be seen at the office of the undersigned from 10/06/2025 to 02/07/2025 up to 1.00PM.

Sd/-

Block Development Officer,
Jalah Dev. Block, Jalahghat

(IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/867)

GOVT.OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER:: DIPHU DIVISION (IRRIGATION) DIPHU KARBI ANGLONG::ASSAM

PRESS NOTICE INVITING BID

No. EE/DDI/T-I/PL-V/2023-24/58

Date: 12/06/2025

The Executive Engineer, Diphu Division (Irrigation) Diphu on behalf of Governor of Assam invites the item rates bid from registered contractor of Class - I, II & III category for Improvement/Renovation/Re-construction etc. of 23(Twenty Three) Nos. of Schemes under Diphu Division (Irrigation) Diphu, under the administrative control of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu for the year 2025-26. The detail may be seen from the office of the undersigned during office hours from 13-06-2025 to 27-06-2025.

Sd/-

Executive Engineer
Diphu Division (Irrigation)
Diphu

Memo No. EE/DDI/T-I/Pt.-V/2023-24/58(A) Date: 12/06/2025

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

No. TE(Ex) Admn-1/2025/310

ONLINE COUNSELLING FOR ADMISSION INTO B. TECH. PROGRAMME [OFFERED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT ENGINEERING COLLEGES OF ASSAM]

For participation in the online counselling process for provisional admission into the 1st semester B.Tech. programme of State Government Engineering Colleges of Assam based on the Combined Entrance Examination [CEE-2025], the aspiring eligible candidates having CEE-2025 Rank shall have to fill up the online counselling form and upload the required documents as mentioned in the Counselling Guidelines-2025 by logging in, using their Application No. of CEE-2025 and Date of Birth w.e.f. 16th June to 27th June, 2025. The link of the online portal will be made available at : <https://dte.assam.gov.in>

Note:-

- For further details regarding the educational qualification, Date of Birth etc., please refer to the Counselling Guidelines-2025 available in the website: <https://dte.assam.gov.in>
- The details of the schedule for allotment of seat, submission of acceptance letter by the candidates and parent/guardian will be notified in the DTE's website : <https://dte.assam.gov.in> in due course of time. Candidates are requested to visit the website frequently.
- If a candidate uploads any forged document or submits misleading information, his/her candidature will be forfeited at any stage during the provisional selection process/ during the study period.

Sd/-

Director of Technical Education, Assam,
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19.

DIPR /D/HLT/34/ 14-Jun-25

Praying for families facing unimaginable loss: Priyanka Chopra Jonas on Ahmedabad plane crash



NEW DELHI, June 13: Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas joined her industry colleagues in mourning the loss of lives in the Air India plane crash near Ahmedabad.

A London-bound Air India plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed into residential quarters of BJ Medical College doctors in Ahmedabad's Meghainagar area minutes after taking off from the airport on Thursday afternoon.

Air India has confirmed the death of 241 people in the plane crash. One passenger miraculously survived the incident, which also claimed the lives of medical college



residents as the plane crashed into the building.

Prominent celebrities, including Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, Alia Bhatt, Allu Arjun and Karan Johar, expressed sorrow over the incident on Thursday.

In a post on her Instagram Stories, Priyanka wrote, "So so sad. Praying for everyone affected, and the families facing unimaginable loss in the Air India tragedy."

Bollywood star Salman Khan, who cancelled an event for the Indian Supercross Racing League in the wake of the tragedy,

has also condoled the deaths.

"Deeply saddened to hear about the Ahmedabad plane crash... heartfelt prayers for the families of the passengers, crew and all those affected," he wrote on Instagram.

Actor-filmmaker Farhan Akhtar said he was heartbroken to learn about the airline incident.

"Deepest condolences to all who have lost a family member or a friend. Hope and pray that you find the strength to cope with this unimaginable loss. Thoughts are with you at this incredibly difficult time," he said.

The ill-fated flight was under the command of Capt Sumeet Sabharwal along with First Officer Clive Kunder. While Sabharwal has 8,200 hours of flying experience, Kunder 1,100 hours, the DGCA said in a statement.

Actor Vikrant Massey also mourned the loss of lives and said Kunder was the son of a family friend.

"My heart breaks for the families & loved ones of the ones who lost their lives in the unimaginably tragic air crash in Ahmedabad today."

"It pains even more to know that my uncle, Clifford Kunder lost his son, Clive Kunder who was the 1st officer operating on that fateful flight. May God give strength to you and your family uncle and to all deeply affected," he wrote on Instagram. (PTI)



DHARMENDRA, ARBAAZ KHAN TO STAR IN 'MAINE PYAAR KIYA PHIR SE'

MUMBAI, June 13: Cinema veteran Dharmendra and actor Arbaaz Khan are set to share screen space once again after 27 years in the upcoming Hindi film "Maine Pyaar Kiya Phir Se".

The duo last worked together in the 1998 hit "Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya", which also starred Salman Khan and Kajol.

"Maine Pyaar Kiya Phir Se", a family drama blended with a thriller, is directed by Sabir Sheikh and produced by Ronnie Rodrigues, CMD

of Pearl Group of Companies and owner of Cinebuster Magazine Pvt Ltd. Rodrigues has penned the story of the film, a press release said.

The movie was officially launched at an event held in Mumbai recently.

Dharmendra described the film as "like a mixed veg—full of flavours and entertainment".

"My best wishes to Ronnie Rodrigues and his entire team. I had a great time working with Arbaaz in

"Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya", and I'm excited about this new journey together," he said.

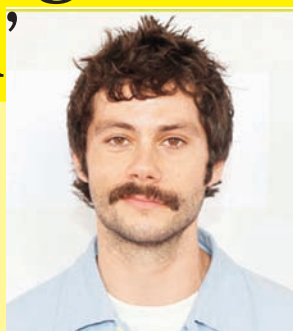
Arbaaz Khan called working with Dharmendra again an honour.

"He is an institution in himself, and our journey now feels like it has come full circle. I wish Ronnie and the entire team all the very best," he said.

The film is slated to go on floors soon and is expected to release in November 2025. (PTI)

Dylan O'Brien joins 'Being Heumann'

LOS ANGELES, June 13: Hollywood actor Dylan O'Brien, best known for his role in "Maze Runner", is set to star in "Being Heumann". The 33-year-old actor will appear alongside Ruth Madeley and Mark Ruffalo in the upcoming film, according to the entertainment news outlet Deadline. The film is an adaptation of the bestselling memoir from disability activist Judy Heumann, titled "Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist". The book chronicles the journey of Heumann's struggle for inclusion and mentions her role in the disability rights movement. She led the movement alongside Ed Roberts and Javed Abidi, in 1977. The movement lasted for 28 days. "Being Heumann" is directed by Sian Heder and will have O'Brien essaying the role of Evan White, one of the few reporters covering the San Francisco disability



rights protests. Madeley plays the titular role in the film. Ruffalo will portray Joseph Califano, the U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Jimmy Carter, who was initially doubtful to sign off on civil rights legislation affecting the disabled community. The film is produced by David Permut under Permut Presentations and Kevin Walsh through The Walsh Company. John W. Beach and Kevin Cleary are producing under Gravity Squared Entertainment. O'Brien will next appear in a black comedy film, "Twinless". Directed by James Sweeney, the film is slated to release in September. (PTI)

'Spaceballs 2' in the works at Amazon MGM Studios, Bill Pullman and Rick Moranis to return

LOS ANGELES, June 13: A sequel to popular Hollywood space parody movie "Spaceballs" is in development at Amazon MGM Studios with original stars Bill Pullman and Rick Moranis set to return. Actor Josh Gad is on board to star and produce the project alongside 99-year-old Hollywood veteran Mel Brooks, who had co-written, directed and produced the original 1987 cult classic. The new film is being directed by Josh Greenbaum, with a screenplay by Gad, Benji Samit, and Dan Hernandez, according to entertainment news outlet The Hollywood Reporter. "Spaceballs", which was a parody on popular sci-fi movies like "Star Wars", "Star Trek", "Alien" and "The Wizard of Oz", followed mercenary Lone Starr (Pullman) and his sidekick Barf (John Candy) rescue Princess Vespa and her droid from the evil Spaceballs, who plan to steal Druidia's air. Stranded on a desert moon, they meet Yogurt (Brooks), who teaches Starr the power of "the Schwartz". Meanwhile, the bumbling Dark Helmet (Moranis) and Colonel Sandurz try to hunt them down. The plot details of the sequel are not known yet. Pullman's son, "ThuNderbolts" star Lewis Pullman, will also feature in the movie along with fellow newcomer Keke Palmer. Imagine's Brian Grazer and Jeb Brody are producing alongside Gad, Brooks and Greenbaum. Kevin Slater, Adam Merims, Benji Samit and Dan Hernandez will executive produce. The film is expected to be released in theatres in 2027. (PTI)



Andrew Richardson, Zubin Varla, Adam Young boards Prime Video's 'Rings of Power' season 3

NEW DELHI, June 13: Actors Andrew Richardson, Zubin Varla and Adam Young have joined the cast of "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" season three.

According to the press release, Richardson will appear as a series regular, while Varla and Young will have recurring roles.

"The Rings of Power" is primarily based on the appendices of "The Lord of the Rings", specifically the description of Middle Earth's Second Age, and includes younger versions of some of the key characters from the original trilogy.

Set thousands of years before the events of J R R Tolkien's famed book series, the series follows the forging of the original rings of power during the Second Age that allowed the Dark Lord Sauron to spread evil across Middle Earth. The show features an ensemble cast of Char-

lie Vickers, Morfydd Clark, Robert Aramayo, Ismael Cruz Cordova, Charles Edwards, Daniel Weyman, Maxim Baldry and Markella Kavenagh.

JD Payne and Patrick McKay serve as creators on "The Rings of Power". The first season of the show premiered on Prime Video in September 2022, followed by the sophomore chapter in August 2024.

Richardson is known for projects such as "Daughter of the Bride", "The Independent", and "Jack London's Martin Eden".

Varla has been a part of shows such as "Deep State", "Our Girl" and "Strike Back", among others.

Young, who made his screen debut in Tom Beard's 2018 film "Two for Joy", is well-known for his role of Jim-Bob in the 2021 horror film "Don't Breathe 2". (PTI)

Popularity of red carpet shouldn't overshadow cinema: Boman Irani on Cannes Film Festival

MUMBAI, June 13: Actor-director Boman Irani says he understands the glamour aspect of the Cannes Film Festival but believes the spotlight should remain on the artists who are finally getting their moment in the sun.

Irani, who attended the film gala last month for the screening of Anupam Kher's director "Tanvi The Great" at the Marche du Film, said what filmmaker Payal Kapadia and Neeraj Ghaywan have achieved at the festival is inspiring.

"There is nothing wrong with having the red carpet, people and the glamour. The glamorous side of the world gets represented far more strongly than the cinematic side of it. However, what happens is that everything goes hand in glove."

"But there has to be a bit of imbalance at this point of time. I saw a photograph of Payal and Neeraj Ghaywan together; to me, that's the festival. People who love cinema will find inspiration in what Payal and Neeraj have done," the 65-year-old actor told PTI in an interview.

Ghaywan's second feature film "Homebound" received a nine-minute standing ovation at the prestigious film festival following its screening in the Un Certain Regard section. He had earlier premiered his acclaimed debut feature Masaan at Cannes in 2015.

Kapadia made history in 2024 by becoming the first Indian filmmaker to win the prestigious Grand Prix -- the second-highest honour at Cannes -- for her debut feature "All We Imagine As Light". This year, she returned to the festival as a member of the main competition jury.

Irani said the achievements of the two filmmakers at Cannes have made them popular all over the country.

"If Payal had gone there 15 years ago and won, I think it would have been a small little article in the newspaper and forgotten about. But today, thanks to all of this, Payal is now a household name."

"Neeraj is a household name, and it's so beautiful to see the two of them also walking during the red carpet with great aplomb, which makes me feel beautiful about it," he added.

Irani, who made his directorial debut with "The Mehta Boys" earlier this year, said he has no issues with people, "who don't understand or are not interested in cinema", attending Cannes and walking the red carpet.

"To each his own. As long as the festival is getting a lot of benefit out of that through whoever, I don't know whether I can call them influencers or whatever, the glamour side of it, it's fine. But the immense popularity of the red carpet should not overshadow the cinematic achievement," the actor added.

During his time at Cannes, Irani also seized the opportunity to watch Spike Lee's film "Highest 2 Lowest".

"I was there for Spike Lee's film, Denzel Washington, all of them were there, it was so beautiful (to see them). At the end of the day, everybody is there to have a good time, humble people talking about their movies, cinema, and talking to anybody and everybody. It's so wonderful."

On the acting front, Irani is gearing up for the release of his upcoming movie, "Detective Sherdill", fronted



by Diljit Dosanjh. It is slated to release on June 20 on ZEE5.

The actor expressed his fondness for detective films and reminisced about iconic characters like Karamchand and others.

"I find Byomkesh Bakshi, Karamchand, Sherlock Holmes, Miss Marple, and Hercule Poirot to be some of my favourites, they all are so amazing," Irani said.

"Detective Sherdill" is produced by



Ali Abbas Zafar and Himanshu Mehra, and directed by debutant Ravi Chhabriya.

The film also features Diana Penty, Banita Sandhu, Sumeet Vyas, and Chunky Pandey among others. (PTI)

‘Australia played full press and we learnt how to stretch them with counter-control’ India women’s hockey team eyes strong outing in European leg of Pro League

LONDON, June 13: Having worked extensively to iron out the chinks in their armour, India will aim for a strong showing in the European leg of the Women’s Hockey Pro League, beginning with their clash against Australia here on Saturday.

Currently ranked sixth with nine points, India will face Australia on June 14 and 15, followed by back-to-back matches against Argentina on June 17 and 18.

The team will then travel to Antwerp on June 19 for two games against Belgium, scheduled for June 21 and 22, before concluding the European leg with matches against China on June 28 and 29 in Berlin.

“We have worked in every department. But the two departments I am focussing on because it is result oriented are -- goalkeeping and drag flicking,” chief coach Harendra Singh told reporters on the eve of the match.

Singh also revealed that drag flickers Deepika and Manisha underwent a 10-day specialised camp with renowned Dutch drag-flick expert Toon Siepmann ahead of the tour.

“For drag flicking, Deepika and Manisha trained under Toon Siepmann, who has years of experience coaching some of the world’s top players,” Singh said.



“We also worked on improving our injectors and stoppers. Earlier, five girls were rotating in those roles, but now we’ve narrowed it down to three.”

India will look to build on the momentum gained during the India leg of the Pro League in February, where they held world No. 1 Netherlands to a 2-2 draw in Bhubaneswar and earned a bonus point via shootout.

The team experimented with new combinations during a five-match friendly tour in Perth against Australia A and the Hockeyroos last month. While results were mixed, Singh said the tour provided valuable learning for Salima Tete’s side.

“Australia played full press and we learnt how to stretch them with counter-control. We also learnt that we should play stick-to-stick

hockey.

“Second learning was to be more resilient on the pitch specially 1v1. I took a squad of 24 to give more players experience but this Pro League we need to be more alert, scan with peripheral vision, play fast hockey.

“I’m confident that the team will get a good result in the four (Pro League) matches.”

The coach has opted for a bal-

anced squad that blends experience with young talent.

Singh wants the team to peak during September’s Asia Championship as winning the continental championship would mean automatic qualification for next year’s World Cup.

“I would say the team is 70 percent fit because we want to peak at the right time which is during the Asian Championship later this year.”

With Belgium and Netherlands already qualifying as co-hosts of the World Cup and Germany by virtue of winning the Pro League last year, a good showing in the Pro League could also potentially secure a World Cup berth for India.

“Two teams have automatically qualified as hosts. Germany won the last Pro League and has also qualified. So we have to manage to finish above England and Spain.

“So if we finish fifth, and presuming, for example, Australia qualifies from Oceania, Argentina qualifies (from South America), and one of us or China qualifies from the Asia Cup then there is an opportunity for us to qualify in this Pro League itself,” Singh said.

England are languishing at the bottom of the points table with five points while Spain is fifth with 14 points from 12 outings. (PTI)

India’s Tayade shines as Team MGD1 in joint lead after day 2



LONDON, June 13: India’s Atharva Tayade emerged as the top performer for Team MGD1 as the side continued its strong showing by sharing the top spot with Hexamind on 13 match points on day 2 of the World Rapid and Blitz Team Championship here.

Tayade has so far won all his eight games in the tournament.

With six victories, one draw and one loss each, Hexamind and Team MGD1 are leading the table. They are being closely followed on 12 points by the Viswanathan Anand-led Freedom, Uzbekistan and Germany and Friends.

Tournament favourites WR Chess, who have some of the biggest names, including American Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura, Alireza Firouzja and Wesley So,

are in sixth spot, but their title hopes suffered a setback following back-to-back losses.

Following a draw with the Anand-led Freedom in round five, the Arjun Erigaisi-led Team MGD1 overcame top seeds WR Chess 4-2 in round six. In round seven, MGD1 scored a narrow 3.5-2.5 win over Germany and Friends.

However, in the eighth and final round of the day, Hexamind delivered a crushing 4-2 blow to MGD1, thus tying for first place.

The biggest upset on day 2 was Freedom’s 2.5-3.5 loss to Germany and Friends. Germany’s top player Vincent Keymer led his black pieces to victory against Freedom’s Rauf Mamedov on board one for the crucial win. (PTI)

US Open players get that sinking feeling, straight down into the rough at brutal Oakmont



OAKMONT (USA), June 13: Gary Woodland, the 2019 U.S. Open champion, waved the rules official over. Certainly, a ball buried that deep must have embedded into the soft turf below when his off-line drive on the 12th hole landed with a thunk, about 10 yards right of the fairway. No such luck, the official told him. The rough at Oakmont is just that deep — and thick and hard to escape. Instead of taking a free drop that’s allowed for an embedded ball, Woodland had to replace it where he found it, get out his wedge, take a hack and pray — leading to his first blemish on the way to a round of 3-over 73.

His was a common story during the opening round of the U.S. Open on Thursday, where the rough was gnarly, thick and sometimes downright impossible.

“Even for a guy like me, I can’t get out of it some of the times, depending on the lie,” said defending champion Bryson DeChambeau, who makes a living on overpowering golf courses and gouging out of the thick stuff. “It was tough. It was a brutal test of golf.”

DeChambeau was at even par when he nuked his second shot over the green and into the rough in back of the 12th green. The grass opened up his club face on the third and rifled the ball into more rough. He needed two more shots to advance the ball from there to the fringe. He also shot 73. “If you miss the green, you miss it by too much, you then try to play an 8-yard pitch over the rough onto a green that’s brick hard running away from you,” Scotland’s Robert MacIntyre said, in describing some of the challenges Oakmont presents after his round of even-par 70. “It just feels like every shot is on a knife edge.”

Punishing the best in the world is exactly how the superintendents at what might be America’s toughest

golf course planned it.

For the record, they do mow this rough. If they didn’t, there’s a chance some of the grass would pillow over on top of itself, allowing the ball to perch up instead of sink down. The mowers here have blades that use suction to pull the grass upward as they cut, helping the grass stand up straight and creating the physics that allow the ball to sink to the bottom.

Which is exactly where Rory McIlroy found his third shot, then his fourth, after failing to reach the fairway from the deep fescue after his wayward drive on the par-5 fourth. He made 6 there on his way to 74.

On No. 3, top-ranked Scottie Scheffler hit his tee shot into the famous church pew bunker, then cooked his second shot up the hill and over the green. The rough opened up his clubface on the chip, sending the ball into the second cut of fringe. He got down in two to save bogey there.

Patrick Reed hit the shot of the day. It was a 286-yarder from the fairway that hit the green and dropped in for only the fourth albatross — a 2 on a par 5 — in recorded U.S. Open history.

If only he could have stopped there. He closed the day with a triple-bogey 7 that included a shot from a downhill lie just outside a fairway bunker that he advanced about 40 yards. He shot 73.

“If you get in the rough, good luck,” Reed said. Maybe J.J. Spaun figured it out the best.

With the dew still slickening the grass for his early tee time, Spaun chipped in from a gnarly lie on his first hole to open the Open with a birdie. He only hit eight of 14 fairways and 12 of 18 greens, but that was good enough for a 4-under 66, which sent him home with the lead and a chance to watch the afternoon players suffer.

“I like feeling uncomfortable,” Spaun said. Not everyone did.

Austen Truslow might have finished the day tied with McIlroy at 74 had it not taken three shots — one of them a whiff — to move the ball from the greenside rough onto the putting surface on his 137th hole, the par-4 ninth. Truslow made 6 — one of last scores of double bogey or worse in Round 1 — and shot 76.

Maybe the most fitting scene came late in the day, after Byeong Hun An tapped in for a par on No. 18 to finish his own round of 74. He plucked the ball from the hole and tried casually tossing it to a boy waiting behind the ropes. The ball bounced twice, but got stuck in the rough, so An had to walk over, pick it up and hand it to the kid. (AP)

Days before the Club World Cup kicks off, fears over player welfare are being raised

MIAMI, June 13: Days before the start of the Club World Cup, soccer chiefs are facing renewed calls to safeguard players over growing fears of injuries and burnout.

The sport’s global players union, FIFPRO, said Thursday there should be an immediate implementation of guaranteed four-week breaks for players during the off-season, as well as time off mid-season.

“If we can all agree that health comes first, then we should take steps to implement these safeguards,” said Prof. Dr. Vincent Gouttebarge, FIFPRO Medical Director.

FIFPRO has been critical of the extra workload placed on players as a result of tournaments like the Club World Cup, which kicks off in Miami on Saturday.

The newly-expanded tournament involving 32 of the world’s best teams has faced pushback since FIFA announced it would be added to an already saturated calendar.

The month-long tournament will be played every four years, sandwiched in between the men’s World Cup, European Championship and Copa America. It is going ahead against the backdrop of legal challenges in Europe, strike threats and repeated concerns over players’ mental and physical welfare due to the increased number of games.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino this week said the competition was “writing history.”

“For the first time in history, the 32 best clubs in the world will compete in a tournament to determine finally who is the best club in the world,” he said.

But many players at the Club



World Cup have entered the tournament on the back of a full regular season.

Players such as Paris Saint-Germain’s Ousmane Dembele and Vinicius have headed to the Club World Cup just two weeks after winning the Champions League final, having also competed in the UEFA Nations League in between.

The tournament ends July 13. That is likely to pose a problem for teams like Manchester City or Chelsea if they play in the latter stages, with the Premier League season kicking off on August 16 and leaving little time to rest before beginning the preseason preparations.

FIFPRO said it carried out scientific study involving 70 medical and performance experts to come up with “12 consensus-based”

safeguards to protect players from from calendar congestion and excessive workload.

It said international soccer lacked “standardized frameworks or regulations.”

Among the safeguards it is calling for, FIFPRO wants two weeks in the offseason to be “completely commitment free.”

It wants mid-season breaks to be mandatory. Many European leagues have a winter break, but the Premier League does not. It also wants a minimum four-week retraining period before players return to action after the offseason break.

Other safeguards include protection for academy players under the age of 18 and “travel fatigue management” to schedule rest periods after long-haul flights. (AP)

Tottenham hires Thomas Frank as coach, luring him from Premier League rival Brentford

LONDON, June 13: Tottenham hired Thomas Frank as head coach on Thursday after the Danish manager ended his nearly decade-long stay at fellow Premier League team Brentford.

The 51-year-old Frank will replace Ange Postecoglou, who was fired last week despite leading Tottenham to its first trophy in 17 years with a win over Manchester United in the Europa League final.

Tottenham said Frank’s contract runs until 2028.

“In Thomas we are appointing one of the most progressive and innovative head coaches within the game,” the club said in a statement. “He has a proven track record in player and squad development and we look forward to him leading the team as we prepare for the season ahead.”

Strong reputation

Frank joined Brentford in December 2016 and has been manager since 2018. He has established a reputation as a tactically flexible and shrewd coach who has improved players, especially those of a lower profile or who have not performed at other clubs.

At Tottenham, he will have a squad of higher quality — albeit one that finished below Brentford in the Premier League last season — and will be managing in the Champions League for the first time. One of his first games will be against Champions League winner Paris Saint-Germain in the UEFA Super Cup. In that sense, it’s a slight gamble from Spurs. Indeed, Frank has never won a trophy in his managerial career.

Frank’s emotional intelligence

Brentford director of football Phil Giles said Frank’s “wisdom, coaching ability and emotional intelligence have helped transform the club.” “He forged a special connection with our fans, helped develop and improve players, and was instrumental in implementing the culture that has seen Brentford go from strength to strength,” Giles said.

“We will never forget Thomas, but now it is time to thank him and take the next steps in our journey with a new leader who we believe can be just as successful and influential.” (AP)

I-76 somehow blends in at US Open at Oakmont

OAKMONT (USA), June 13: For a six-lane interstate carving its way through a world-famous golf course, the Pennsylvania Turnpike at Oakmont is surprisingly unintrusive.

From an overhead view, the sight is somewhat jarring — a wide expressway and railroad track dividing the course essentially in half. At ground level, however, the road is not much of a distraction. In fact, it can’t be seen from much of Oakmont’s layout.

“And honestly, you don’t even really hear it,” Oakmont historian David Moore said. “It’s amazing how quiet it really is.”

Moore is an expert on this small stretch of the Turnpike — or Interstate 76, if you prefer. Its path through the course at Oakmont — the site of the U.S. Open this week — was originally just a train track.

“One of the old history books here talks about how until diesel-powered trains came through, there’d be soot all over the first green, the ninth tee and all that,” Moore said. “They’d be driving by and set off all the smoke and just cover the place.”

This is not the Road Hole at St. Andrews. There’s nothing quaint about the Turnpike at Oakmont. It also isn’t — or at least, it shouldn’t be — a factor in the course of play.

With its slick greens and ferocious rough, Oakmont is difficult enough without adding a forced carry over a bunch of 18-wheelers. Holes Nos. 2-8 are to the east of the highway and all the rest are to the west. The first



green and ninth tee, as well as the second tee and eighth green, converge on the two sides of the Turnpike, near a couple footbridges that allow fans to cross over the road.

The biggest reason the roadway blends in when you’re on the course is because there’s an elevation change down to the highway. So the Turnpike presents largely as a gap in the middle of the course — if it’s perceptible at all.

There is no giant screen to prevent wayward balls from flying onto the road. The holes closest to the highway on the west side are generally perpendicular to it. Those on

the east are more parallel, but it would take a pretty extraordinary miss to reach the Turnpike.

That’s not to say it can’t happen. Moore tells the story of Cary Middlecoff hitting a ball toward the highway on No. 10 before withdrawing in disgust in 1953. Thirty years later, it was Tom Weiskopf on No. 8 working his way into Oakmont lore.

“He flared one off to the right, it landed in a passing train, and it ended up in Cleveland,” Moore said. “The running joke around here: It was the longest tee shot ever

hit.”

The more realistic concern the highway creates is for fans. Even with a second footbridge added between the 1994 and 2007 U.S. Opens, there’s still a potential bottleneck in that area as fans cross over the traffic below — which on Thursday included some drivers honking their horns as they passed by golf’s third major of the year.

Foot traffic wasn’t excessively slow, but it was enough of a slog that bouncing back and forth between one side and the other wasn’t advisable.

Near the bridges, the highway is flanked by a wall on the west side and some fencing on the east. The wall seems to do a better job of suppressing the noise from below, but on both sides, you might hear the road before you can see it.

If you’re looking for a decent view without crowding onto a bridge, the area behind the 10th green has a nice vantage point of the highway as it descends north toward the Allegheny River. A grandstand at the green on No. 12 offers a view of the Turnpike going the opposite direction.

For the most part, the sheer size of Oakmont turns even a major roadway — which can take cars all the way to Philadelphia in one direction and Akron, Ohio, in the other — into something of an afterthought.

“You don’t really see it,” Moore said. “Twelve is really like the only hole where you look over it.” (AP)

Rookie Avani placed second in Belgium



HULENCOURT (BELGIUM), June 13: Indian rookie Avani Prashanth equalled her best start of the season with a 4-under 68 that gave her a solid tied second position after the first round of the Hulencourt Women's Open here.

Playing in one of the late groups in the afternoon, Avani had seven birdies against three bogeys in an action-packed round.

Australia's Kelsey Bennett topped the leaderboard after day one with an opening round of 67 (-5). Avani shared the second place with Germany's Helen Briem as they carded 68 each.

Avani is one of the seven Indians in action this week on the Ladies European Tour.

The seasoned Diksha Dagar began with a modest even par 72 in the first round of the event and was T-22 when the round ended.

Amandeep Drall, who recently picked a win on her home Tour, the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, is playing her first LET event this season, and Sneha Singh is featuring in her second event. The duo shot 2-over 74 each and were T-58th.

Tvesa Malik carded 76 as did Vani Kapoor, a four-time winner at home on WPGT, and both were T-89 while Hitaashree Bakshi strug-

gled to 79 and was T-125th.

Avani began on the first and picked two early birdies on the second and the third. Then she had two bogeys on the fifth and the seventh with one birdie in between. A birdie on the ninth meant she turned in 2-under 34.

A par on the tenth was followed by three birdies in a row from the 11th to the 13th and a bogey on the 14th. Four pars over the last four holes meant she finished at 4-under for the day.

"I think it was a very good day from start to finish," said Avani.

"The putter was really hot all day. I love quick greens so this is definitely one of my favourite golf courses so far. I was reading putts perfectly and I've been working quite a bit on my putting the last two days, so I'm glad it all came together."

At just 18-years-old, Prashanth is feeling good about her opening round.

"I'm feeling pretty good about it and I'm just glad that I finally got the good first day that I wanted. Things are off to a good start and let's see how the week goes."

"I think the game plan was pretty much the same as last week, despite being very different courses. I just had to work on getting my speed in control, but besides that, it's been the same," continued the teenager.

She is enjoying spending time with some fellow Indian players on Tour. They had some home cooked food Wednesday night which she described as "a kind of home away from home." Diksha, who has been in fine form this season and has been in the Top-10 of the Ladies European Tour's Order of Merit, had three birdies and as many bogeys in her round.

She started on the back nine and bogeyed the 14th, but turned in one-under with birdies on the 16th and the 18th. A bogey on the second followed by a birdie on the third meant she was still under par. A bogey on the seventh, which was her 16th hole, saw her finish at even par. (PTI)

OAKMOT (USA), June 13: World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler, shot 3-over 73, his highest ever score in the US Open, as he trailed surprise leader, J.J. Spaun (66) by seven shots while Indian-origin golfers struggled in the US Open at the Oakmont Country Club.

As Spaun, runner-up to Rory McIlroy at the Players, played bogey free, the Masters champion, McIlroy, had to hack out three times on the fourth hole to get it back to the fairway, and then he holed a 30-foot putt for a most unlikely bogey in his 4-over 74 and was T-62.

Scheffler was T-49, as was Bryson DeChambeau, who called the round as "a brutal test of golf" after his first round 73.

Indian-American Sahith Theegala, who has had a very disappointing season, pulled out before the event because of a 'neck injury' that is taking more time than expected to heal.

Another Indian-American, Akshay Bhatia, had a rough time with his 76 with seven bogeys and one solitary birdie.

Indo-British Aaron Rai (72) was T-33 with three birdies against five bogeys.

INJURED THEEGALA SKIPS US OPEN

Bhatia, Rai struggle along with Scheffler



Brooks Koepka, who has not competed in a major since winning the PGA Championship in 2023, he missed the cut in the Masters and PGA Championship this year



He kept mistakes to a minimum and closed with two birdies for a 68 that put him in a group with the South Korea duo of Si Woo Kim and Sungjae Im.

of Si Woo Kim and Sungjae Im.

Another shot back at 69 was a group that included two-time major champion Jon Rahm, who went 11 holes before making a birdie, and followed that with an eagle.

McIlroy was bogey-free on his opening nine. Then he three-putted for bogey on No. 1 and wound up with a 41 on the front nine for a 74.

Sam Burns was one shot out of the lead until playing the last four holes in 5 over for a 72.

Patrick Reed made an albatross by holing out from 286 yards on the par-5 fourth, but finished with a triple bogey and shot 73.

Shane Lowry made the first eagle on the par-4 third hole at Oakmont, but finished with 79 and was in danger of missing the cut at T-133.

DeChambeau was 39 yards away from the hole at the par-5 12th and took four shots from the rough to get to the green.

Even as this was going around, Spaun played a steady round. He played bogey-free and finished with 10 straight pars for a 4-under 66 at Oakmont, seen as America's toughest course. (PTI)

India look to bounce back against formidable Australia in FIH Pro League

ANTWERP, June 13: Low on confidence after four successive defeats, a struggling India will be desperate to arrest the slide and stay in contention for the top prize when they take on a formidable Australia in the men's FIH Pro League on Saturday.

The European leg of the tournament has been disappointing for the Indian men's hockey team, which suffered 1-2 and 2-3 losses to Olympic champions Netherlands in Amstelveen, followed by back-to-back defeats against Argentina.

Ranked fifth with 15 points from 12 games, India need to bounce back strongly against Australia to collect crucial points and remain in the race for a top-three finish.

"A win against Australia will be very critical for us, as it will not only help us gain crucial points but



also give the team a winning momentum," said captain Harmanpreet Singh, who had missed the last match due to a finger injury, in a release.

"We've had a few close games in the last four matches, and while we have been on the losing end, we want to change that and get some wins under our belts."

While poor penalty-corner conversions and the recurring issue of conceding late goals cost them

dearly against the Netherlands, it was sloppy defending that led to a 3-4 defeat to Argentina in the first game. In the second, a potential equaliser from a late penalty was disallowed as India went down 1-2.

India also struggled to earn penalty corners, managing only three compared to Argentina's eight.

Up against a strong Australian side, India can ill afford any more slip-ups and will have to play out of their skins to turn their fortunes around.

Currently ranked world number 7, India will look to draw confidence from their win over former world number one Australia during the Paris Olympics Pool stage.

India will conclude their European leg with two matches against Belgium on June 21 and 22. (PTI)

Indian players mourn Ahmedabad airplane crash victims

BECKENHAM (UK), June 13: The Indian players and their support staff members observed a minute's silence and wore black armbands before the start of the intra-squad match here on Friday in memory of the Ahmedabad airplane crash victims.

Only one person survived the horrific accident on Thursday afternoon when London-bound Air India flight AI-171, carrying 242 passengers including crew members, crashed moments after taking off from Ahmedabad's Sardar Patel International Airport.

"The players and members of support staff involved in the intra-squad game in Beckenham are wearing black armbands," the BCCI said.

"A minute's silence was also observed today to pay homage to the victims of the Ahmedabad plane crash, as a mark of respect for the lives lost and solidarity with the affected families," it added.

Several touring members including head coach Gautam Gambhir, Test captain Shubman Gill and senior players KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja have expressed their anguish at the accident in social media posts on Thursday.

The legendary Sachin Tendulkar also joined the cricket fraternity to express his thoughts.

"Devastated and heartbroken by the flight crash in Ahmedabad. Such a tragic incident! Prayers for the departed souls, and may God give strength and courage to their loved ones at this difficult time," Tendulkar wrote on X. (PTI)

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<p>CONSULTANT CARDIOLOGIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest pain or discomfort Shortness of breath Fatigue or weakness Swelling in legs, ankles or feet Coughing or wheezing <p>DR. REJA BORA DM (CARDIOLOGY)</p>	<p>CONSULTANT NEPHROLOGIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swelling in feet, ankles, or around the eyes Fatigue or feeling unusually tired Changes in urination (color or frequency) Loss of appetite or nausea Persistent itching or dry skin <p>DR. ANKIT RAY DM (NEPHROLOGY)</p>	<p>CONSULTANT UROLOGIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain or burning during urination Frequent urination, especially at night Blood in urine Pain in the lower back, pelvis or side Urinary tract infection <p>DR. DIVAKAR CHOUBEY MCH (UROLOGY)</p>
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অশোক সিংহল

মন্ত্রী
স্বাস্থ্য আৰু পৰিয়াল কল্যাণ,
জলসিঞ্চন বিভাগ, অসম চৰকাৰ
Health & Family Welfare and
Irrigation Deptt.
Government of Assam

দিছপুৰ
৩০ জেঠ, ১৪৩২ ভাদ্ৰবাদ
১৪ জুন, ২০২৫ ইং

বিশ্ব বক্তৃতা দিবস উপলক্ষে অসমবাসীলৈ বাৰ্তা

শ্ৰদ্ধাৰ অসমবাসী ৰাইজ,

আপোনালোক অৱগত যে সমগ্ৰ বিশ্বৰ লগতে অসমতো প্ৰতি বছৰে ১৪ জুন তাৰিখে 'বিশ্ব বক্তৃতা দিবস' পালন কৰি অহা হৈছে। বিশ্ব স্বাস্থ্য সংস্থাই নোবেল বঁটা বিজয়ী অষ্ট্ৰিয়াৰ মহান চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানী কাৰ্ল লেণ্ডষ্টেইনাৰলৈ সন্মান জনাই তেখেতৰ জন্মদিনটো 'বিশ্ব বক্তৃতা দিবস' হিচাপে ঘোষণা কৰি ২০০৫ চনৰ পৰা এই দিবস উদ্‌যাপনৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰে।

এই দিবস উদ্‌যাপনৰ মূল তাৎপৰ্য আৰু উদ্দেশ্য হৈছে বিশ্বৰ স্ব্চ্ছামূলক বক্তৃতা সঙ্কলক তেওঁলোকৰ নিঃস্বার্থ সেৱাৰ বাবে কৃতজ্ঞতা জনোৱাৰ লগতে সমাজত স্ব্চ্ছামূলক বক্তৃতাৰ বাবে এক গণ আন্দোলন গঢ়াৰ দিশত উদগনি যোগোৱা। এই বছৰৰ বিশ্ব বক্তৃতা দিবসৰ মূল বিষয়বস্তু হৈছে —

"বক্তৃতা কৰক, আশা প্ৰদান কৰক; আহক একেলগে জীৱন বন্ধা কৰোঁ।"

১৮ বছৰৰ পৰা ৬৫ বছৰ বয়সৰ সকলো সুস্থ ব্যক্তিয়েই বক্তৃতা কৰিব পাৰে। বক্তৃতানে শৰীৰৰ একো ক্ষতিসাধন নকৰে, বৰঞ্চ প্ৰত্যেক তিনিমাহৰ মূৰে মূৰে বক্তৃতা কৰিও এগৰাকী ব্যক্তিয়ে নিৰাপদ, সুস্থ জীৱন-যাপন কৰিব পাৰে। আজিৰ এই বিশেষ দিনটোত মই ৰাজ্যৰ প্ৰতিগৰাকী স্ব্চ্ছামূলক বক্তৃতাটো তেওঁলোকৰ নিঃস্বার্থ সেৱাৰ বাবে আন্তৰিক ধন্যবাদ আৰু কৃতজ্ঞতা জ্ঞাপন কৰিছোঁ।

বক্তৃতাৰ দৰে মহৎ দান আন একো নাই। আপুনি দান কৰা প্ৰতিটোপাল ৰক্তই সংকটৰ সময়ত আন কাৰোবাক এটা নতুন জীৱন উপহাৰ দিব পাৰে। এই বিশেষ দিনটোতে সেয়েহে মই পুনৰবাৰ সকলোকে স্ব্চ্ছামূলক বক্তৃতাৰ বাবে আগবাঢ়ি আহি মানৱীয় দায়বদ্ধতা পালন কৰিবলৈ আন্তৰিকতাৰে আহ্বান জনাইছোঁ।

অশোক সিংহল

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