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Assam to use 1950 law to deport illegal immigrants

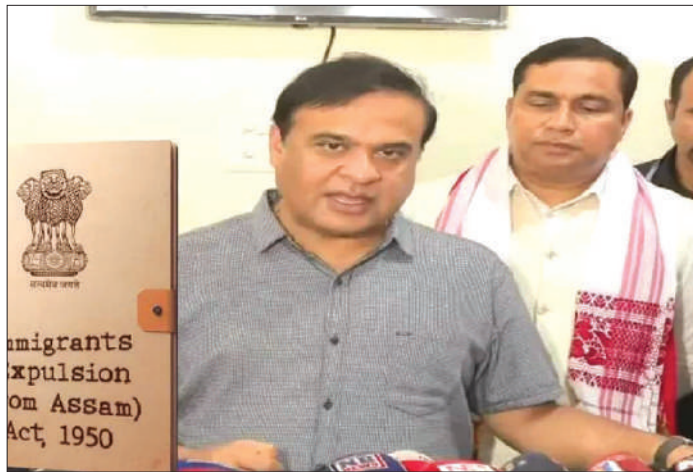
Fresh move marks departure from long-standing process involving foreigners' tribunals

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 7: In a move that may spark legal and political uproar, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that the Assam government does not need to approach court every time to deport illegal foreigners, as it can use an old law passed in 1950.

The chief minister said that the Assam government has decided to invoke a little-known law from 1950—the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Order—to fast-track the deportation of undocumented immigrants, bypassing the usual judicial process.

"The identification and removal of 'foreigners' would now proceed at a faster pace after slowing down due to complications surrounding the National Register of Citizens (NRC). This time, if someone is identified as a foreigner, we will not have to approach the foreigners' tribunal to initiate a push-back," Sarma said while talking to



reporters in Nalbari.

Referring to a previous Supreme Court hearing on Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, he added that the court had clarified the Assam government is not obligated to seek judicial approval for every deportation.

He also pointed to the Immigrants Expulsion Order, enacted in 1950, which he claimed grants district commissioners (DCs) the authority to issue deportation orders without judicial intervention.

"Our lawyers had not informed us about this provision earlier. We

recently became aware of it, and we are now taking it seriously," he said. The chief minister confirmed that deportations have already begun under the renewed approach, though individuals with pending cases in court have not yet been affected.

The move marks a departure from the long-standing process involving foreigners' tribunals—quasi-judicial bodies responsible for determining the status of suspected undocumented immigrants. Until now, individuals declared as "foreigners" by the tribunals had the right to challenge the verdict in the High Court and the Supreme Court.

However, the policy shift has triggered concern among minority communities and political groups. The All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), a minority-based opposition party, recently petitioned Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, alleging widespread (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP nominates Kanad Purkayastha as Rajya Sabha candidate from Assam



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 7: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday named Kanad Purkayastha as its official candidate for the upcoming biennial Rajya Sabha elections from Assam.

The announcement was made through a formal notification issued by BJP National general secretary Arun Singh.

Purkayastha, currently serving as secretary of the BJP's Assam Pradesh unit, is a veteran party worker known for his grassroots involvement and long-standing commitment to the organisation.

Reacting to the nomination, Purkayastha expressed his gratitude on social media, calling it a recognition of his service and a reaffirmation of the party's core values. "This gesture is not just an acknowledgment of my dedication and service to the party, but also a reaffirmation of the values we uphold—commitment, integrity, and selfless service," he wrote.

Calling Assam his "home, inspiration, and strength," he added that being nominated for the Upper House was a "great honour and a humbling moment." He also extended his thanks to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, state BJP president Dilip Saikia, and party workers for their support and blessings. State party chief Dilip Saikia welcomed the decision and thanked the BJP's central leadership for choosing Purkayastha.

"Congratulations to Shri @kanadpurkayastha on being nominated as BJP's Rajya Sabha candidate from Assam. May his journey ahead (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Indore couple was accompanied by three men on day they went missing, claims guide



SHILLONG, June 7: A tourist guide on Saturday claimed that the honeymoon couple from Indore, Raja Raghuvarshi and his wife Sonam, was accompanied by three men on the day they went missing from Meghalaya's Sohra area.

An official confirmed that the guide had provided this information to the police.

While the couple went missing on May 23, Raja's body was found in a gorge on June 2 while a search for his wife was underway.

Speaking to PTI, Albert Pde, a guide at Mawlakhiat, said he had seen the couple accompanied by three male tourists as they were climbing over 3,000 steps from Nongriat to Mawlakhiat around 10 am on May 23. He said he recognised the couple as he had offered his services to them on the previous day to climb down to Nongriat but they had politely refused and hired another guide. "The four men were walking ahead while the woman was behind. The four men were conversing in Hindi but I could not understand what they were speaking as I know only Khasi (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam flood situation improves marginally, rivers showing receding trend

GUWAHATI, June 7: The flood situation in Assam improved marginally as major rivers, including the Brahmaputra, were showing a receding trend though a population of over four lakh people are still affected by the deluge in 18 districts of the state, officials said on Saturday.

Rainfall has been less in most districts and scattered in some, leading to a recession in the water level of the major rivers.

The Brahmaputra is flowing above the danger level in Dhubri, Kopili in Dharamtul, River Barak at Katakhal in Halakandi and Kushiara in Sribhumi.

There was no report of any casualty during the day though a person was reported missing in Kamrup (Metro) district. A landslide took place in the



Rupnagar area of Guwahati early on Saturday and a person has been reported missing. The current first wave of floods along with landslides due to heavy rainfall has so far claimed 21 lives.

The floods have affected 1,296 villages

under 54 revenue circles of 18 districts and 16,558.59 hectares of cropland are still under water while 2,96,765 animals are facing the impact of the current wave.

More than 40,313 displaced people are taking shelter in 328 relief camps, while 1,19,001 affected people were provided relief at distribution centres set up in the affected districts.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday visited the Barak Valley for the second time in a week and assured timely rehabilitation grants to the people and that damaged infrastructure, like roads, will be repaired before Durga Puja festivities.

Flood waters of the Brahmaputra have inundated vast tracts of Kaziranga National Park, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

2 more persons arrested in crackdown on 'anti-nationals' in Assam

GUWAHATI, June 7: Two more persons have been arrested in Assam in an ongoing crackdown on "anti-national and communal elements", Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

With these, the number of arrests in such cases in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack has reached 90. "Update on crackdown against Anti-national and communal elements - 7 Jun - 90 arrests till now," Sarma said in a post on X.

One person has been apprehended by Goalpara police for making "offensive social media post on Lord Ram", and another by Kamrup police for "inciting communal discord" through social media.

The state police have been taking action against people for "anti-India" and "pro-Pakistan" activities, including posts on social media, since the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 people were killed.

Among those arrested on the anti-national charge was opposition AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam.

He was initially arrested on sedition charges for allegedly "defending" Pakistan and its complicity in the Pahalgam attack.

After he secured bail in that case, he was held under the stringent National Security Act.

Sarma had earlier said that the state-wide crackdown on traitors would continue. (PTI)

Namrata Bora accident case Conrad assures 'fair' probe to Himanta

GUWAHATI, June 7: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday requested his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma to conduct a "fair and impartial inquiry" by a senior police officer into the death of a 25-year-old woman in a road accident in the hill state earlier this week.

He said that the bereaved family of the Golaghat native has raised concerns regarding the accident and urged Sangma to ensure that all facts surrounding it are brought to light.

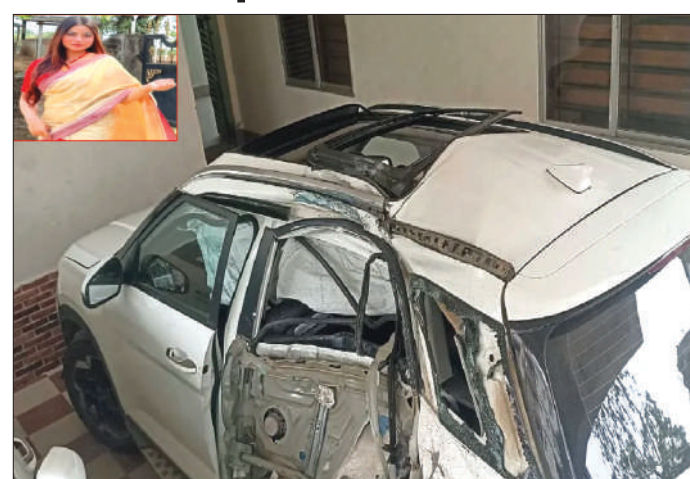
The victim, Namrata Bora, who worked in Guwahati, had purportedly gone on a drive towards Shillong with her friends in the early hours on Wednesday, but they decided to return midway.

Their car met with an accident in Shangbanga area of Ri Bhoi district when it was hit by another vehicle while trying to overtake a stationary truck.

Namrata succumbed to her injuries at Nongpoh Civil Hospital, where she was taken, while the other four passengers escaped with minor injuries.

"I request Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Shri @Sangma-Conrad, to kindly look into a tragic incident that occurred near Nongpoh police station in the early hours of Wednesday, June 4," Sarma said in a post on X.

"A vehicle bearing Assam registration number AS 01 EV 9578 met



with an accident, resulting in the unfortunate death of a young woman, Namrata Bora, while four other co-passengers sustained only minor injuries," he said, adding that a case has been registered at Nongpoh police station.

"However, in view of the concerns raised by the bereaved family and well-wishers, I request that a fair and impartial enquiry be conducted by a senior police officer to ensure that all facts surrounding the incident are brought to light," the chief minister added.

Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma on Saturday said instructions have been given for a fair and impartial inquiry into the incident.

Replying to Himanta's post on

X, the Meghalaya CM also said on X, "@himantabiswa I have given instructions to ensure the same."

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Nalbari later, Sarma said that he had also spoken to Sangma in the morning with request for handing over the inquiry to a senior officer and his Meghalaya counterpart has responded positively.

He said Assam Police have also started their own "preliminary inquiry" and will hand over the findings to Meghalaya Police, if they uncover anything.

"If there is anything behind the accident, we will get to its roots. Since it happened in Nongpoh, Assam Police cannot conduct the probe. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Rahul can't garner public support: BJP counters 'match-fixing' barb

NEW DELHI, June 7: The BJP on Saturday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of attacking democratic institutions to undermine people's trust in the electoral process, claiming he was doing so to pre-empt his party's defeat in the upcoming elections as he cannot garner public support.

This came after Gandhi launched a fresh attack on the ruling BJP, alleging that the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly election was a "blueprint for rigging democracy". He also claimed the "match-fixing" of Maharashtra will come to Bihar next, and anywhere the BJP is losing.

Hitting back, BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari accused the Congress leader of resorting to attacking democratic institutions under a well-planned conspiracy, as he knows that his party is set to suffer defeat in the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls.

Gandhi is trying to undermine the trust of people in the electoral process because he is unable to gain public support in favour of his party, Bhandari charged, calling the Congress leader "anti-democracy".

"Rahul Gandhi knows he's losing Bihar and, like always, he's resorted to a well-planned conspiracy: attacking democratic institutions to pre-empt his defeat," the BJP spokesperson wrote on X, reacting to the Congress leader's charge. "Unable to win the trust of the people, he is now trying to undermine the trust of the people in the electoral process itself," he alleged, adding, "Rahul Gandhi is anti-democracy."

Slamming Gandhi over his accusations, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya accused the Congress leader of deliberately making repeated attempts to sow seeds of doubt and dissension in the minds of the voters about the poll process.

"It is not that Rahul Gandhi doesn't understand how the electoral process works. He does very well. But his goal is not clarity; it is chaos. His repeated attempts to sow seeds of doubt and dissension in the minds of voters about our institutional processes are deliberate," Malviya wrote on X.



The BJP leader pointed out that when Congress wins an election, be it in Telangana or Karnataka, the same system is hailed as "fair and just".

"But when they lose -- from Haryana to Maharashtra -- the whining and conspiracy theories begin, without fail," he said, adding, "This is straight out of George Soros' playbook -- systematically erode people's faith in their own institutions, so they can be cracked open from within for political gains".

"India's democracy is strong. Its institutions are resilient. And the Indian voter is wise. No amount of manipulation will change that," Malviya asserted.

Gandhi on Saturday alleged that the Maharashtra assembly elections in 2024 were a "blueprint for rigging democracy".

Posting on X, his article titled 'Match-fixing in Maharashtra', published in the Indian Express, the Congress leader accused the ruling BJP of stealing the assembly elections held in the state last year.

"How to steal an election? Maharashtra assembly elections in 2024 were a blueprint for rigging democracy. My article shows how this happened, step by step," Gandhi wrote on X. "It's not hard to see why the BJP was so desperate in Maharashtra. But rigging is like match-fixing - (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

4 held for duping people by promising them jobs in Tata's semiconductor unit: Police

MORIGAON, June 7: Four persons, including a college lecturer, were arrested in Assam's Morigaon district on Saturday for allegedly duping people by promising them jobs in the Tata group's upcoming semiconductor unit in lieu of money, police said.

The semiconductor unit is being set up at Jagirood in Morigaon district. The accused had collected lakhs of rupees from aspirants with the promise of providing jobs in the unit, a police officer said.

"The scam involved creating fake WhatsApp groups and promising lucrative jobs to unemployed

youths in Nagaon and Morigaon districts," the police officer said.

Led by alleged mastermind Tarikul Ahmed, who posed as an engineer at the semiconductor unit, they offered fake job opportunities to hundreds of youths, the officer said.

"They collected lakhs of rupees from the victims, promising them jobs in the project. The scammers even created fake appointment letters, interview letters and other documents to deceive the victims," the police officer said. A lecturer of Economics at a college in Nagaon district and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

The delegation will visit the Assam State Zoo and Botanical Gardens Delegation from Bhutan's Gelephu arrive on 6-day visit to Assam, M'laya

GUWAHATI, June 7: A nine-member delegation from Bhutan's Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) arrived on Saturday at the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport here on a six-day visit to Assam and Meghalaya, an official said.

The delegation was scheduled to visit Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG) and the Hayagriva Mahavira Mandir at Hajo in Kamrup district on Saturday.

The delegation will visit the Assam State Zoo and Botanical Gardens, the Umananda or the Peacock Island, the Guwahati Tea Auction centre and the Royal Bhutan Consul General's Office here on Sunday.

The nine-member team will leave for Meghalaya on Monday. On June 10, the delegation will call on Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and also meet the state's chief secretary, director general of Police and chief commissioner of the Central GST, Central Excise and Customs, North East Region.

On June 11, the team will visit Kamakhya Temple, Pandu Port and the Royal Global University and will

leave for Bhutan the next day.

Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) is a Special Administrative Region in Bhutan, bordering Assam. It is an innovative urban development project that integrates economic growth with mindfulness, holistic living, and sustainability. The chief minister had visited Bhutan in December last year to primarily understand the Gelephu Mindful City which is being developed by the Bhutan government as a buoyant city.

The city, once developed, near Assam's geography will change the entire economy of the region and the Bhutan King is keen that Assam also takes advantage of the city by inviting investments from billionaires who will visit Gelephu, Sarma had said earlier.

The billionaires can come and reside in the luxurious hotels in Gelephu and invest in various projects in Kokrajhar, Chirang and Bongaigaon.

Sarma said that the state government's job is not to create a twin city on the Assam side but to complement the Bhutan city. (PTI)



Infosys gets huge relief on GST as DGGI closes ₹ 32,400 cr pre-show cause notice

NEW DELHI, June 7: In a major relief for Infosys, the Director General of GST Intelligence has closed pre-show cause notice proceedings against the company for financial years 2018-19 to 2021-22 involving a staggering ₹ 32,403 crore in GST dues.

The latest move effectively ends nearly a year-long GST saga for Infosys's second-largest IT services firm.

Mid-last year, the goods and services tax (GST) authorities had slapped ₹ 32,403 crore notice on Infosys for services availed by the company from its overseas branches for five years starting 2017.

The GST demand, in fact, exceeds Infosys's annual profits (net profit for full FY25 stood at ₹ 26,713 crore), and its closure now is bound to come as a significant relief for the tech major.

The Bengaluru-headquartered company, in a BSE filing, said with the receipt of the latest communication from DGGI "this matter stands closed".

"In continuation to our earlier communications on July 31, 2024, August 1, 2024 and August 3, 2024 on GST, this is to inform that the company has today received a communication from the Director General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) closing the pre-show cause notice proceedings for the financial years 2018-19 to 2021-22," the company said in the filing late Friday evening.

Infosys -- which competes with



the likes of TCS, Wipro and others for global IT contracts -- said it had received and responded to a pre-show cause notice issued by DGGI for the period July 2017 to March 2022 on the issue of non-payment of IGST under Reverse Charge Mechanism.

"The GST amount as per the pre-show cause notice for this period was ₹ 32,403 crore. The company had on August 3, 2024 received a communication from DGGI closing the pre-show cause notice proceedings for the financial year 2017-2018. With the receipt of today's communication from DGGI, this matter stands closed," Infosys said.

In July last year, Infosys had informed that Karnataka State GST authorities issued a pre-show cause notice for payment of GST of ₹ 32,403 crores for the period July 2017 to March 2022 towards the expenses incurred by overseas

branch offices of Infosys Ltd, and added that the company has responded to the pre-show cause notice.

"The company has also received a pre-show cause notice from Director General of GST Intelligence on the same matter and the company is in the process of responding to the same," the filing of July 2024 had said.

All along, Infosys maintained that GST is not applicable on these expenses. "Additionally, as per a recent circular issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs on the recommendations of the GST Council, services provided by the overseas branches to Indian entity are not subject to GST," Infosys had argued back in July 2024.

The tech firm had asserted GST payments are eligible for credit or refund against export of IT services. "Infosys has paid all its GST

dues and is fully in compliance with the central and state regulations on this matter," the company had contended.

The document sent to Infosys by GST authorities at that point had reportedly said, "In lieu of receipt of supplies from overseas branch offices, the company has paid consideration to the branch offices in the form of overseas branch expense. Hence, M/s Infosys Ltd, Bengaluru is liable to pay IGST under reverse charge mechanism on supplies received from branches located outside India to the tune of ₹ 32,403.46 crores for the period 2017-18 (July 2017 onwards) to 2021-22."

The Directorate General of GST Intelligence in Bengaluru had been of the opinion that Infosys did not pay the Integrated-GST (IGST) on the import of services as a recipient of services.

For the just-ended March quarter, Infosys reported an 11.7 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹ 7,033 crore mainly on account of compensation to employees, and acquisitions during the reported period.

The company has guided for a revenue growth of 0-3 per cent in constant currency terms in the current fiscal year, citing uncertainty in the environment. For the full FY25, profits saw a marginal increase of 1.8 per cent to ₹ 26,713 crore; revenues climbed 6.06 per cent to reach ₹ 1,62,990 crore -- exceeding its guidance of 4.5-5 per cent for the full FY25. (PTI)

AMNS India supplied 25,000 MT steel for Chenab Bridge project: Co statement

NEW DELHI, June 7: AMNS India has said it supplied 70 per cent steel for Chenab Bridge and 100 per cent steel for Anji Khad Bridge projects, which were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday.

AMNS India supplied 25,000 metric tonnes of high-strength structural steel, accounting for 70 per cent of the total steel used in the Chenab Bridge, the company said in a statement.

This included specialised steel grades for different components, high-strength steel for the arch and tailored grades for the pillars, it said.

For the Anji Khad Bridge, AMNS India said it has supplied about 7,000 metric tonnes of customised fabricated steel structures, meeting 100 per cent of the

bridge's steel requirement. The steel for both projects was produced at its Hazira facility in Gujarat.

Ranjan Dhar, Director and Vice President, Sales & Marketing, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AMNS India), said, "The Chenab and Anji Khad Bridge is not just an engineering marvel but a symbol of India's advancing self-reliance and industrial strength. Our contribution to this landmark project reflects our deep alignment with the national development goals championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AMNS India) is a joint venture between ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel. The company has a crude steel capacity of 9 million tonnes per annum at its plant in Hazira, Gujarat. (PTI)

Ather Energy marks Northeast debut with Guwahati launch

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 7: Ather Energy, India's premier electric two-wheeler manufacturer, in partnership with Bimal Group, has officially inaugurated a brand-new Ather Space in Guwahati.

The grand opening was led by Raveet Phokela, Chief Business Officer (CBO) of Ather Energy, marking the company's strategic expansion into Northeast India.

Located in the heart of Guwahati at Jain Complex, GS Road, Christian Basti, the outlet brings Ather's cutting-edge electric scooters and advanced EV technology to customers across Assam.

"We are incredibly excited to bring Ather's advanced EV products to Guwahati," said Rohit Kumar Sarawgi, director of Bimal Automobile Pvt. Ltd.

"As we step into the EV segment, our focus remains on delivering excellence in service and experience. With Ather's world-



class technology, we are confident this partnership will shape the future of urban mobility in Guwahati."

Ather Space Guwahati offers customers an immersive experience, including test rides, person-

alised product demonstrations, and comprehensive post-sales support.

The launch reflects a shared commitment between Ather Energy and Bimal Group to create a greener, smarter future for transportation in the region.

Mahendra Dev assumes charge as EAC-PM Chairman

NEW DELHI, June 7: Former Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research Vice Chancellor S Mahendra Dev has taken charge as the new Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).

The eminent economist replaced Niti Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery, who was holding the additional charge of EAC-PM.

The EAC-PM had been without a full-time chairman since last November, following the death of its first chairman, Bibek Debroy.

An order issued by the Cabinet Secretariat had earlier said the prime minister approved the reconstitution of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister for two years or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

While three full-time members - Sanjeev Sanyal, Sanjay Kumar Mishra and Shamika Ravi - have been retained, new part-time members appointed include Soumya Kanti Ghosh (group chief economic advisor at SBI).

Other part-time members are Rakesh Mohan, Sajid Cheno, Neelkanth Misra, Nilesh Shah, T Ram Mohan, KV Raju, Chetan Ghate, Pami Dua, Pulak Ghosh and Gourav Vallabh.

Dev also previously worked as the editor of Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) and independent director of Axis Bank.

He completed his MPhil and PhD from the Delhi School of Economics and Post-doctoral research at Yale University (USA). He has written and edited 22 books and around 150 research publications on development economics, macroeconomic policies, the agricultural sector and rural economy. (PTI)

India-Denmark maritime ties growing stronger, says Sonowal

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 7: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday said that maritime partnership between India and Denmark is growing from strength to strength.

He said this while interacting with students of the prestigious Blue MBA Executive Programme at the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) today in Denmark.

The session spotlighted India's robust economic trajectory, expanding investment opportunities, and the country's efforts to harmonise economic growth with ecological responsibility.

"India and Denmark have enjoyed a long and constructive relationship, and our maritime partnership is growing from strength to strength. As coastal nations with rich maritime traditions and deep strategic interests in ocean-based industries, our collaboration today carries great potential—not just for our two countries, but for global maritime sustainability," said Sonowal who became the first minister from India to visit the prestigious business school.

He said that India's economic rise— as the fourth largest economy—



offers immense opportunities for maritime businesses, both domestic and international, adding, "Sustainability is at the heart of our maritime policy, and we are committed to achieving Net Zero emissions at major ports by 2047. From green hydrogen to digital shipping, our roadmap is ambitious yet inclusive." The discussion delved into India's role as a global maritime hub and emerging logistics power, underpinned by the country's focus on developing green ports, multimodal connectivity, and digital in-

frastructure to boost international trade. "Today, India represents a compelling story of growth that is inclusive, innovative, and sustainable," said Sonowal during the interactive session.

"As we expand our port capacity and integrate logistics across the hinterland, we also remain deeply committed to decarbonising the maritime sector. The aim is to make India the global epicentre for green shipping and clean trade corridors," he added.

Speaking to the Blue MBA co-

hort, Sonowal further outlined India's maritime growth strategy driven by the Sagarmala Programme and the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, both aimed at creating sustainable infrastructure, multimodal logistics, and a future-ready maritime ecosystem.

Sonowal termed CBS as a globally respected institution, and the Blue MBA programme in particular stands as a beacon for future-ready leadership in the maritime world. "I am especially pleased to be among students whose drive and vision will help shape the course of global shipping in the years ahead and I am eager to interact with you all today and learn more about your experiences, insights, and aspirations," he added.

The minister was joined by a distinguished panel of faculty and maritime experts, including Brian Wessel, director general of the Danish Maritime Authority; Leif Christensen, associate dean, Copenhagen Business School; and Irene Rosberg, programme director of the Blue MBA.

The Union minister was accompanied by Manish Prabhat, Ambassador of India to Denmark.

Extreme poverty in India down to 5.3 pc in 2022-23: World Bank

NEW DELHI, June 7: India's extreme poverty rate declined sharply to 5.3 per cent over a decade from 27.1 per cent in 2011-12 even as the World Bank revised upwards its threshold poverty line to USD 3 per day.

Given India's inflation rate between 2017 and 2021, a revised extreme poverty line of USD 3 would constitute a 15 per cent higher threshold than USD 2.15 expressed in 2021 prices and result in a 5.3 per cent poverty rate in 2022-23, the World Bank said in a report. As against 34 crore people below poverty line (USD 3 per day) in 2011-12, the numbers have come down to 7.5 crore in 2022-23 in absolute numbers.

The World Bank has announced a major revision to global poverty estimates, raising the International Poverty Line (IPL) from USD 2.15/day (2017 PPP) to USD 3/day (2021 PPP), according to a factsheet issued by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) on the report.

"While the change led to a global increase in the count of extreme poverty by 125 million, India emerged as a statistical outlier in a positive direction. Using more refined data and updated survey methods, India not only withstood the raised threshold but also demonstrated a massive reduction in poverty," PIB said in its factsheet details issued on Saturday.

The new poverty line would have increased the count of global extreme poverty by 226 million people. But thanks to India's data revision, the net global increase was only 125 million, as India's revised data reduced the count by 125 million on its own, it said.

In India, the World Bank report said, 54,695,832

people lived on less than USD 3 per day in 2024. Thus, the poverty rate at USD 3 per day (2021 PPP -- percentage population) is 5.44 per cent in 2024.

The extreme poverty rate decreased from 16.2 to 2.3 per cent between 2011-12 and 2022-23, while the poverty rate at the lower middle income country (LMIC) line declined by 33.7 percentage points, it said.

Free and subsidised food transfers supported poverty reduction, and the rural-urban poverty gap narrowed. The five most populous states account for 54 per cent of the extremely poor, it said.

With regard to economy, the report said, real GDP of India was around 5 per cent below the pre-pandemic trend level as of FY25.

Growth should gradually converge back to potential over 2027-28 assuming the current global uncertainties are resolved in an orderly fashion, it said.

"The outlook, however, is subject to significant downside risks, as policy shifts may continue to unfold globally. Elevated trade tensions would dampen demand for India's exports and further delay the recovery in investment," it said.

The current account deficit is expected to average around 1.2 per cent of GDP over FY26-28 and remain adequately financed by capital inflows, it said, adding that foreign exchange reserves are projected to remain stable around 16 per cent of GDP.

India has lifted 171 million people from extreme poverty in the decade between 2011-12 and 2022-23, the World Bank said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Assam to use 1950 law to deport

harassment of Indian Muslims under the guise of targeting illegal immigrants. In a memorandum submitted to the governor, the party claimed individuals, particularly from the Muslim community, were being detained, interrogated, and even arrested based on mere suspicion, often without credible evidence or due legal process. In several instances, detainees were later released after being confirmed as Indian citizens, the AIUDF noted.

As Assam moves forward with implementing the 1950 law, legal experts and human rights advocates are expected to scrutinize the constitutionality of bypassing tribunals—a move that could open up a fresh round of litigation and public debate.

BJP nominates Kanad

be marked by impactful service and steadfast commitment to the people," Saikia said in a post on X. Purkayastha was selected from a shortlist of 13 senior leaders drawn up by the Assam BJP. Of the two Rajya Sabha seats falling vacant from the state, the BJP will contest one, while its ally, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), will field a candidate for the other.

The Rajya Sabha elections are scheduled following the upcoming retirement of incumbents Mission Ranjan Das and Birendra Prasad Baishya on June 14, according to the Election Commission of India.

Indore couple was accompanied

and English," Pde said. He said that he had offered his services to take them to Nongriat on May 22 but they had hired another guide, named Bha Wansai, and spent the night at Shipara homestay and returned the next day without a guide.

"By the time I reached Mawlakhiat, their scooter was not there," the guide claimed. He has also given his statement to the police. The newlywed's rented scooter was found at Sohrarim, several kilometres from the parking lot at Mawlakhiat with the keys latched to it.

Meanwhile, even as Sonam is yet to be traced, his brother Govind, who is camping in Shillong, accused the state government of not doing enough and searching for her "like she is dead". "We strongly believe Sonam is alive. They are searching for her like she is dead," Govind said, urging authorities to take help from the CBI or any other agencies. Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has assured that the government was leaving "no stone unturned" to find the missing woman.

However, the terrain, extremely heavy rainfall and foggy weather conditions that reduce visibility to only a few feet were affecting the search operation.

"We are trying our best... our boys are doing what they can without rest using gadgets and trained dogs. The search will continue," East Khasi Hills district superintendent of police Vivek Syiem said.

Raja's decomposed body was found in a gorge near Weisawdong falls on June 2.

A gold ring and a neck chain were found missing from his body, further leading to suspicion that he was murdered. A day later, a bloodstained machete was discovered nearby and two days later, a raincoat that was similar to the one used by the couple was found in Mawkma village, half-way between Sohrarim and the gorge where Raja's body was found.

Another CCTV footage from one of the homestays showed that Sonam was wearing a similar raincoat. At the Mawlakhiat parking lot, there are no CCTVs and no registers to record the vehicles being parked. "The village itself has very poor infrastructure and inconsistent power supply," an elder at the village said.

Asked if the couple and the three other men left Mawlakhiat together, he said he could not remember any specific individual since there are many visitors in a day.

The locals have decided to start recording the vehicle numbers and visitors' phone numbers. A special investigation team headed by an SP and assisted by four DSPs is probing the matter. The search for Sonam is continuing with the participation of NDRF, SDRF, mountaineers, sniffer dogs and drones. (PTI)

Assam flood situation improves

the UNESCO World Heritage site, while 70 per cent of the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has been severely affected by the waters of the Brahmaputra and Kopili rivers.

The floods have forced the animals, including the one-horned rhinoceros, and other wildlife to move to higher ground for shelter. "The forest personnel are closely monitoring the situation and efforts are being made to minimise the impact of the floods on wildlife," an official said. (PTI)

CBI arrests former PNB senior

Sington took undue advantage of ₹ 1 lakh in his bank account from Dey's bank account for allowing extension of cash credit limit of ₹ 20 lakh to the latter, even though his firm was not in right financial health.

Searches were conducted in official and residential premises of both the accused at five locations in Dimapur and two locations in Guwahati on Friday and Saturday, leading to the recovery of incriminating documents and articles, a CBI release said on Saturday. It said Sington took undue advantage of a total of ₹ 1.69 lakh from Dey, as per searches and seizure so far.

Besides, an invoice of a total of ₹ 2,06,200, relating to the purchase of electric/electronics items, were also seized from the office premises of Dey. These items were purchased by Dey in the name of Sington, the release said. Some of the items found at the residential premises of Sington in Dimapur and Guwahati have been seized for investigation, the CBI said.

Conrad assures 'fair' probe

But Assam Police are doing some preliminary inquiry and will help Meghalaya Police if they come up with anything," Sarma added. Namrata's father had been questioning the circumstances surrounding her death and has demanded an investigation into the accident.

"I am in a very disturbed state of mind. My only plea is that she should get justice and I have full faith in the justice system. I request Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to conduct a thorough inquiry," he told reporters at his Golaghat residence after performing rituals in memory of Namrata on Friday. The survivors of the accident had initially stated before Ri Bhoi Police that there were six people in the car, including Namrata, and a driver.

However, they later retracted the statement and said that there were five persons in the car with one of them, who is the son of an Assam AIUDF MLA, driving it. They claimed to have made the false initial statement out of fear. A video had also emerged on social media, purportedly taken inside the car, which accounted for five persons inside it, with the MLA's son at the wheel. (PTI)

Rahul can't garner public

the side that cheats might win the game, but damages institutions and destroys public faith in the result," he charged.

"All concerned Indians must see the evidence. Judge for themselves. Demand answers. Because the match-fixing of Maharashtra will come to Bihar next, and then anywhere the BJP is losing," Gandhi said.

Reacting to the Congress leader's charge, Bhandari said the voter increase between the Lok Sabha and assembly elections in Maharashtra was a regular administrative trend, not a conspiracy. Gandhi is "peddling a lie" to question a normal democratic process, he alleged. He termed Gandhi's claims "inconsistent and scripted", pointing out that the Congress leader on January 19 claimed one core fake voters were added, then he changed the figure to 70 lakh on February 3 and brought it down to 39 lakh on February 7.

"Not even 1 per cent of Congress candidates formally raised complaints using Form 17C -- the legal way to challenge EVM data. If the Congress party truly believed the results were rigged, why didn't its candidates approach the District Magistrate with Form 17C data?" Bhandari asked. "Because this isn't about evidence, it's about narrative warfare," he said. (PTI)

4 held for duping people

three others were apprehended, the officer said. A police investigation revealed that large sums of money got deposited in Islam's account. The police have appealed to the public to be cautious, verify the authenticity of job offers and report any suspicious activities to the authorities. (PTI)

Dimapur village chiefs call for ILP application through offline mode

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, June 7: The GB Union Dimapur (Sadar) on Friday urged the Dimapur district administration to allow offline application for inner line permit (ILP) in the district.

In a letter to Dimapur DC, president of the GBs (village chiefs) union W Kholie Kapfo and general secretary T Onen Jamir said cited practical difficulty in obtaining ILP if it is done only through online mode.

The union said majority non-indigenous people residing in Dimapur are surely going to face problems due to their poor literacy and lack of knowledge of using the online app through a smart mobile phone. It said the implementation of ILP may be greatly hindered if it is only carried out through the online system.

The union requested the district administration to look into the matter for the convenience of the general public and the success of the ILP implementation in Dimapur.

It also said the government had taken the right step to enforce ILP all over Nagaland, including Dimapur district.

The GBs assured to fully support the government's decision and assist the district administration wherever needed for implementation of ILP within the Dimapur Sadar areas.

Heavy rain had triggered multiple landslides in north Sikkim recently, disrupting road connectivity in the region

76 army personnel airlifted from landslide-hit Chaten in north Sikkim



GANGTOK, June 7: At least 76 army personnel were on Saturday airlifted from Chaten in north Sikkim where road connectivity has been snapped due to multiple landslides triggered by heavy rain, officials said.

This marks the "completion of

coordinated evacuation efforts", which included the rescue of all stranded tourists earlier, they said.

"Altogether 76 army personnel were airlifted by three MI-17 helicopters. The air evacuation operation from Chaten has concluded today with the helicopters trans-

porting army personnel from Chaten to Pakyong Greenfield Airport," an official said.

The state government continues to closely monitor the overall situation and remains committed to providing all necessary support in the disaster-hit region and assis-

tance to those affected by natural calamities, another official said.

Heavy rain had triggered multiple landslides in north Sikkim recently, disrupting road connectivity in the region. As a result, more than 1,600 tourists had been stranded in Lachen, Lachung and Chungthang towns for days before they were rescued by the state government.

The Indian army, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Border Roads Organisation (BRO), and the Mangang district administration had carried out rescue and search operations for days and evacuated all stranded tourists and local people, the officials said.

Several helicopters were pressed into service to evacuate more than 140 tourists by air, they said.

Three army personnel were killed, four injured and six others went missing after a landslide hit a military camp at Chaten on the evening of June 1. Efforts are underway to locate the missing soldiers. (PTI)

Written examination for BTC grade-III posts to be held on June 15

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, June 7: The Central Selection Board (CSB), an autonomous body under the Government of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), has announced that the written examination for Grade-III posts in various departments of BTC will be conducted on June 15.

The examination has created some confusion among candidates, particularly regarding the eligibility for appearing in multiple departmental exams. Hundreds of candidates who applied for multiple departments expressed concerns, as the official CSB notification did not clearly state whether appearing for more than one department was permitted.

On Saturday, the CSB issued a clarification. In a press conference held at the Bodoland Guest House in Kokrajhar, CSB Chairman Dr. Dipak Kumar Basumatary clarified that candidates who have applied for multiple departments will be allowed to appear for the examination on June 15. However, if they qualify in the written test, their testimonials will be verified, and they will be considered for appointment in only one department.

Basumatary further informed that Bodoland University will conduct the examination for all departments simultaneously on June 15. Admit cards are being issued online according to the options selected by candidates during the application process.

He added that a total of 416 posts are to be filled across various departments, for which 47,068 candidates have applied. The examination will be held in 75 centres across BTC districts.

Meanwhile, Dipen Boro, President of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), raised concerns about discrepancies in the issuance of admit cards. He said he had a telephonic discussion with CSB Chairman Basumatary regarding the matter, and the latter assured that clarifications would be provided through the press conference held on Saturday.

Noted physician passes away

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, June 7: Renowned physician Dr Biswarup Gohain Baruah, a resident of Panigaon, Polytechnic Road, Bishnu Rabha By-lane in Nagaon town, passed away last night while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Guwahati. He was a respected figure in the medical fraternity and known for his dedication to patient care.

According to sources, Baruah suddenly fell ill on the morning of June 4 and was initially admitted to a private hospital in Nagaon. Later the same day, he was referred to a private hospital in Guwahati for advanced treatment, where he ultimately breathed his last.



At the time of his passing, Baruah was serving as the Medical Officer (School Health) under the Nagaon Sub-Divisional Health and Medical Department. A skilled gynecologist by profession, he was also deeply involved in various social and cultural activities in Nagaon, earning the love and respect of the community.

The news of his untimely demise sent shockwaves through the district. Friends, admirers, fellow doctors, and well-wishers gathered at his residence to pay their last respects. His mortal remains were later taken to the office of the Joint Director, Nagaon District Health Department, where colleagues, retired medical professionals, and health staff paid homage. Baruah's death has left a profound void in the medical community. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) expressed deep condolences to the bereaved family.

Rupak Sarma, MLA of Nagaon-Batadroba, mourned the loss, describing it as an irreparable blow to the healthcare sector in Nagaon. Former Minister Girindra Kumar Baruah, former MLA Dr. Durlav Chamaia, and several local organizations also extended heartfelt condolences.

Baruah is survived by his wife, two daughters, and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

Jagiroad police arrest five, recover 11 stolen mobile phones

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, June 7: In a successful crackdown on mobile phone theft, Jagiroad Police arrested five individuals and recovered 11 stolen mobile phones in a late-night operation.

The action was initiated after a woman named Bandana Das lodged a complaint about her missing phone. Acting swiftly, police traced one of the stolen phones to the residence of Suresh Boro of Madhavnagar, under Jagiroad Police Station. During the search, officers discovered three additional stolen mobile phones concealed in his home.

Further investigation led to the arrest of four more individuals—Atabur Rahman, Akhtar Hussain, and Rafiqul Ali from Boha Pahar (Jagiroad), and Zubaid Alam from Mangaldai. Seven more stolen mobile phones were recovered from their possession. Police have launched a detailed investigation to uncover the full extent of the theft ring and trace any other stolen property. Authorities have urged the public to remain vigilant and report thefts promptly.

Hojai Police seize heroin worth over ₹ 2 crore, two arrested

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, June 7: In a major breakthrough in the fight against drug trafficking, Hojai Police seized a large quantity of suspected heroin valued at over ₹ 2 crore and arrested two individuals during an early morning operation on Friday, June 5.

Acting on a tip-off, police launched a targeted operation along National Highway 27 in the

Hojai-Lumding stretch. During the operation, two suspected drug peddlers were apprehended—identified as Shahid Ahmed Mazumdar and Rahanul Islam, both residents of Cachar district.

According to police sources, 50 soap boxes containing a total of 820.51 grams of suspected heroin were recovered from their possession. Two vehicles used in the transportation of the

contraband were also seized from the Lumding Reserve area.

Speaking to the media, Hojai Superintendent of Police (SP) Saurabh Gupta stated, "Hojai Police's mission against illicit drugs is ongoing. Based on reliable intelligence, we intercepted a consignment of heroin en route from outside the state via the Barak Valley, destined for Nagaon in Central Assam."

FIR lodged against retired Darrang College vice principal

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARALI, June 7: Representatives of several socio-cultural organizations from the greater Jamugurihat area, including the Jamuguri branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha, Baresohoriya Bhaona Committee, Abhijatri Kala Kendra, Srimanta Sankardev Namdharma Samaj, Jamuguri Bohagi Mela Committee, Jamuguri Vedic Samaj, Asamiya Sahitya Sammilani, Naduar Chapter of Nath Yogi Sammilani, and the Jamuguri Sports Club, among others, lodged an FIR today against Gahan Chandra Mahanta, a retired Vice Principal of Darrang College, at Jamuguri Police Station.

The FIR pertains to Mahanta's alleged derogatory remarks made during a meeting held on June 1 at Abhijatri Kala Kendra, which reportedly showed disrespect toward Jamugurihat and its rich socio-cultural heritage. Earlier, on June 4, these unified organizations had held a press meet condemning Mahanta's controversial comments. They issued a 48-hour ultimatum demanding a public apology. However, as of today, Mahanta has neither issued an apology nor expressed any regret over his remarks.

In response, the organizations moved forward with legal action and lodged an FIR demanding strict action. In addition, representatives of the groups staged a sit-in demonstration within the premises of Jamuguri Police Station, demanding the immediate arrest of Gahan Chandra Mahanta.

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Dated Manja, the 3rd June, 2025

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Assam Hills Small Industries Development Corporation Ltd. (KANCH), (a Govt. of Assam undertaking), Manja Industrial Complex, Manja, Karbi Anglong is going to conduct One Day Training-cum-Awareness Programme on the various subjects/matters in collaboration with the Line Department of Govt. of Assam/Resource Person(s) for the interest of the local un-employed youths and others.

Therefore, the undersigned is cordially requested to the interested person(s) to take part on the occasion of One-day Training-cum-Awareness Programme as per the fixed schedule and programme to the following Date and Time:

PROGRAMME	SUBJECT
10 TH JUNE, 2025 At 10.30 am to 2.00 pm.	One day training on Mushroom cultivation, making of homemade Pickles and making of Ginger based products etc.
13 TH JUNE, 2025 At 10.30 am to 2.00 pm	One day Training on Rubber plantation etc.
17 TH JUNE, 2025 At 10.30 am to 2.00 pm	One day Training for self-employment and awareness on "STARTUP" Policy.
21 ST JUNE, 2025 At 10.30 am to 2.00 pm	One day Training on Tourism for upliftment of the Tourism sector in the Hill Areas.
25 TH JUNE, 2025 At 10.30 am to 2.00 pm	One day Training-cum-work shop Village Industry in the Hill Areas
30 TH JUNE, 2025 At 10.30 am to 2.00pm	One day Training on Scientific cultivation on Betel nut, fruits plantation like Orange, Pineapple for welfare of the people resides in Hill Areas.
5 TH JULY, 2025 At 10.30 am to 2.00 pm	Training-cum-Awareness on Aromatics Crops for essential Oil products for self employment & its market

Please Note:

(1) PLACE OF TRAINING PROGRAMME AT: MANJA INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, MANJA, K/ANGLONG.

(2) Time Scheduled: 10.30 am to 2.00 pm and may be changed subject to arrival of Invited Guest/Officials. (3). No TA/DA for the participants are admissible on each day of the Programme. (4) TARGET GROUP: Un-employed Youth and individuals can participate on the Training Programme. (5) Certificate will be provided to the Participant by the Authority of AHSIDC Ltd. (6) Interested person/Group may register their name with his/her Mobile Number to our WHATSAPP M.No.78968-80068 / 60000-36706 or through Email id: ahsidcltd@gmail.com.

Sd/-
(D.Lekthe)
Managing Director

Eid-ul-Zuha celebrated

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, June 7: The Islamic community of Margherita observed Eid-ul-Zuha on Saturday with heartfelt devotion and a spirit of togetherness.

At 8:30 AM, the Margherita Central Eidgah Ground was filled with thousands of worshippers as Imam Ali Ahmed Misbahi led the Eid prayers. The ground, beautifully decorated for the occasion, resonated with spiritual energy as people gathered to offer prayers in a collective expression of faith.

Following the prayer service, many visited the local Kabrasthan (graveyard) to offer supplications for deceased loved ones. Across various Eidgahs in the region, people came together to pray for global peace and harmony, embodying the core values of Eid—compassion, charity, and unity.

The celebration served as a reminder of



the enduring bonds that connect the community and their commitment to peace and mutual respect.

Our Sivasagar Correspondent adds: Along with the rest of the world, the Muslim community in Sivasagar celebrated Eid-ul-Adha with solemnity, devotion, and enthusiasm.

At Babupatty Eidgah Moidan, the Eid prayers were led by Haji Maulana Ismail Ali Kasimi, who also delivered a sermon

emphasizing the values of sacrifice, compassion, and unity.

Eid prayers were also held at various other Eidgahs across the district, including Amguri, Samaguri, Geleki, and Nitaipukhuri, where large gatherings of worshippers came together in a spirit of brotherhood and celebration.

The day was marked by prayers, community gatherings, and acts of charity, reflecting the true essence of the festival.

Grave allegations surface against headmaster of Majiahadi English ME School

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, June 7: Serious allegations have emerged against Gobin Johori, Headmaster of Majiahadi English ME School in West Karbi Anglong district (UDISE Code: 18331007304), accusing him of monopolistic practices and widespread irregularities in the school's operations. The controversy, extensively reported across multiple media outlets on June 6, has sparked public outrage, with residents demanding a thorough investigation and immediate intervention by the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC).

Sukulal Daudunglangtha, the founding and former President of the School Management Committee (SMC), has accused Johori of unilaterally restructuring the SMC without prior consultation or approval. Daudunglangtha claims he did not authorize any resolutions during his tenure, yet Johori allegedly went ahead and appointed all teaching and non-teaching staff on his own. According to the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE), the school employs seven teaching staff and one non-teaching



staff member for the 2024-25 academic session. The legitimacy of these appointments is now under serious scrutiny.

Further compounding the issue are glaring discrepancies in student enrollment and attendance figures. While Johori claims an enrollment of 15-20 students, both Daudunglangtha and the Sarkari

Gaon Burha (SGB) of Majiahadi village report actual physical attendance ranging from zero to three students. This stark inconsistency has raised concerns over potential mismanagement and misuse of funds intended for the school's functioning.

The school's infrastructure also raises questions. Despite Johori's assertion that the school has three bighas of land, it continues to operate out of a temporary structure. This has led to suspicions of forged or misrepresented land documents possibly being used to obtain UDISE registration and avail KAAC facilities.

Local residents have also alleged financial mismanagement and irregular staff appointments, deepening the community's mistrust in the school's administration. As tensions escalate, the public is calling for a transparent and thorough investigation by relevant authorities, particularly the KAAC, to ensure accountability and restore faith in the school's governance.

Stakeholders now await swift and decisive action to address the growing crisis at Majiahadi English ME School.

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Editor's pick

Chinese credibility deficit

By: Harsh V. Pant & Atul Kumar

China's defence exports have historically faced a credibility deficit, rooted in persistent performance and reliability issues. Repeated cases, such as Thailand and Algeria replacing crucial components in Chinese weapon systems with Western alternatives, underscore systemic shortcomings and enduring doubts. This perception has been reinforced in the previous years by instances such as the operational failure of ground combat platforms in African states as well as technical deficiencies in airborne early warning and control systems and frigate exports to Pakistan.

However, the most notable shock emerged during the Operation Sindoor clashes between India and Pakistan, where Chinese systems reportedly failed across domains. The episode ended up casting doubts on China's capacity to sustain competitive defence exports and questioned the maturity and resilience of its broader military-industrial complex.

Dependence exposed in combat

Since the early 2000s, China has become Pakistan's principal defence partner, significantly reshaping the region's military balance. By the time of Operation Sindoor, according to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 81% of Pakistan's defence inventory came from China. This was more than an arms trade, it reflected deep strategic dependence.

Pakistan's order of battle was dominated by Chinese systems: J-10C and JF-17 fighter aircraft, JY-27A long-range air surveillance radars, and multiple surface-to-air missile systems. The Fatah rockets were modelled on China's A300 rocket system. Chinese SH-15 self-propelled artillery was utilised on the Line of Actual Control. Beijing's drones, such as the CH-4 and Wing Loong series, were crucial assets, backed by an extensive radar grid.

This set-up wasn't just tactical, it also reflected structural shifts. Historically, Pakistan relied on its air force for air defence, with ground-based systems playing a secondary role. China helped build the Comprehensive Layered Integrated Air Defence (CLAD) and expand the Air Defence Ground Environment System (ADGES) into central components of Pakistan's posture. The JY-27A radar at Mianwali operated in the very-high frequency (VHF) band and tracked stealth aircraft up to 500 km. China's YLC series radars, deployed across key installations, formed the core of Pakistan's ADGES network. Pakistan's CLAD was built almost entirely with Chinese hardware: HQ-9Ps and HQ-16s for high- and medium-altitude coverage, HQ-17s, FM-90s, and FN-6s for short-range protection.

During Operation Sindoor, Chinese support even extended into space and signals. Beijing provided satellite reconnaissance, real-time targeting data, and secure ultra sets for satellite-based communications. Some of this intelligence, routed through the Pakistan Army, has reportedly reached even terrorists.

However, when the real tests came, Chinese weapon systems failed across domains. Drones were jammed, radars neutralised, and missile batteries underperformed. The much-touted ADGES and CLAD crumbled in real combat. Pakistan's deep military reliance on China-produced integration, not superiority, and for Islamabad, the cost of dependence became visible as the strategic alignment delivered hardware, not success.

China's security apprehensions

Although Chinese internet commentators blamed Pakistan's poor training and limited personnel competence for the underperformance of Chinese weapons during Operation Sindoor, the outcome revealed deeper flaws in China's defence manufacturing. The operation exposed serious gaps in the capability and combat reliability of Chinese-made systems.

China's state-dominated military-industrial complex has, since long, produced weapons that outwardly match Western or American systems in appearance and advertised specifications. Yet, most of these systems have never been battle-tested. Without real combat data, their actual performance remains speculative. Moreover, corruption in China's defence sector is a well-known issue, raising doubts about the quality and integrity of production. The risk of compromised and underperforming systems remains high.

Still, this hasn't stopped Beijing from inducting these weapons into its People's Liberation Army (PLA) or exporting them to friendly regimes or those with funds. Most of the surface-to-air missile systems and radars used in the May clashes form a central part of China's own air-defence network. The JY-27A radar is deployed opposite Taiwan and India. Over 500 J-10 fighters are in PLA service. The PL-15 is its standard beyond-visual-range missile.

While Pakistan received export variants, concerns about reliability extend to China's own versions. For instance, Beijing suspects that Moscow supplied a downgraded S-400 system to avoid the risk of reverse engineering, while India received a fully capable version. As a result, China finds itself in a bind—its domestic systems are often untested and prone to flaws, while its imported ones are restricted in capability. Compounding the problem, the West's arms embargo since the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown continues to block China's access to the advanced weaponry.

There are signs of innovation—civil-military fusion has helped Chinese manufacturers integrate advanced civilian technologies into weapons design. Yet, these gains are overshadowed by long-standing credibility apprehensions. As a result, a core question persists: Is the PLA truly prepared to fight and win the wars that the Chinese Communist Party intends to fight in the future?

Lessons for India

Operation Sindoor has revealed four key takeaways. First, China and Pakistan now form a de facto military partnership, integrating capabilities across space, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, cyber, electronic warfare, and communications. Though China avoids overt support, it tacitly bolsters Pakistan's hand. Second, Chinese weapons, despite advanced outward appearances, performed poorly in battle. Beijing is now eager to study battlefield data to improve its systems. Third, India's indigenous weapons are maturing, boosting both combat capability and export potential. Lastly, India must intensify local weapons development while selectively pursuing foreign collaboration. Timely induction of reliable indigenous systems is now central to India's military and strategic preparedness. (Courtesy: ORF)

Elon Musk's vicious attack against Trump's economic policies has stunned maga supporters

By: T N Ashok

NEW YORK: The differences between US President Donald Trump and his first buddy tech billionaire Elon Musk, who sunk \$288 million of his personal fortunes to get the mercurial Trump re-elected, has now exploded in the public domain with a spat. The bitter attack by the Tesla CEO against the U.S. President's economic policies indicates that there are differences in approach between the two friends of fundamental nature.

The words "disgusting abomination" used by Musk endangers the relationship between the President and the tech billionaire, founder of TESLA EVs, xAI, SpaceX, Neural Link (Brain Mapping) and owner of social platform X, are so strong that the unpredictable Trump could sway which way every way he wanted in the relationship as he is also used to using in-temperate language in his social media platform Truth Social, with millions of followers. Could both gut each other with their verbal spat, in which Trump has remarkably kept his cool and not reacted violently.

An utterly frustrated Musk, who made his fortunes building a company coming to USA on a H1B visa, has a different take on every one of Trumps policies starting from immigrants, tariffs and government spending. He continued with these for the first 130 days of Trump regime. Now after getting out of administration, he is airing his personal views in a no holds manner.

Musk walked into White House as the chief administrator of DOGE – Dept of Govt Efficiency – to slash redundant government jobs and save government expenditure. When ideological differences emerged and his co administrator wanted DOGE outside of the government, the 2024 presidential aspirant and admirer of Trump Vivek Ramaswamy was eased out to campaign for governorship of the Ohio state, where he lives.

Once inside a building next to the White House, Musk never got a room in the West Wing, the most powerful advisory group in the United States in the presidential house, he began his job in earnest. At the end of his 130 days mission, he spent \$135 billion to effect a saving of \$175 billion in government spending, a fraction of the \$2 trillion reduced later to \$1 trillion he promised.

When Trump virtually offered him the last straw to pull out of DOGE, Musk was flabbergasted that the man who had been campaigning all along in 2024 to shut down his predecessor Biden from government spend for inflating budget deficit, did exactly the same of what Biden did bringing the entire situation back to square one.

Fears are being expressed in Washington DC that Trump's Big Beautiful Bill, vastly different from Biden's Build, Back, Better initiative on climate technologies of a \$1.7 trillion, might end up with an expenditure ballooning deficit to \$5 trillion in the next 10 years, leaving a gaping hole in the government's budget.

Trump's attempts to cut taxes for the rich, for those earning over \$4 million a year saving them \$400,000 a year and cutting expenditure on Medicaid, Medicare, Obama care and the redefining of the Affordable Care act leaving out 8.6 million of urban middle class from the health care net, raising the costs of medicare by \$1,000 per urban household, enhancing the prices of drugs needed by the middle classes, seems to mitigate all the gains achieved by DOGE in Cutting on wasteful government expenditure.

In a vituperative outburst on his X media platform, Musk bellowed calling the Big Beautiful bill as a "massive, outrageous, pork-filled Congressional spending bill". He went on to say it was an



Musk walked into White House as the chief administrator of DOGE – Dept of Govt Efficiency – to slash redundant government jobs and save government expenditure. When ideological differences emerged and his co administrator wanted DOGE outside of the government, the 2024 presidential aspirant and admirer of Trump Vivek Ramaswamy was eased out to campaign for governorship of the Ohio state, where he lives

abomination bill.

The bill scraped through the Congress at 215-214 by a solitary vote. It's now hanging in balance in the senate where the republicans outnumber democrats by 53 to 47 and vice president, JD Vance, with the presiding officer of the senate, holding the tie breaking vote.

With three republicans opposing it in the senate, Trump could see the BBB through the senate 50 to 47 and if it's a nail biting finish JD Vance can always come to the rescue with his tie breaking vote. But the bill could be gutted from its present form to make it acceptable to the section of republicans opposing the bill.

History seems to repeat itself. Joe Biden's Build Back Better initiative with a budget of \$1.7 trillion was gutted by his own democrats representing the fossil fuels lobby as it sought to promote climate change technologies against fossil fuels. The fossil fuel lobby, which influences several senators and congressmen spent about \$93 billion in FY 2023-24 to lobby against climate change advocacy groups.

Biden's Build Back Better initiative went through the drain down to about \$1 trillion and yet managed to be allocated \$750 billion for climate change technologies that included promoting EVs, subsidies on car sales and the batteries that went into it. But Trump's BBB, very similar in moniker to Biden's BBB, is likely to be gutted in its present form in the sen-

ate with Musk influencing senators. Musk said of the congressmen who voted for the bill: "Shame on those who voted for it: you know you did wrong. You know it."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt reacted to a question on Elon Musk calling Donald Trump's tax bill as "a disgusting abomination. The billionaire's aggressive intervention comes at a critical time for Trump's "big, beautiful bill", which narrowly passed the House of Representatives last month and needs to be approved by the Senate if it is to become law.

Trump has imposed a deadline of July 4 to pass the legislation, which could define his second term and set the course for the US economy. He has heaped pressure on Republican senators who are alarmed about the package, which would slash taxes, reduce social spending and increase the federal debt.

Hours before Musk's comments on X, Trump attacked Republican Senator Rand Paul, a staunch fiscal conservative who has taken issue with the bill's provisions to raise the limit on how much the federal government can borrow by \$5tn.

"Rand Paul has very little understanding of the BBB, especially the tremendous GROWTH that is coming," Trump said on his Truth Social media platform on Tuesday morning. "The BBB is a big WINNER!!!"

Other fiscally conservative senators — including Wisconsin's Ron Johnson, Mike

Lee of Utah and Rick Scott of Florida — have called for deeper spending cuts in the bill.

Another group of Republican senators — including Susan Collins of Maine, Alaska's Lisa Murkowski and Josh Hawley of Missouri — have criticized the bill's proposed cuts to Medicaid, a government healthcare scheme for lower-income and disabled Americans. They will now face the flak from their constituents back home.

Trump's party controls the Senate by a 53-47 margin, meaning the Republicans can only afford to lose the support of three senators if the spending bill is to pass the upper chamber. Asked about Musk's comments, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said: "Look, the president already knows where Elon Musk stood on this bill. It doesn't change the president's opinion. This is one big, beautiful bill, and he's sticking to it." But Musk's intervention is likely to embolden the president's Republican critics. Paul agreed with Musk on X, saying, "We can and must do better." Lee replied: "The Senate must make this bill better."

Musk's broadside came five days after his high-profile send-off at the Oval Office and his dispute with the White House escalated, which he has criticized over tariff policy and blamed for not fully backing his efforts to cut \$1tn from the US budget. Musk, who outsources many of the spare parts from China for TESLA and also sells TESLA cars by the huge numbers in that country, was one of those badly hit by the Tariffs heaped on China.

Musk saw his quarter line profits plummet to 71%. The stakeholders and board of directors were very much upset and asked Musk to either return to TESLA and do his job as the CEO or resign and find an alternate to run the company. Everything in Musk's venture is dear to his heart from TESLA to Space X to Neural Link on Brain Mapping to his social media platform X which he acquired from Twitter for \$44 billion. He said he would return to his flagship company running all the entities and sleep in his office if necessary to bring back the company to profit making days once again.

The administration on Tuesday sought to mollify disgruntled supporters of Musk's cost-cutting task force, the so-called Department of Government Efficiency, by presenting Congress with a small slither of cuts the initiative identified — including contracts related to diversity programmes and more than \$1bn in funding for NPR and PBS — to be enshrined in law. (IPA Service)

When national unity must rise above partisan politics

By: Shashanka Das

India's resolute response to the Pahalgam terror attack, under the mantle of Operation Sindoor, has drawn a clear red line against those who dare to endanger its sovereignty. In a move that has drawn both national and international approval, the Government of India launched a precision military strike to avenge the blood of fallen civilians. But beyond the battleground, a different kind of war is being fought—one that demands unity of purpose rather than division of opinion.

To consolidate global support against terrorism and articulate India's stance with clarity, the government dispatched high-level bipartisan delegations to influential world capitals. These were not mere symbolic gestures but strategic diplomatic missions aimed at underlining a singular national message: India will not tolerate terrorism, nor will it permit its soil to be undermined through violence.

One such delegation is being led by Congress MP Dr. Shashi Tharoor in the United States. Known for his articulate diplomacy and deep understanding of international affairs, Tharoor's presence has added gravitas to the delegation. He has spoken with clarity and conviction, offering a balanced, factual, and principled account of India's position on cross-border terror and its recent military response.

When questioned about fellow Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's controversial statement—alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "surrendered" after receiving a call from then US President Donald Trump—Tharoor swiftly countered the claim. "India didn't need persuading to stop. No one needed to tell us to stop be-



cause we were telling them that the moment Pakistan stops, we are prepared to stop," Tharoor said, reinforcing the fact that India's decision was sovereign and strategic, not the result of foreign pressure.

His remarks, while diplomatically worded, subtly corrected the narrative that sought to undermine the Indian government's decision-making during a crucial security operation. Tharoor further elaborated that if any communication came from the United States, it was likely directed at Pakistan, urging them to halt hostilities since India had already indicated its willingness to cease operations should the other side stop. "That's a wonderful gesture on their part," he noted, signalling gratitude without compromising national pride.

His response also underlined a critical strate-

gic position: "We have no real difficulty speaking the same language as the Pakistanis, as long as they use the language of terrorism. We will use the language of force, and that doesn't require a third party," Tharoor added. It was a categorical assertion that India's counter-terrorism posture is firm, independent, and unambiguous.

Joining Tharoor in this bipartisan diplomatic mission is another Congress leader, Milind Deora, who lauded Tharoor's conduct, saying, "He always puts country before party." Deora's words are significant, especially when viewed in contrast to the controversy sparked by Gandhi's comment, which seemed to prioritise political point-scoring over statesmanlike responsibility.

Another all-party delegation, this one in Jakarta and led by senior Congress leader and former External Affairs Minister Salman Khur-

shid, echoed similar sentiments. Responding to the "surrender" allegation, Khurshid clarified, "The call came from the DGMO of Pakistan. We stopped when they said 'Let's stop,' and we didn't send any further attacks on them." His remarks offer insight into the operational protocol between military officials and reinforce that India was neither coerced nor cajoled into halting its operations.

Khurshid also voiced disappointment at the politicisation of India's security policy. "Is it so difficult to be patriotic?" he asked, lamenting that political opportunism was eroding the very consensus that India's global diplomatic efforts were trying to build. "We are not supporting each other's parties—we are supporting one simple idea called India," he added, poignantly reminding all that patriotism must not become the casualty of politics.

This divergence within the Congress party itself—between those engaged in international diplomacy and those stirring domestic discontent—poses a moral and strategic dilemma. How can a party reconcile its global diplomacy with internal dissent that undermines the very cause it seeks to advance abroad?

More dangerously, Rahul Gandhi's remarks have been gleefully seized upon by Pakistan's propaganda machinery. His "Narendra surrender" jibe has found its way into digital campaigns designed to mock India's resilience and amplify false narratives. This is no longer merely a domestic debate; it has international ramifications.

The consequences of such careless political rhetoric extend beyond partisan squabbling. They erode the hard-earned credibility India has built through military professionalism, diplomatic outreach, and democratic stability. The revocation of

Article 370, once a subject of fierce debate, has since ushered in higher voter participation, reduced militancy, and restored political normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. As Khurshid noted, "There is an elected government in Kashmir today," and to trivialise this progress for short-term political gains is deeply unfortunate.

India has a proud history of bipartisan unity on foreign policy and national security—from the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War to the 1999 Kargil conflict. These were moments when political leaders, irrespective of their ideological leanings, stood shoulder to shoulder. That tradition must not be abandoned now, particularly when Indian delegations are carrying the country's message abroad.

The essence of India's foreign policy rests on its strategic autonomy and unwavering resolve against terrorism. That must not be muddled by off-the-cuff political remarks. When Indian civilians and soldiers are targeted, and India responds, there should be no space for domestic divisions. Politics can wait; national unity cannot.

As the world watches, India's strength lies in its resolve—and in its unity. Leaders like Dr. Shashi Tharoor and Salman Khurshid exemplify this statesmanlike approach. Their words abroad carry the dignity of a nation that refuses to be bullied and refuses to compromise on truth. Their voices must not be drowned by the din of domestic discord.

In moments like these, the nation looks to its leaders not merely for answers, but for assurance—that they speak with one voice when it matters most.

Let that voice be India's. (The author can be reached at shashankadasnov1@gmail.com or 9706619975)

Versatile Anita Hazarika : Magic casements of creativity

By: Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee

“Twilight end of the Autumn / The serenity of the green earth / In the soft lap of Nature / Magical heaven descends / Free I am / Casements open all around me / Autumnal moonlight I weave / Delving deeper into sweet memory / Me an artist / I can imagine / Every day my ever fresh? Evergreen is my dreamy magic Castle” These beautiful lines are from the poetry book of the versatile writer of Assam Anita Hazarika. She is a teacher with noble ideals, a writer of children literature with a mission and a musician with social responsibility and a sports woman with kinetic energy. All rounder Anita Hazarika passes her each moment in writing and work besides her teaching as a professional responsibility. She was born in the beautiful village Meteka of Nagaon Assam in 1963. Now she lives in Morigaon. She completed her studies in Meteka Primary school where Tileswar Kakati the Headmaster of the institution and Asst teacher Anuprava Deka looked after her as local guardian when her father Mohan Hazarika was whole day busy with her political activities and social service all day long. She learnt from her parents two important thing of her life not to make any difference between brother and sister on the ground of gender and to leave even government job if it collides with political ideology and freedom of mind. Her father left government job as he was not allowed to continue his political mission. Being born in such a family of high ideals and moral integrity Anita Hazarika too grew up as an accomplished writer of versatile creativity- ever uncompromising and brave enough to look at life bravely without any prejudice following the left ideology of her father. Her mother who was a perfectly accomplished lady remained for

her an icon of gentleness and suavity. She strictly supervised her growing up as a good student and an ideal girl. She inspired her to use the library where she got the first real lesson for literature. Her love of literature was nourished by her reading the poets and writers of Assam. Before completion of her graduation she got a chance to be appointed as a science teacher on an emergency vacancy to be filled up urgently under the pressure of the locality. Later she completed her graduation and married her colleague Bhadrakanta Das with the persuasion from her parents and continued service in that school. That school was that time created a niche for female education all over the district. Anita felt proud of being a teacher of that school and did her job with full commitment to her duty as a teacher. It was more than a profession for her, a mission, a noble passion. While she was a sincerely teaching her students, she herself prepared for her Masters privately side by side and finally in 2017 came out with flying colours. This degree was her struggle for success that few women in her condition can achieve. Anita has a passion for music and simultaneously pursued hard training in Classical Music and got her diploma while she learnt playing violin in her leisure time. Leisure is a change of work for her not idle life of passing her moments in lethargy because she is also good in sports and athletics on district level participation. This is a social responsibility for her and this sense is inherited from her ever active father.

Anita is above everything is a writer. She loved to write for the children whom she has been guiding in her school. Decades passed in writing in varied genres of literature. Recognition as a writer came for her from All Assam Women Writers Organisation (Xadou Asom Lekhika Xamaroh Samiti) for joining and in a short time she was given the re-



sponsibility as a Secretary of the branch in the same year 2001. Anita started writing for newspapers in her busy schedule as a mother of three children carrying the burden of a science teacher of a school. The burden was however her pleasure and pride. She wrote on Pratima Barua Pandey the queen of folk song of Goal-

para in a local newspaper. Editor Santanu Deka was elated to read her article and called her to tell that he would publish it in his newspaper. Since then her articles were continuously published in the Sunday Supplements of Alap regularly. In 2008 she started writing for her book for children and many of them

were published in the newspapers. She published anthology of her articles on eminent writers and on literature. She wrote on Bhupen Hazarika in 2009 when his statue was inaugurated at Guwahati. In this book she wrote on Padmanath Gohain Boruah, Lakshminath Bezbarua, Benudhar Sarma, Hitesh Deka, Lakhyadhar Chowdhury, Jagmeswar Sarma, Bhogeswar Barua, Khagen Mahanta, Keshab Mahanta, Bishnu Prasad Rabha, Jyotiprasad Agarwala and so on. Politics was in her vein and she was happy to write on Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan Gopinath Bardoloi, Jawaharlal Nehru and many others. Writers of World literature were also included. They are Leo Tolstoy, Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arbind Adiga, Chinua Achebe, Richard Fineman, Juliet Curie also Bharat Ratan Abdul Kalam and many others from various field of science and literature. She also wrote on Sports such as Beginning of Olympic Sports, Flag of Olympic, Gavaskar and many other such topics of world sports.

As a musical she took deep interest in Dr. Nirmalprava Bordoloi's songs and also the songs of Nagen Bora. She wrote on their life events and showed how they overcame financial restraints to fulfill their mission. Anita Hazarika published four books. In 2011 her book Bandar aru Ekho Chiti had three editions and this shows her popularity as a writer of children stories. Dr. Narendra Nath Bardoloi wrote on the book, Bandar aru Ekho Chiti focused on the impediments in the child mind and the ways how to remove them. 13 stories are all simply thought provoking and enjoyable. Anita published her second book Kakaideuta Aru Natilora is a novel for the children. It was published in 2024. This book focuses on the duty of the parents and a vision of a beautiful society. The third

edition is Pachbook which is a Story anthology in which many earlier stories were also included. Eminent story writer Riju Hazarika wrote on this anthology. Srimati Hazarika's narrative in the story comprises simple and fluent diction Her observation and skill in presenting the society from varied angles is commendable. There are 16 stories in the anthology. The next publication is Saphalatar Aarat (Behind the Success) which contains 19 essays focusing on the great writer of the 19th and 20th Century of Assam and their thoughts. Many of these essays were published earlier. Her fifth publication is Biral Pratibha (Rare Talents) which focused on great writers and political persons of Assam nay India. Her sixth publication is a poetry book. Awards and recognition came to her in abundance. A few may be mentioned: In 2011 she was awarded Birangana Sabitri Bai Phule National Award from Bharatiya Dalit Sahitya Akademi in New Delhi, Sadou Asom Lekhika Samaroh awarded her in 2012, 2014, 2016-8. Morigaon Granthakar Samaroh awarded her in 2018, Kriti Shikshak Award from Morigaon District School Inspector in 2021, International Women Day 2024 brought her Grantha Ratna Award from North East Biggest Cultural Unities and so on.

Anita Hazarika is also a poet and this book on poetry Ejak Shabdar Baraxun (Shower of a Splash of Words) shows her deeper sensibility from which some lines can be shared with the readers. On the bough of Chot month / Verdurous green dreams of Hope / Echoing the lost melodious tunes / Where the cuckoo sings of life in the open air. This romantic mind of Anita goes on creating each moment a poetic magic for the readers in the ever busy schedule of her life. (The author is a poet and a multilingual writer who can be reached at prfratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)

‘Bhaimon Da’ - A journey through cinema

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The recently released Assamese film ‘Bhaimon Da’ stands as a heartfelt tribute to the legendary filmmaker Munin Barua, a pivotal figure in the golden era of Assamese cinema. Known affectionately and respectfully as ‘Bhaimon Da’ within the industry, Munin Barua's life and work are beautifully portrayed in this film, which captures not only his personal journey but also the broader struggles and triumphs of Assamese cinema during a challenging period. Directed and written by the young cultural activist and popular lyricist Shashank Samir, and produced by Shyamantak Gautam under the banner of Zeal Creations, the film goes beyond a simple biographical account. It offers a vivid portrayal of the cultural, social, and economic realities that shaped Assamese cinema.

Munin Barua's passion for cinema was evident from his childhood. His professional journey began as a screenwriter for the acclaimed director Shiva Prasad Thakur's popular film ‘Bowari’, marking the start of his recognized creative contribution. Over the years, Barua directed and wrote many memorable films such as ‘Pratima’, ‘Pita-Putra’, ‘Prabhati Pokhir Gaan’, ‘Hiya Diya Niya’, ‘Nayak’, ‘Kanyadaan’, ‘Daag’, ‘Bida-hata’, and ‘Deenabandhu’. These films not only achieved commercial success but also captured the essence of Assamese society, reflecting its cultural and social nuances. ‘Bhaimon Da’ successfully portrays Barua's artistic vision and personal struggles while highlighting his role as a guiding force in both the commercial and artistic development of Assamese cinema. The film weaves his story with the larger narrative of Assamese cinema's heritage, challenges, and identity.

The central theme of the film revolves around the battle to carve out a space for Assamese films in an industry dominated by Hindi cinema. During Munin Barua's era, securing screening opportunities for Assamese movies was a daunting challenge, as theater owners and distributors favored Hindi films, sidelining regional productions. This film effectively depicts these struggles against the backdrop of Assam's social and political environment, including events like the Assam Movement, the rise of Surabahi, and the challenges posed by CD piracy and VCD production. The director's keen insight and thorough research have created a screenplay that blends Munin Barua's personal life—his relationships, dedication, and commitment to art—with the socio-economic conditions of the time. By striking a balance between reality and creative storytelling, the film allows audiences to emotionally connect with the narrative and appreciate the larger message it conveys.

Stylistically, ‘Bhaimon Da’ is a unique mix of biographical story-

telling and docu-drama. The narrative structure uses flashbacks to bring the audience through the various phases of Barua's life, from his early struggles to moments of success. The film's visual elements carefully recreate the atmosphere of Assamese cinema halls, director's offices, and film sets from the 1980s and 1990s. The director's attention to detail is evident in scenes like the haunting depiction of a shuttered cinema hall, where dust and bats symbolize the decline of Assamese cinema during the early 21st century. Such scenes enrich the film's authenticity and help the audience experience the emotional weight of those times.

Cinematography is one of the film's standout features, with Chennai-based cinematographer Bانشi-nathan skillfully using lighting and camera work to evoke different moods. Dark and muted tones portray the hardships, while brighter colors celebrate moments of joy and achievement. This contrast deepens the emotional impact and visually narrates the highs and lows of Barua's journey. The production design, costume, and makeup departments have also done an excellent job of faithfully representing the era. Details like the items in Barua's shop and the period costumes by Garima Saikia Garg transport the audience back in time, creating a fully immersive experience.

Music plays an important role in the film, with songs and background scores that echo Munin Barua's emotional depth and the cultural richness of Assamese cinema. The melodies enhance key moments, underscoring both struggles and triumphs, and help the audience connect more deeply with the story. The editing skillfully weaves together memories and present moments, allowing the film to flow smoothly and keeping viewers engaged.

Acting performances in ‘Bhaimon Da’ deserve special praise. Featuring around 360 actors and actresses, many of whom are newcomers, the film showcases a range of convincing portrayals. Bandwip Sarma, who plays Munin Barua, delivers a nuanced performance capturing the director's creative spirit, resilience, and warmth. Young actor Abhinav Bora's depiction of Barua's adolescence adds further depth. Veteran actors such as Gunakar Dev Goswami and Pakiya Begum give heartfelt performances as Barua's parents, while Bidya Bharati and Himani Kalita bring to life the roles of his sisters. Yashasree Bhunyan's portrayal of Manjula Barua is engaging and natural, hinting at a bright future for the actress. The young Geethartha Sarma, playing Barua's son Manas Baruah (Riju), impresses with his dedicated portrayal. Well-known actor Nilim Dutta vividly portrays the character of Biju Phukan, while Samudragupta Dutta's performance as Shiva Prasad Thakur is touching. Partha Hazarika

beautifully portrays the complex character of Zubeen Garg. The roles of Jatin Bora and Ravi Sharma are portrayed with ease by promising actors Kaushik Bhattacharya and Joy Saikia, respectively. Capturing the physical expressions, gestures, dialogue delivery, and tone of characters beloved by Assamese audiences is no easy task, yet these new actors have largely succeeded. Supporting roles by artists like Kalpana Kalita, Arghadwip Barua, Dipjoyti Keot, Ashish Bidyarthi, Harpal Saikia, Pratyush Plaban, Ujjwal Rajkhowa, Abinash Sarma, Navajit Konwar, Sanjiv Buragohain, Sima Barua, Ujjwal Kumar, Navajoti Nath, Himanshu Barman, Tarun Parikshit Barua, Nirupam Saikia, Imon Talukdar, Taruntirtha, Prakash Sarma, Baibhavi Goswami, Rishabh Sarma, and Shilpishikha Bora add depth to the narrative with their natural performances. The performances of characters like cinema hall owners, producers, and co-artists authentically reflect the environment of Assamese cinema, vividly portraying the social and cultural context of the time. The performances of other artists also exhibit a naturalness and credibility that enhance the film's overall quality.

The film also touches on timeless issues, such as the ongoing struggle of regional cinema against the overwhelming influence of Hindi films. It reminds viewers of the importance of preserving Assamese cultural identity through cinema. Munin Barua's films often depicted rural life, family bonds, and social change, and ‘Bhaimon Da’ reinforces the artist's responsibility to society and the power of cinema to reflect and shape cultural heritage. For younger audiences, it is an educational introduction to the history of Assamese cinema, while older viewers can enjoy a nostalgic journey through a treasured past. Though the film has a few minor flaws, such as somewhat repetitive drinking scenes and occasional use of modern slang in period settings, these do not significantly detract from its overall success.

In summary, ‘Bhaimon Da’ is more than a biographical film. It is a cinematic homage to Munin Barua and a living document of Assamese cinema's history, struggles, and pride. It captures the spirit of an era and celebrates the dedication of filmmakers who shaped regional cinema against many odds. The film promises to inspire new generations and evoke fond memories among longtime fans. With its emotional depth, artistic quality, and cultural significance, ‘Bhaimon Da’ stands as a shining example of Assamese cinema's enduring legacy. The efforts of the producer, director, cast, and crew deserve heartfelt appreciation and congratulations for bringing this important story to the screen.

(The author can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com or 9954812261, 9864000260)

The Inner Voice: Whispers of a soul and the rise of a blooming bud

By: Aubaid Akhoun

There are voices we hear in crowded streets, and there are voices that echo only in the silence of our hearts. Some words are written with ink, and some are bled onto paper by the soul itself. It is these unspoken words, these unheard whispers, that find a home in Imbisat Tareen's heartfelt collection — The Inner Voice.

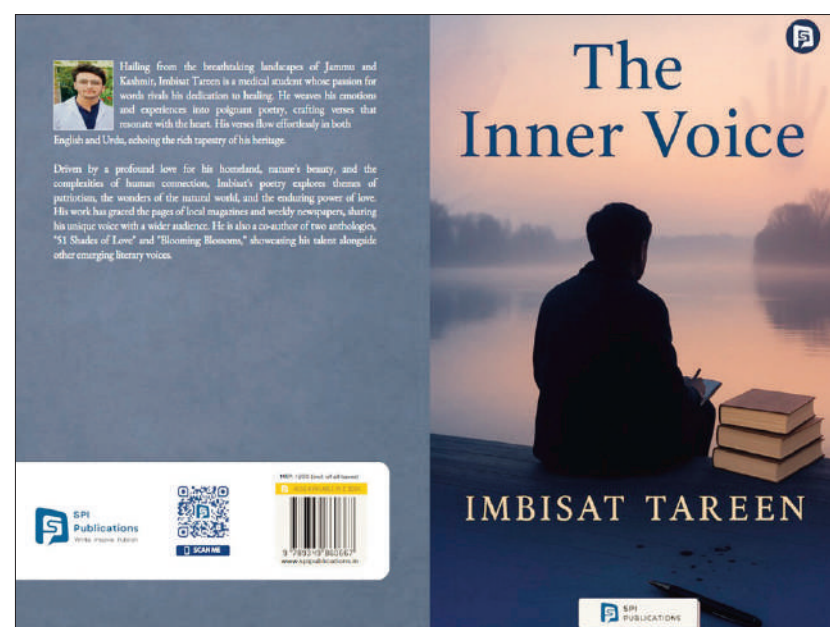
In the realm of contemporary literature, where verbosity often overshadows sincerity, The Inner Voice emerges as a work of rare tenderness and emotional honesty. Penned by a young poet hailing from the picturesque valleys of Jammu and Kashmir, this book does not shout for attention. It softly sings, it weeps, it questions, and it quietly embraces its readers.

But for me, this book holds a meaning far deeper than its poetic grace — for Imbisat Tareen was once a blooming bud in my classroom. To watch him now blossom into a published poet is a joy known only to those privileged enough to witness a student's flight into his destined sky.

A Tapestry of Tender Emotions
The Inner Voice is a poetic memoir of the soul. Through a series of heartfelt poems and reflections, Imbisat journeys through the alleyways of love, longing, loss, hope, and resilience. Poems like Parents, In a Cage, Tears and Love, Snowfall in Summer, and The Diamond in the Dark Night paint vivid portraits of human emotions — the kind that dwell within all of us, yet rarely find words.

What makes this book unique is its unpolished sincerity. Imbisat neither seeks to impress with grandiloquent phrases nor hides behind complex metaphors. His verses are raw, simple, and drenched in emotion. It is poetry written not to decorate the page, but to soothe the heart.

Kashmir: The Unspoken Metaphor
Through much of the book, nature becomes both a companion and a metaphor. Rivers, snow, flowers, and cages make frequent appearances — subtly hinting at the quiet unrest of Kashmir without



politicising it. The reader is left to sense the silence between words, to decipher the cry behind the beauty.

The poet's homeland breathes through his verses. The snow-laden meadows, the distant mountains, the scent of lost springs — each image delicately mirrors not only Imbisat's personal memories but also a collective longing for peace and belonging.

A Fortunate Bond: From Student to Poet

As a teacher, there is no greater reward than seeing one's student thrive. And when that student pens words capable of touching souls, the joy multiplies. Imbisat Tareen's evolution from a humble learner to a published poet is a chapter I hold dear. I recall the spark in his eyes, his quiet observations, and now, to see them immortalized in print, is a blessing.

I have always believed that poetry is the art of bleeding gracefully. And The Inner Voice stands testament to that belief. It is a book that demands no applause but deserves to be read in silence — under the shade of an old tree, on a cold

winter night, or in a moment of solitude.

Why This Book Matters

In a time where much of modern writing tends to chase trends and formulas, The Inner Voice offers readers something precious — authenticity. It reminds us of the strength in vulnerability, the beauty in simple words, and the timelessness of heartfelt poetry.

It is not just a book but a companion for those lost in the labyrinth of their own inner voices. And for me, it is a reminder that sometimes, the quietest students become the most profound writers.

Bottomline

I heartily recommend The Inner Voice to all lovers of poetry, seekers of emotional depth, and those who value sincerity in literature. May Imbisat Tareen continue to bloom, and may his words travel beyond valleys, beyond borders, straight into the hearts they are meant for. (The author is a Columnist, Motivational Speaker, Associate Editor, Educational Quill. He can be reached at 9205000010 / 9205000016 or akhoun.aubaid@gmail.com)

Poem

Despite Our Ideological Conflicts

By: Bipul Chandra Kalita

We exchange mirthful greetings without pretensions
Despite our ideological conflicts,
Highlight our pointed ways and means of peace
To put an end to any terror-based enemy's divisive winks!

We put on our intellectually sanitized uniforms,
Stand by what our conscience dictates;
Patriotic civility civilized us,
Safety of our country is the foremost priority.

Anything or anybody harmful to humanity is avoidable,
Condemn those whose words poison
The air of our solemn egos and mutual understanding.

Who will listen to any shamelessly available greedy good-doer?
Wisdom, not merely knowledge,
Can help us build our castles of love, peace and progress.

What ideological conflicts will bring us if we lose our ground?
Rooted in truth and conscience, we cleanse our canvas
Before painting our clear vision and future mission on it;
So, we get united patriotically despite our ideological conflicts.

A story of a tree

By: Otteri Selva Kumar

In that tree
No more birds
Can't live...
Under that tree
No more poor people
sit down...
Can't eat!!!
Under that tree...
Any cows...
Any animal
Can't rest anymore...
The reason...
Until this moment
That tree that was there
It has now been cut
If the tree is cut
Earth has lost the shade it deserves...
All that town is pond + lake
Water has been lost that rain will come...
So what?
Cut out
That tree
In a comfortable home
As a doorway
Go beautiful
All that was left was the withered...

Drinking water crisis in Itanagar

Flood situation in Arunachal improves

ITANAGAR, June 7: The flood situation in Arunachal Pradesh improved on Saturday with water levels of most rivers receding, even as 33,000 people in 24 districts remained affected, officials said.

Twelve people lost their lives and one person went missing in rain-related incidents, including landslides, after the monsoon set in, they said.

In its daily report, the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) said 33,200 people in 215 villages remained affected due to floods and landslides in the state.

The water levels of most major rivers and their tributaries were showing a receding trend over the last 24 hours, it said.

Altogether, 515 houses were damaged across the state, and 432 livestock deaths were reported, it added.

As many as 112 roads and 17 bridges were damaged in the state. The floods also affected 51 water supply projects, 17

power transmission lines and eight hydro projects, the SEOC said.

Changlang is the worst-affected district, with six villages inundated and 2,231 people rendered homeless.

Flash floods washed away the Makantong bridge on the Trans Arunachal Highway, disrupting connectivity between Miao and Bordumsa. The authorities have decided to start ferry services for the locals there.

The Noa-Dehing river has damaged farmland in the Dharmapur block in the Namphei circle.

The water supply projects in Changlang town, Namtok extra assistant commissioner headquarters, Yatdam circle, Phinbiro-I and II villages and Rang Hill village were damaged by landslides, leading to a drinking water crisis.

Additionally, floods and landslides damaged around 17 hectares of farmland and 20 hectares of horticulture plantations

in the district.

Three hanging bridges at Phaparbari, Two Hut and Lama Camp were also damaged by flood in district. A Bailey bridge at 60 Mile between Miao and Vijaynagar was also damaged.

In the Upper Siang district, the Sirnyuk hydropower project in Jengging was damaged due to severe rainfall.

In the Itanagar Capital Region, landslides damaged pipelines of the Poma water supply project, causing a drinking water crisis. The restoration process would take about several days, officials said, adding that water tankers were being arranged.

Three relief camps have been set up in the state, and 239 people are taking shelter there, they said.

Relief and rescue efforts were underway with support from the NDRF, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), police and local volunteers. (PTI)



Rijiju's intervention sought over Arunachal weightlifter's exclusion from Commonwealth team



ITANAGAR, June 7: A social welfare and cultural organisation in Arunachal Pradesh has called for the immediate intervention of Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, over the exclusion of the state's weightlifter, Sambo Lapung, from the Indian team for the upcoming Commonwealth weightlifting championship.

Lapung, a three-time national gold medalist from Lapung village in East Kameng district, has been dropped from the final team despite a stellar record in the 96 kg category, the organisation claimed.

The East Kameng Social Welfare and Cultural Organization (EKSOWCO), submitted a representation to the minister on Saturday, describing the Arunachal weightlifter's exclusion from the Indian team as a "serious lapse in fairness and transparency" by the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF).

Union Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Kiren Rijiju, who represents the Arunachal West parliamentary constituency in the Lok Sabha, has been urged to take steps to address what the organisation perceives as a "gross injustice" to Sambo Lapung.

Lapung clinched gold at the senior National Weightlifting Championships held in Chandigarh (2022), Itanagar (2023), and Himachal Pradesh (2024).

EKSOWCO has questioned the

selection criteria used by the IWF and alleged lack of consistency and meritocracy.

The organisation claimed that Lapung's exclusion not only diminishes his outstanding achievements but also delivers a blow to regional sentiments across Arunachal Pradesh and the northeast.

"This decision reflects a disturbing trend of stereotyping and discrimination against athletes from the northeast by mainland institutions," the representation said.

EKSOWCO also claimed that such incidents risk alienating the youth of the region, for whom sports represent a powerful vehicle for national integration and self-realisation.

"Lapung's inclusion would inspire countless young talents and reinforce the message that merit and hard work are duly rewarded," said EKSOWCO Chairperson Raya Flago.

"Ignoring such a decorated athlete from your constituency sends a disheartening message, not just to him but to the entire region," he added, urging the Union minister to take up the matter personally with the IWF.

The organisation has also demanded that the IWF adopt a transparent, performance-based selection policy, placing greater weight on national championships rather than selectively favouring other events. (PTI)

Chief Secretary and team inspect DBT, interact with officers

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, June 7: Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta, along with a team of officers from the Arunachal Pradesh Civil Secretariat and heads of various departments, visited and inspected the Department of Biotechnology and Life Sciences (DBT). The team interacted with officers and officials, discussing various issues related to DBT.

The APSCS&T Centre of Excellence for Bioresources and Sustainable Development (CoE for BRSD), Kimin, is a key institution for research and investigation into various food products and related items. According to a press release issued by the department, "The visit marked an important milestone in aligning scientific research and policies to foster bioresource innovations and drive sustainable development in Arunachal Pradesh."

The release further stated, "It provided an inclusive overview of the Centre's core research domains, outreach programmes, research achievements, and its role in fostering a bioresource-based economy in Arunachal Pradesh."

The dignitaries toured laboratories, R&D



facilities, and the orchidarium, interacting with scientists and officers to gain firsthand insight into ongoing research in orchids, microbial resources, bioinformatics, medicinal and aromatic plants, foam-forming biomaterials, millets, rice, translational research, and value-added agri-waste innovations.

Special emphasis was placed on the strategic initiative to develop Arunachal Pradesh as the "Orchid Capital of India." With over

650 recorded orchid species, the state is a biodiversity treasure trove. The dignitaries expressed strong interest in expanding orchid-focused research and commercialization activities.

Discussions highlighted the need to establish dedicated business research and development verticals for orchids — including mass propagation, high-value floriculture, development of orchid-based herbal formu-

lations, nutraceuticals, and eco-tourism-linked value chains. The CoE's efforts to integrate biotechnology, entrepreneurship, and local community participation were appreciated as a transformative step toward positioning Arunachal Pradesh on the global orchid map.

The team led by the Chief Secretary lauded the CoE's scientific contributions and its role as a catalyst in growing Arunachal Pradesh's bioeconomy. They encouraged deeper collaboration between academia, industries, research institutions, and government departments. The release also emphasized the strategic importance of utilizing local bioresources through science and innovation to achieve sustainable livelihoods, entrepreneurship, and environmental conservation.

Officials present included PCCF & HoFF P. Subramanyam, Commissioner of Urban Affairs/Transport Vivek Pandey, Secretary of Science & Technology Ms. Sumedha, Technical Advisor to Government of AP K.C. Dhimole, Director-cum-Member Secretary APSCS&T C.D. Mungyak, and Project Director Dr. Debajit Mahanta.

10th day of Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan observed

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, June 7: The 10th day of the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan (VKSA) was successfully observed on Friday across Mogto, Gongkhar, Bongleng, and Kharung villages under the Mogto-Bongkhar Block in Tawang district. The event was organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Tawang, in collaboration with the Departments of Agriculture and Horticulture, Tawang, and ICAR-NRC on Yak, Dirang. The programme saw enthusiastic participation from Gaonburahs, PRI members, public leaders, and farmers from the region. At the main venue in Mogto, AN Tripathi, Senior Scientist and Head of KVK Tawang, outlined the aims and objectives of the VKSA and highlighted the various farmer-centric initiatives undertaken by KVK.

M Jatana from NRC on Yak delivered an insightful session on silage-making, while K.B. Kayastha, Entomologist, elaborated on Central Sector Schemes (CSS) and State-Sponsored Programmes aimed at improving farmer welfare. He also advocated for Natural Farming as a means to ensure sustainable soil health and enhance crop productivity. Thuten Tashi, a prominent public leader from Mogto block, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. In his address, he stressed the importance of adopting scientific farming techniques and urged agricultural scientists to conduct training programmes and field demonstrations in Mogto Circle for the benefit of local farmers.

The technical session featured Lakshmi Priya Borah, SMS (Plant Protection), who discussed management strategies for bacterial wilt in chillies and the importance of seed treatment. Dr. Divya Pandey, SMS (Community Science), emphasized value addition of vegetables as a pathway to increasing farm income.

Arunachal Pradesh leads nation in GST Growth

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, June 7: In May 2025, Arunachal Pradesh recorded an impressive 61.9% year-on-year growth in GST collections, the highest percentage increase among all Indian states. This surge reflects strong economic momentum along with increasing awareness and compliance among taxpayers in the region.

A press statement issued by CGST Arunachal Pradesh said, "As part of a series of initiatives leading up to GST Day (July 1), the CGST Itanagar Commissionerate, in collaboration with the State GST Department and local administration, has launched intensive outreach programs across the state. After a successful session in Pasighat, the latest program was held on June 5 at the DC Office, Roing. These initiatives aim to further sustain revenue growth by fostering voluntary tax compliance, improving return filing practices, and clarifying key GST provisions—especially in sectors like construction and works contracts."

Participants were guided on essential topics such as GST registration, return filing, record maintenance, input tax credit claims, and the Reverse Charge Mechanism. Common compliance issues and exemptions were also addressed in a simplified, practical manner, said the CGST Office Assistant Commissioner.

GREEN LAWN SCHOOL, CHANGLANG WANTED – SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

Green Lawn School invites applications for the post of Bus Driver.

Salary: ₹10,000/- per month

Perks:

Free Accommodation (School Quarter)

Free Education for Your Children (Pre-Nursery to Class 8)

Requirements:

Valid Driving License for heavy vehicles with prior experience.

Location: Changlang HQ, Changlang District, Arunachal Pradesh.

Interested candidates may contact the school office or submit their applications at: [+919774183438](tel:919774183438)

No. DPRD/BTC/(15th FC)/(I.F)/Udl-03/2025/9, Dated Kokrajhar the 3rd June, 2025

PRESS NOTICE

(e-Procurement)

The Director, P&RD, BTC, Kokrajhar invites bids for implementation of work "Const. of Daojeng river protection with boulder revetment at No.3 Kundarbil" for an amount not exceeding of Rs. 50,00,000.00 (Rupees fifty lakhs) only under interest fund (Bank interest) of 15th FC (RLBs) for the year 2025-26 from the registered contractors of Class - I & Class- II (A,B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads) / (Building), BTC.

Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.Rov.in> and also at the Office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-Director,
Panchayat & Rural Development,
BTC, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/696

No. DPRD/BTC/(15th FC)/(I.F)/Udl-06/2025/9, Dated Kokrajhar the 3rd June, 2025

PRESS NOTICE

(e-Procurement)

The Director, P&RD, BTC, Kokrajhar invites bids for implementation of work "Protection of erosion with boulder revetment in Edenbari village" for an amount not exceeding of Rs. 20,00,000.00 (Rupees twenty lakhs) only under interest fund (Bank interest) of 15th FC (RLBs) for the year 2025-26 from the registered contractors of Class-I & Class-II (A,B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads) / (Building), BTC.

Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.Rov.in> and also at the Office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-Director,
Panchayat & Rural Development,
BTC, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/693

Plantation drive organised by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways regional office Itanagar

Collaboration with PWD, Highway Division, Arunachal Pradesh

NAMSAL, JUNE 7: On the occasion of World Environment Day (June 5, 2025), the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Regional Office Itanagar, in collaboration with PWD Highway Division, Arunachal Pradesh, initiated a mega plantation drive along National Highways under the campaign "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0."

A press statement issued by the Regional Officer, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways said, "This campaign was restarted by the Government of India as a continuation of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign launched by the Prime Minister on World Environment Day 2024. As part of this campaign, the Ministry has targeted planting more than 20,000 trees along National Highways during the monsoon/plantation season in Arunachal Pradesh."

Regional Officer Itanagar, Subhash Chandra, informed that the plantation drive commenced from NH-13 at Chowkham with plans to plant over 30,000 trees along highways in Arunachal Pradesh, surpassing the Ministry's target. Within two days of launch, more than 500 trees had been planted along highways at Khonsa, Pasighat, and Jaimapur on NH-13 (Pasighat-Pangin) and NH-13 (Dibang



Bridge). The plantation drive conducted by MoRTH Regional Office, Itanagar, in collaboration with PWD Highway Division on NH-13 (Dibang Bridge) has received

national recognition. The efforts were appreciated at the national level, with the first photo of the drive being featured on the official social media handle of MoRTH on June 7.

No.GDB/6th-FC/206/2022-23/899

TENDER NO.20 OF 2024-25
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

Date 23/05/2025

Selected tenders affixing Non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty Five Paise) only with at validity period of 180 (One Hundred Eighty) days which will subsequently to be covered and drawn up in the printed F-2 form are invited from the intending Registered Contractors of all categories of the Assam PWD (Bldg. & Roads) for submitting tender for the work below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2:30 PM 23-05-2025 to 12-06-2025 and will be opened on the date 12-06-2025 at 2:30 PM.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approx Estimated value of work	Tender Value	Earnest money 2% for GNL & 1% for ST/SC/OBC/MOBC	Cost of tender document	Time of completion
1	Const. of RCC slab culvert on Barpathar village road near Banerwar Deka house under 6 th -FC fund for the year 2023-24 during 2025-26 (2 nd Inst)	13,00,000.00	13,00,000.00	Rs26,000/- & Rs. 13000/-	Rs. 300/-	3 (Three month)
2	Const. of RCC slab culvert on Simla village road near Samabari Barhon Mandir, under 6 th -FC fund for the year 2023-24 during 2025-26 (2 nd Inst)	12,00,000.00	12,00,000.00	Rs24,000/- & Rs. 12000/-	Rs. 300/-	3 (Three month)

Detailed NIT may be seen in all working days in the Office of the undersigned. Tender 4paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent up to 11:30 AM in all working days from 23-05-2025 to 12-06-2025 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of Banker Cheque/Bank Draft/ Demand draft duly pledged in favour of the BDO, Goreswar Development Block.

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/677

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

India will never countenance 'perpetrators of evil' being put on par with victims: Jaishankar

'For the first time, Rafale fuselages will be produced outside France'

NEW DELHI, June 7: India expects partners to understand its policy of "zero tolerance" against terrorism, and it will never countenance "perpetrators of evil" being put on par with its victims. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday during extensive talks with his British counterpart David Lammy.

Jaishankar's remarks, which seemed to be an attempt to send an unambiguous message to the global community, came against the backdrop of unease in New Delhi over several countries hyphenating India and Pakistan following their four-day clashes last month.

Lammy arrived in New Delhi this morning on a two-day visit to review various aspects of the strategic partnership between the two countries.

A British readout said bolstering economic and migration ties and delivering further growth opportunities for British businesses are set to be at the top of the UK foreign secretary's visit to India.

Before holding talks with Jaishankar, the British foreign secretary met Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In his televised opening remarks at the meeting with Lammy, Jaishankar thanked the UK for its strong condemnation of the "barbaric" Pahalagam terror attack and London's solidarity and support to New Delhi's fight against terrorism. "We practice a policy of zero tolerance against terrorism and expect our partners to understand it, and we will never countenance perpetrators of evil being put on par with its victims," he said.



It is understood that the Indian side explained its challenge of dealing with cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

The UK was among the countries which were in touch with both India and Pakistan in an attempt to de-escalate tensions during their military conflict from May 7-10.

Lammy paid a two-day visit to Islamabad from May 16, during which he welcomed the May 10 understanding between India and Pakistan to stop the military actions.

Jaishankar also described the recently finalised India-UK free trade deal and the double contribution convention as "truly a milestone".

"The recent conclusion of the India-UK FTA and the double contribution convention is truly a milestone which will not only propel our two-way trade and investment but will also have a positive effect on other strategic aspects of our bilateral ties," Jaishankar said. The UK readout said, Foreign

Secretary Lammy will also welcome progress in "our migration partnership, including ongoing work on safeguarding citizens and securing borders in both countries."

It said addressing migration remains a top priority for the government, and Lammy is focused on working internationally with global partners to secure the UK's borders at home.

"India was one of my first visits as foreign secretary, and since then has been a key partner in the delivery of our 'Plan for Change'. Our relationship has gone from strength to strength -- securing our future technologies, adding over 25 billion pounds in trade every year between our countries and deepening the strong links between our cultures and people," Lammy said.

He said the signing of the free trade agreement with India is just the start of the ambitions for the two countries.

"We're building a modern partnership with India for a new global era. We want to go even further to

foster an even closer relationship and cooperate when it comes to delivering growth, fostering innovative technology, tackling the climate crisis and delivering our migration priorities, and providing greater security for our people," he was quoted in the readout.

The British foreign secretary is also scheduled to meet leading figures in Indian business to discuss how both sides can unlock greater investment by Indian business in the UK.

In 2023-24, India was the UK's second-largest source of investments in terms of the number of projects for the fifth consecutive year.

In his remarks, Jaishankar listed various initiatives which were rolled out recently to bolster the ties.

"Since your last visit to India, there have been significant initiatives which both of us have taken, and those initiatives have progressed well," he said.

Jaishankar singled out the Technology Security Initiative (TSI) and said it will enable deeper collaboration in strategic technology sectors of AI, semiconductors, telecom, quantum, health-tech, biotech, critical minerals and advanced materials.

"We have also launched the strategic exports and technology cooperation dialogue, the first meeting of which was held, I believe, this week."

"This will enhance, among others, the TSI's effectiveness in promoting trade in critical and emerging technologies, including the resolution of relevant licensing or regulatory issues," he said. (PTI)

Rahul alleges Bihar polls like Maha to be fixed, Nadda says electoral losses making him desperate

NEW DELHI, June 7: Rahul Gandhi claimed on Saturday that the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly elections were a "blueprint for rigging democracy", drawing rebuke from BJP president J P Nadda, who accused the Congress leader of "cooking up bizarre conspiracies" in his desperation after losing a series of elections.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha alleged in an article in the Indian Express that this poll "match-fixing" would next happen in the Bihar elections and "anywhere the BJP is losing".

In a post on X, he said, "My article shows how this happened, step by step: Step 1: Rig the panel for appointing the Election Commission. Step 2: Add fake voters to the roll. Step 3: Inflate voter turnout. Step 4: Target the bogus voting exactly where the BJP needs to win. Step 5: Hide the evidence." Hitting back, Nadda said Gandhi's article is a blueprint for manufacturing fake narratives, owing to his sadness and desperation of losing election after election.

He said, "Here's how he does it, step by step. Step 1: The Congress Party gets defeated in election after election due to its antics. Step 2: Instead of introspecting, he cooks up bizarre conspiracies and cries rigging. Step 3: Ignores all facts and data. Step 4: Defames institutions with zero proof."

He added, "Step 5: Hopes for headlines over facts. Despite being exposed time and again, he shamelessly keeps peddling lies. And, he is doing this because a defeat in Bihar is certain."

Democracy doesn't need drama. It needs truth, Nadda asserted.

Gandhi said fixed elections are a "poison" for any democracy, and the side that cheats may win the



game, but it damages institutions and destroys public faith.

In his article, Gandhi alleged that voter turnout figures were inflated. "Election Commission data show that the number of registered voters in Maharashtra in the 2019 Vidhan Sabha elections was 8.98 crore, which rose five years later to 9.29 crore for the May 2024 Lok Sabha elections. "But a mere five months later, by the November 2024 Vidhan Sabha elections, the number had leapt to 9.70 crore. A crawl of 31 lakh in five years, then a leap of 41 lakh in just five months," Gandhi said.

So incredible was this leap that the registered voter total of 9.70 crore was even greater than the 9.54 crore adults in Maharashtra, according to the government's own estimates, he said in his article.

Pointing to inflation in voter turnout on polling day, Gandhi pointed out that "the polling turnout at 5 pm was 58.22 per cent. Even after voting closed, however, turnout kept increasing more and more. The final turnout was reported only the next morning to be 66.05 percent."

"The unprecedented 7.83 per-

centage point increase is equivalent to 76 lakh voters - much higher than previous Vidhan Sabha elections in Maharashtra". He also pointed to the addition of new voters in only 12,000 booths across 85 constituencies in the state, where the BJP eventually won.

In his rejoinder, Nadda shared an article on the portal 'OpIndia' which countered Gandhi's charges.

The BJP also accused Gandhi of attacking democratic institutions to undermine people's trust in the electoral process, claiming he was doing so to pre-empt his party's defeat in the upcoming elections, as he cannot garner public support.

BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said the Congress leader was resorting to attacking democratic institutions under a well-planned conspiracy, as he knows that his party is set to suffer defeat in the upcoming Bihar assembly polls.

Gandhi is trying to undermine the trust of people in the electoral process because he is unable to gain public support in favour of his party, Bhandari charged, calling the Congress leader "anti-democracy". (PTI)

Helicopter on way to Kedarnath crashlands on highway, all safe

RUDRAPRAYAG, June 7: A helicopter on its way to Kedarnath made an emergency landing on the highway in Rudraprayag district on Saturday after developing a technical snag during take-off, officials said.

However, all pilgrims on board and the pilot are safe, the officials said. The helicopter had taken off from Badasu base for Kedarnath when it made the emergency landing shortly after take-off on the main road just below the highway near Sirsi following a technical snag during take-off, they said.

Videos on social media showed the Kestrel Aviation helicopter standing in the middle of the highway, dangerously close to populated buildings with a parked car damaged by its tail rotor.

Six people on board the helicopter including the pilot had a narrow escape.

The pilot sustained minor injuries and was rushed to a hospital.

People on the ground got scared as they saw the helicopter getting imbalanced in the air and crash-landing on the road, eyewitnesses said. Kedarnath heli service nodal officer Rahul Chaubey said the incident had not affected the heli shuttle service to the Himalayan temple. (PTI)

86.5 lakh deaths in 2022, 15 pc dip over Covid-hit 2021: CRS data

NEW DELHI, June 7: Nearly 86.5 lakh deaths were reported in the country during 2022, a significant decline of more than 15 per cent from Covid-affected 2021 which had recorded over 1.02 crore deaths, according to a new data from the Civil Registration System (CRS).

The dip of 15.74 lakh from 2021 brought mortality figures broadly back in line with pre-pandemic patterns last seen in 2020, the data for 2022 brought out by the office of the Registrar General of India through CRS report showed.

According to the CRS data, 2021 registered a sharp spike with 1.02 crore deaths across the country as compared to 81.1 lakh in 2020, 76.4 lakh in 2019, and 69.5 lakh in 2018, underscoring the impact of Covid -19. "In the case of registered deaths, the number has decreased from 102.2 lakh in 2021 to 86.5 lakh in 2022, i.e. a decrease of 15.4 per cent. Some of the major states namely, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Bihar and Haryana have contributed significantly to the decreased number of registered deaths," the report said.

Around 5.26 lakh deaths were reported due to Covid -19 till July 26, 2022, according to a reply given by the government in the Lok Sabha on July 29, 2022.

The World Health Organisation had reported over 47 lakh Covid -19 linked deaths in India which was strongly disputed by the government. The Centre had said the WHO estimates suffered from "a number of inconsistencies and erroneous assumptions". "India had registered a strong objection to the process, methodology and outcome of this unscientific modelling approach especially when India had provided authentic data published through Civil Registration System by Registrar General of India to WHO," the government reply had said.

The CRS report also showed that over 2.54 crore births were registered in 2022. "The number of registered births has increased from 242.0 lakh in 2021 to 254.4 lakh in 2022, an increase of about 5.1 per cent," the report said. There has been an increase in 2022 in registered births in almost all states and UTs, except Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, West Bengal, Ladakh, and Lakshadweep as compared to 2021. (PTI)

CM, DCM have 'blood on their hands', should quit: Shobha Karandlaje

BENGALURU, June 7: BJP leader and Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje on Saturday alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar have "blood on their hands", as she held them directly responsible and demanded their resignation in connection with the June 4 stampede that killed 11 people.

Demanding a probe by a sitting High Court judge for the truth to come out, she slammed the state government for suspending Bengaluru police commissioner B Dayananda and four other senior police officials over the incident.

The Bengaluru North MP also questioned the Congress high command and party leader Rahul Gandhi's silence on the incident, and urged them to seek the CM and Deputy CM's resignation if they have "guts".

"Is Karnataka Congress bankrupt of leaders other than Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar? Let the two face inquiry, make others CM and Deputy CM. Where are Congress general secretaries K C Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala, who often come to the state for everything, hiding?" she asked. She further alleged that they are silent on the issue as the Karnataka Congress government is an ATM for the party's Delhi high command.

The stampede occurred on June 4 evening in front of the Chinnaswamy stadium here, where a large number of people thronged to participate in the RCB team's IPL victory celebrations. Eleven people died and 56 were injured in the incident.

"Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar have blood on their hands. The parents who have lost their children are cursing. They (CM and DCM) are trying to wash the blood on their hands and wipe it on police officers. A person known as a tough cop, a

good and honest officer, who came from a normal family and became Bengaluru's commissioner has been suspended," Karandlaje said.

Speaking to reporters here, she said this is a dark spot on this government and the CM's image.

"In the history of Bengaluru or any metropolitan city, we have not heard about officials being transferred for mistakes, but here because of the mistake of the CM and his deputy, the Commissioner has been suspended. You (CM, DCM) have committed the fault and you are blaming them (officials) for it. You are wiping the blood on your hands on them," she added. Questioning Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar as to why they thought about holding this celebration, the MP from Bengaluru North asked are they partners with RCB in any ways?

If laurals were brought to the country or the state by an official national or state team, then holding celebrations is understandable, but they were never felicitated this way, she noted and said, "When a private franchise RCB won the match, you wanted to celebrate. The grand stairs of Vidhana Soudha were reserved for swearing-in or government ceremonies all these years. You used it for a private team."

If anyone in the government is planning to have a partnership with RCB or planning for franchise ownership, she sought to know, and further asked, "with these intentions, attempts were made to take publicity from RCB's win."

Pointing out that the family of ministers and the CM had gathered there at the event at Vidhana Soudha, while the public was suffering, Shobha asked how the permission was given. Didn't the intelligence or police have information about the gathering of lakhs of people? (PTI)

PM Modi lays down 5 priorities for building disaster-resilient infra

NEW DELHI, June 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday outlined five key global priorities for him to build disaster-resilient infrastructure, including a skilled workforce, a global digital repository to document best practices and innovative financing.

In a video address to the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure 2025, Modi said strengthening early-warning systems and coordination is another crucial aspect.

He noted that India has established a tsunami-warning system benefitting 29 countries and that it recognises the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as large-ocean countries and the need for special attention to their vulnerabilities.

With the event being hosted in Europe for the first time, Modi thanked French President Emmanuel Macron and extended his best wishes to him for the upcoming United Nations Oceans Conference.

In his remarks, he prime minister noted that the conference's theme is "Shaping a Resilient Future for Coastal Regions" and underscored the vulnerability of coastal regions and islands to natural disasters and climate change.

He cited recent disasters, including Cyclone Remal in India and Bangladesh, Hurricane Beryl in the Caribbean, Typhoon Yagi in Southeast Asia, Hurricane Helene in the United States, Typhoon Usagi in the Philippines and Cyclone Chido in parts of Africa. (PTI)

Make a vow to reduce salt, processed food & 10 pc less oil for healthy India: J P Nadda

BENGALURU, June 7: On this World Food Safety Day, every Indian must make a vow to reduce salt intake, processed food as well as 10 per cent of oil consumption, said Jagat Prakash Nadda, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare on Saturday.

According to him, it is our collective responsibility to spread awareness about eating the right food.

Nadda was addressing an event organised to celebrate World Food Safety Day by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in Bengaluru. World Food Safety Day is celebrated on June 7 of every year.

"We should take the clarion call given by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi and see to it that at least in our own homes, we are able to reduce 10 per cent of oil consumption and salt consumption. This is the most necessary part. We also have to see to it that processed foods are reduced to the maximum," said Nadda.

He also said to remain healthy and to eat right, India must revisit its traditional food practices.

"Our traditional food includes

many types of preparations with millets. We have to revive this tradition," he added.

Nadda said change is possible only if it is a continuous process.

"By talking about food safety habits only on World Food Safety Day is not going to work. It will only work if we make it a part of our life and if we make it a habit," he added.

Nadda also said health consciousness and the Eat Right Movement are imperative as obesity is spreading fast in India.

"India's diabetes study by ICMR says that from 2008 to 2020, the obesity in urban India has increased by 39.6 per cent and in rural areas, it has increased by 23.1 per cent. It is also projected that by 2050, 1/3 of the population will be obese," said Nadda, adding that time to act is now.

During the event, Nadda also released a booklet called 'Eat Right India'.

Sanjay Kumar, Secretary of Department of School Education and Literacy, who addressed the gathering via video conferencing, explained how the science of eating right has become a part of National Council for Education, Research and Training's curriculum. (PTI)

'The value of discretion, empathy and judicial interpretation is irreplaceable'

Technology must complement, not replace, human mind in judicial decision-making: CJI B R Gavai

NEW DELHI, June 7: Technology must complement, not replace, the human mind in judicial decision-making, Chief Justice of India B R Gavai has said while emphasising that the value of discretion, empathy and judicial interpretation is irreplaceable. In his keynote address on "Role of Technology in the Indian Legal System" at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London, the CJI said while the judiciary welcomes innovations like automated cause lists, digital kiosks and virtual assistants, it must ensure that human oversight, ethical guidelines and robust training are integral to their implementation.

"The value of discretion, empathy and judicial interpretation is irreplaceable," Justice Gavai said and pointed out that the Indian judiciary is well-positioned to develop homegrown ethical frameworks tailored to the country's constitutional and societal realities.

"We possess the technological expertise, the judicial foresight and the democratic mandate to build systems that reflect our values of equality, dignity and justice," he

said. "In fact, in the very first week after assuming office as the chief justice of India, I initiated a discussion with the Centre for Research and Planning of the Supreme Court to prepare a comprehensive note on the ethical use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies in the judiciary."

"Technology must complement, not replace, the human mind in judicial decision-making," the CJI said, adding, "The emphasis must always be on using technology to enhance trust and transparency -- never to replace the human conscience at the heart of justice."

He said though the judiciary has started to embrace technology, with the emergence of artificial-intelligence (AI) tools in judicial processes -- from case management to legal research, document translation and even predictive analytics -- there must be caution.

"Around the world, debates are ongoing about the ethical use of AI in legal systems. Concerns include algorithmic bias, misinformation, data manipulation and breaches of confidentiality. For instance, sensitive information, such as the identity of a victim of crime, must never be disclosed due to AI error



or the absence of clear protocols. Additionally, a few recent cases have shown that AI tools can generate fabricated citations or biased suggestions if not properly regulated and monitored," the CJI underscored. He added that technology, if anchored in constitutionalism and empathy, can transform access to justice from an abstract ideal into a lived and shared reality.

"As we continue our journey toward modernising the Indian legal system, our approach must remain deeply rooted in constitutional values. The integration of technology must be people-centric, inclusive

and guided by ethical clarity. Our ultimate goal should be to make justice accessible to every citizen, regardless of language, geography, income or digital literacy," he said.

Concluding his address, Justice Gavai said, "I firmly believe that access to justice is not solely the responsibility of the judiciary. It is a shared national commitment. Law schools, civil society, legal-aid institutions and governments must work in unison to develop and promote technological models that are accessible, transparent and inclusive."

Meanwhile, at a joint event of

the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) and Trilegal organised on the occasion of London International Disputes Week, CJI Gavai said in recent decades, the justice-delivery mechanism, once confined within the boundaries of courtrooms, has witnessed a significant shift towards modes of alternative dispute resolution, with arbitration emerging as a prominent pillar of that transformation. The CJI was speaking on the topic of "Navigating the evolving landscape: The impact of the 7th edition of the SIAC Rules on India-Related Arbitrations".

"At the cusp of this evolution lies the recognition that justice, particularly in complex commercial disputes, need not be adversarial or bureaucratic. Rather, it must be confidential, expert-driven and above all, tailored to the needs of those who seek it. Arbitration, in this context, is a substantive recalibration of how we understand and deliver justice," he said.

Justice Gavai pointed out that over the last 10-15 years, India has made a multi-pronged effort towards its aspiration of building a favourable and sought-after place for arbitration. (PTI)

WTC final will be a new challenge for Australia in foreign conditions: Lyon

LONDON, June 7: Nathan Lyon says it will be a different challenge for Australia to take on South Africa in the World Test Championship final despite having the experience of winning ICC trophies across formats since the side will compete in foreign conditions with Duke balls.

Australia come into this WTC final on June 11 at the Lord's not only as defending champions but their squad also comprises of players who won the 2015 ODI World Cup, 2021 T20 World Cup and 2023 ODI World Cup.

"Having the experience of the guys who have won three (50-over) World Cups and T20 World Cups and obviously the World Test Championship final a couple of years ago, that experience and that pressure in those higher games, it's going to be, it's on our side, isn't it, but it doesn't mean anything when you come to the game," Lyon was quoted as saying by the ICC.

"South Africa have got some world class batters and obviously they've got some unbelievable bowlers there as well so it's going to be a good challenge and obviously it's a one-off Test match.

The English conditions offer good swing to bowlers while in Australia pacers enjoy bounce. The Australians use, in home conditions, the Kookaburra balls, which offer good grip to spinners after loss of seam.

"It's going to be different challenge and with foreign conditions and the Dukes ball. It's going to be two best bowling attacks going at each other which is another exciting thing so it's going to be a good challenge for all batters," he said.

Lyon said he has followed the progress of the South African batters in recent days.

"I'm a cricket nuffie, so I've watched a fair amount of cricket and even tuned into their (South Africa's tour) game at the moment against Zimbabwe," Lyon said.

"They've got some class players as I said with the likes of Aiden Markram, Rickelton at the top of the order there, they're class players, there's no point in hiding behind that fact either," (PTI)

Diksha adds another solid round in Spain to move into tied third place

TENERIFE (SPAIN), June 7: India's Diksha Dagar followed up her opening round with another strong effort, carding a three-under 69 on the second day to tie tied third at the Tenerife Women's Open on the Ladies European Tour here.

The 24-year-old has carded rounds of 70 and 69 to sit at five-under after two rounds. She is four shots behind sole leader Lauren Walsh (67-68), who is nine-under at Abama Golf.

Avani Prashanth played three-over par 75 on the second day to fall down the standings to tied 43. Tvesa Malik (73-75), Hitaashee Bakshi (72-76) and Sneha Singh (77-79) failed to make the cut, which was set at three-over par.

Starting her day on the first tee, Diksha picked up a shot on the third hole before dropping one on the fifth but immediately got it back on the sixth and grabbed one more on the ninth.

On the back nine, Diksha made

GUKESSH BLUNDERS AGAINST CARUANA

Magnus Carlsen wins Norway Chess title for seventh time



STAVANGER (NORWAY), June 7: World champion D Gukesh committed a costly blunder against American Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana in the final round to finish third, as five-time world champion Magnus Carlsen clinched a record-extending seventh Norway Chess title here.

Gukesh, after being in a disadvantageous position against 2018 Norway Chess champion Fabiano Caruana, tried to stage a late comeback but ran out of time and committed a blunder, instantly realising his chances had slipped away. Gukesh offered a handshake, grimaced, closed his eyes, and buried his face in both hands in frustration.

It was a golden opportunity for the young Indian world champion to win his maiden Norway Chess title in only his second appearance, after a roller-coaster tournament that saw him start on a poor note before turning things around with impressive Classical wins over Magnus Carlsen, compatriot Arjun Erigaisi, and China's Wei Yi.

Defending champion Carlsen, who was the overnight leader with 15 points after round 9, ended the tournament with 16 points after fashioning the great escape against GM Erigaisi and steering the game to a draw in the 10th round on Friday. Gukesh finished third -- the same as in the 2023 edition -- with 14.5 points, while Caruana was second with 15.5 points. Erigaisi finished fifth with 13 points.

Erigaisi won the Armageddon tie-break against Carlsen following the miraculous draw by the Norwegian, but it did not matter in the end as the five-time world champion had already secured a point with the stalemate to win the title.

While Gukesh quietly walked out of the arena after losing to Caruana, Carlsen said he had to "literally fight for his life" to stay in the match against Arjun Erigaisi.

A defeat for the Norwegian would have been catastrophic, as the Gukesh-Caruana game was still in progress, and a Classical win for either would have dashed

his hopes of a seventh Norway Chess title and the accompanying prize purse of approximately USD 69,500.

In fact, had Gukesh managed to draw his game against the American Grandmaster, he would have secured the title--provided Carlsen had lost his Classical encounter against Erigaisi.

Under the Norway Chess format, a Classical win earns three points, while a draw gives each player one point. A drawn game is followed by an Armageddon tie-break to decide the winner, who is awarded an additional half point.

"I don't know what to say, like I kind of provoked him (Erigaisi) into concrete action and then I obviously missed something pretty big. But I thought I was doing well when he completely out-calculated me and I just had to yeah fight for my life," said Carlsen.

"It's just trying to find practical chances that keep the game alive, and it seemed that he (Erigaisi) got a bit nervous at some point... gave

me very good chances." Carlsen admitted that part of his attention was on the Gukesh-Caruana game, given the significant impact it could have had on his title-winning chances.

"I was just not good enough to find the win but looking at the other game (between Gukesh and Caruana), I kind of figured out at some point that I probably wouldn't need to win and that helped me," said Carlsen. "Yeah, of course it's (the win) a huge relief after a day like this in the tournament. Obviously, you know, my struggles have been well documented here but at least I fought till the end so I'm happy with that. It's been a roller-coaster ride and we're talking about classical chess." Carlsen said he would not be playing a lot of classical chess in times to come.

"Not a lot (of classical chess) for sure. I'm not going to say that this tournament was my last for sure but I enjoy other forms of chess a lot more."

On whether the title felt like a statement amid talks of the next generation rising, Carlsen said: "Had I actually won the tournament convincingly, we might have been having these talks. But honestly, there were at least three people who could have won this tournament easily, and I kind of stumbled into it. I don't think that's much of a statement. 'It's good to see that I feel like, at least in parts of the game, I am a lot better than the kids who are trying to take over. It's rare to see so many twists and turns... the quality wasn't perfect, but there was a lot of good chess as well.'"

In the women's section, overnight leader and two-time world blitz champion, Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk won the title with 16.5 points despite an Armageddon tie-break loss to India's R. Vaishali in the final round. Muzychuk's draw in the classical game against the Indian earned both players a point each, while Vaishali secured another half a point by beating the Ukrainian in the Armageddon sudden death to finish on 11 points. (PTI)

India's archery hopes crash in Antalya debacle; Simranjeet shines in rare spark



ANTALYA (TURKEY), June 7: Indian archery endured a forgettable outing at Stage 3 of the World Cup here on Saturday, returning empty-handed in a performance that raised serious questions over team selection, preparation and mental fortitude, especially with the Asian Games just a year away.

The high of Shanghai last month, where India stood second on the medal tally with two gold, one silver and four bronze medals, now seems like a distant past. The third leg in Antalya saw both recurve and compound archers flop spectacularly, with not a single podium finish, even in their traditionally strong compound category.

A day after India's compound archers crashed out in both individual and team events, the recurve results were equally dismal, with seasoned names like four-time Olympians Deepika Kumari and Tarundeep Rai also failing to reach the medal rounds.

The only fight came from Simranjeet Kaur, who shocked everyone by stretching Korean Olympic gold medalist An San to a shoot-off in the quarterfinals on Saturday. Simranjeet, who barely made the cut at 54th with the third-lowest qualification score, was on the verge of a historic win, leading 5-3 and needing just a point to seal it against Korean star An San.

But, as has often been the case with Indian archers, nerves took over in the decider. A poor fifth set saw her shoot a 5 and an 8, al-

lowing An San to force a shoot-off. The Korean nailed an 11 under the new scoring system, while Simranjeet faltered with an 8, losing 5-6 (29-28, 24-29, 27-24, 27-27, 23-29) (8-11).

Her second set, where she landed an arrow in the blue ring (6), also proved costly.

An San, meanwhile, defeated Indian star Deepika three times in a row. The South Korean had earlier ousted the Indian star in the second round with a 6-0 rout (29-30, 27-28, 28-30) dashing her hope for a successive medal. Deepika had bagged a bronze in Shanghai last month. Deepika, the former world number 1, continues to falter against elite opponents and has failed to learn from repeated mistakes, particularly against the dominant Koreans.

Ankita Bhakat, who was India's best archer in qualification at 32nd, exited in the opening round, losing 2-6 (27-26, 26-28, 29-30, 28-29) to Dunya Yenhayay -- another lead squandered after going up 2-0. Former youth world champion and Shanghai bronze medalist Parth Salunkhe suffered a shock first-round exit to Lu Shuai of China 2-6 (28-29, 25-28, 28-25, 27-30), while Rai, at 41, showed little justification for his selection as he went down 2-6 to Germany's Mathias Kramer (28-30, 29-28, 27-31, 29-32). Another seasoned campaigner Atanu Das, after leading 4-2, surrendered meekly to world no. 1 Brady Ellison 4-6 (28-27, 30-31, 31-30, 30-31, 27-30) from being 4-2 up. (PTI)

WFI hands temporary suspension to 30 overage wrestlers, bars them from junior competitions

NEW DELHI, June 7: Cracking down the whip on overage wrestlers competing at junior level, the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has handed temporary suspension to 30 of them in the past month after investigating more than 400 such cases.

The WFI acted on complaints, largely from coaches and wrestlers from the Delhi 'Akharas' that many wrestlers from Haryana have procured fake certificates to show they were born in the national capital and are eligible to compete at junior level.

Much to the exasperation of WFI, two overage wrestlers even won medals at the recent Khelo India Games in Bihar.

"We do not want to spoil careers of wrestlers, so we have just barred them from the junior level competitions, like U18 and Cadets. They should compete at the senior level, if they are over 18 they must represent their original state," a senior WFI official

told PTI.

"Now they need to come to WFI, apologise for their actions and cheating. We will consider their cases. This has been going on for some time. One by one we suspended around 30 such offenders in the last 30-40 days."

The WFI official explained that most of these wrestlers, misguided by their coaches in Haryana, paid bribes to procure fake birth certificates from the Narela and Rohini zones in Delhi.

"Out of 436 cases, around 300 were from the Narela zone, while the rest were from the Rohini zone like Sultanpuri and Mangolpuri. Most of them were getting certificates from Begampur."

"All of them wanted to represent Delhi since getting selected in Haryana teams is not easy. We approached MCD and the Delhi Cantonment Board after receiving complaints and upon investigation it was proved they were fake certificates," the official said.



ties," the official said.

"Actually the coaches are to be blamed. They want their wards to win medals at competitions to become famous. That greed drives them to have overage wrestlers competing at junior level," he added.

Then WFI had also complained to the Games Technical Commit-

tee of the Khelo India to get a female wrestler thrown out of competition for submitting a fake birth certificate.

"This female wrestler had submitted a certificate issued by Delhi Cantonment Board. When we approached the Board, they confirmed to us that no such certificate has been issued by them."

Explaining the modus operandi, the WFI official said that the wrestlers play hefty sum to cyber cafe owners to create fake bar codes on the certificate.

Anyone who scans the certificate will get details as they were filled by the cafe owners, making the certificate appear original.

Also, the WFI has decided not to consider birth certificates, issued only recently.

Meanwhile, the WFI has suspended Sanjay Lather, a Haryana coach, after receiving a sexual harassment complaint against him during the Khelo India Games.

"We had received a complaint that this coach, who was appointed by the state government, had entered the room of a female wrestler after the competition ended."

"The Internal Complaints Committee duly investigated the matter and decided to terminate him from all wrestling activities for life," the official said. (PTI)

India must give Gill a crack at Test captaincy for a long period of time: Ponting

NEW DELHI, June 7 India have taken the right decision by handing the reins of the Test team to Shubman Gill and now the youngster must given a long rope to prove his credentials, says Ricky Ponting, who is also confident that India can handle the ongoing transition phase better than other countries.

India will be without stalwarts Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Ravichandran Ashwin, who all retired recently, and pacer Mohammed Shami when they begin their five-Test tour of England on June 20.

While Kohli and Rohit retired from Tests last month, Ashwin had hung up his boots during the Australia tour last year and Shami was ruled out on fitness grounds for the tour of the Old Blighty.

"I actually think it's the right

move. I know there's a lot of other people out there, pundits out there saying they can't understand why it wasn't Bumrah and why they have gone to Shubman, but I think it's pretty simple," Ponting told The ICC Review.

"Bumrah's injuries are holding him back a bit in the last couple of years and you don't want that with a captain. You can't have a captain coming in and missing games here and there, so I think it's the right decision."

"Now that they've made it, it's one they've got to stick with and give him (Gill) a good crack at it for a long period of time," he said. Ponting said it would be tough to replace players with experience but said India should be able to handle the transitional phase better than any other Test-playing side. "It's



always very hard to replace players like that, (given) that have been around for so long that have played that much Test cricket. But if any country can do it and do it quickly, India can, because of the amount of

young talent that they have," Ponting said.

"I've seen it first hand for 10 years now around the IPL and we've seen the emergence of (Yashasvi) Jaiswal and these sort

of guys that have come into international cricket with India and (have) done really well pretty much straight away."

"The skill side of it's one thing to replace and India will replace the skill side of it easily enough, but the experience is the big thing that's going to be missing for them." He continued, "Now even with a young captain with Shubman Gill, they'll still have some experience around with KL Rahul and Bumrah and these sort of guys. But if you look at a rebuilding sort of phase, India can cope with it better than most other teams."

Ponting, who coached Punjab Kings to the Indian Premier League final this year, said left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh should be named in the playing XI for the first Test at Headingley. (PTI)

Sharma misses cut, Ahlawat retires in KLM Open

AMSTERDAM, June 7: Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma failed to make the cut after carding a one-over 72 on the second day of the KLM Open here. Sharma shot 78 in the first round.

Play was suspended for the day due to darkness at The International.

Though the projected cut is set at four-over, Sharma at eight-over is certain to miss the cut. He had two birdies and one bogey in his second round.

Meanwhile, Veer Ahlawat retired after a difficult first day of 78. During the second round, the weather conditions were tough as play had to be stopped for two hours in the afternoon before it could be resumed. The strong winds went to over 35

mph.

Joakim Lagergren set himself apart from the rest of the field on the second day as he played a round of three under par for the day despite the harsh conditions.

Lagergren was helped by the fact that he started earlier in the day, taking the lead by two strokes with a round of 68 and has a total score of eight under. The round included seven birdies and four bogeys.

The harsh weather made it challenging for all players as day one leader Ricardo Gouveia had to fight his way to a round of one-over 72. He is now in second place with a score of six-under par.

Gouveia made four birdies and five bogeys. (PTI)