

Good News

Newly opened our Namsai Office:
2nd Mile, Namsai,
Arunachal Pradesh.
(M) 7002786249, 9612845442



26 YEARS OF DEDICATED JOURNALISM

www.thehillstimes.in

THE HILLS TIMES

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

Voice of the hills people

Vol .No. II Issue No. 102

RNI-ASSEN/2023/86488

GUWAHATI, FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025

PAGES 12

PRICE ₹ 8



Government of Assam

Sowing Seeds of Women Entrepreneurship

₹ **10,000**
Seed Money

through DBT to each eligible woman
Self-Help Group member, fuelling
entrepreneurship aspirations



Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
Chief Minister, Assam



Total women
entrepreneurs

30 lakh



Agriculture



Livestock rearing

**Indicative Sectors
of Entrepreneurship**

Handloom

Handicraft etc.



Total Fund

₹3,000
crore

The Chief Minister launched Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA) in Behali constituency on 1 April 2025

Constituency-wise distribution of MMUA benefits

Sl. No.	Number and Name of new LAC	Month
1	No. 39 Nalbari	August 2025
2	No. 52 Jagiroad	
3	No. 125 Patharkandi	
4	No. 83 Margherita	
5	No. 8 Dhubri	
6	No. 118 Silchar	September 2025
7	No. 114 Lakhimpur	
8	No. 37 Jalukbari	
9	No. 63 Hojai	
10	No. 65 Dhekiajuli	
11	No. 70 Biswanath	
12	No. 80 Jonai	
13	No. 86 Tinsukia	
14	No. 111 Rongkhong	
15	No. 53 Laharighat	
16	No. 7 Gauripur	October 2025
17	No. 11 Mankachar	
18	No. 34 Dimoria	
19	No. 35 New Guwahati	
20	No. 121 Hailakandi	
21	No. 126 R K Nagar	
22	No. 28 Boko-Chaygaon	
23	No. 31 Rangia	
24	No. 32 Kamalpur	
25	No. 18 Bongaigaon	
26	No. 54 Morigaon	
27	No. 57 Kaliabor	
28	No. 59 Barhampur	
29	No. 60 Nagaon-Batadroba	
30	No. 61 Raha	November 2025
31	No. 64 Lumding	
32	No. 69 Naduar	
33	No. 81 Sadiya	
34	No. 82 Doom Dooma	
35	No. 87 Chabua-Lahowal	
36	No. 88 Dibrugarh	
37	No. 12 Jaleswar	
38	No. 25 Pakabhetbari	
39	No. 27 Chamarua	December 2025
40	No. 55 Dhing	
41	No. 9 Birsing Jarua	
42	No. 104 Dergaon	
43	No. 105 Bokakhat	
44	No. 107 Sarupathar	
45	No. 103 Golaghat	
46	No. 108 Bokajan	
47	No. 109 Howraghat	
48	No. 113 Haflong	
49	No. 115 Udharbond	
50	No. 120 Dholai	January 2026
51	No. 26 Bajali	
52	No. 40 Tihu	
53	No. 49 Sipajhar	
54	No. 50 Mangaldai	
55	No. 66 Borsola	
56	No. 68 Rangapara	
57	No. 72 Gohpur	
58	No. 36 Guwahati Central	
59	No. 6 Golakganj	
60	No. 77 Dhakuakhana	February 2026
61	No. 78 Dhemaji	
62	No. 79 Sisiborgaon	
63	No. 85 Makum	
64	No. 90 Duliajan	
65	No. 1 Gossaigaon	
66	No. 17 Srijangram	
67	No. 22 Mandia	
68	No. 62 Binnakandi	
69	No. 58 Samaguri	March 2026
70	No. 106 Khumtai	
71	No. 116 Katigorah	
72	No. 117 Borkhola	
73	No. 13 West Goalpara	
74	No. 15 Dudhnoi	
75	No. 16 Abhayapuri	
76	No. 20 Bijni	
77	No. 21 Bhowanipur-Sorbhog	
78	No. 24 Barpeta	April 2026
79	No. 33 Dispur	
80	No. 38 Barkhetri	
81	No. 41 Manas	
82	No. 43 Tamulpur	
83	No. 44 Goreswar	
84	No. 45 Bhergaon	May 2026
85	No. 47 Mazbat	
86	No. 48 Tangla	
87	No. 67 Tezpur	
88	No. 73 Bihpuria	
89	No. 76 Lakhimpur	
90	No. 91 Tinkhong	
91	No. 98 Majuli	
92	No. 100 Jorhat	
93	No. 101 Mariani	June 2026
94	No. 124 Karimganj South	
95	No. 23 Chenga	
96	No. 56 Rupahihat	
97	No. 119 Sonai	
98	No. 102 Titabor	
99	No. 99 Teok	
100	No. 93 Sonari	
101	No. 94 Mahmora	
102	No. 95 Demow	July 2026
103	No. 96 Sivasagar	
104	No. 97 Nazira	
105	No. 89 Khowang	
106	No. 92 Naharkatia	
107	No. 84 Digboi	
108	No. 74 Ranganadi	
109	No. 75 Nowboicha	
110	No. 42 Baksa	
111	No. 46 Udalguri	August 2026
112	No. 19 Sidli-Chirang	
113	No. 4 Baokhungri	
114	No. 2 Dotma	
115	No. 110 Diphu	
116	No. 112 Amree	
117	No. 30 Hajo-Sualkuchi	
118	No. 123 Karimganj North	
119	No. 29 Palasbari	
120	No. 10 Bilasipara	September 2026
121	No. 3 Kokrajhar	
122	No. 5 Parbatjhora	
123	No. 14 East Goalpara	
124	No. 122 Algapur-Katlicherra	
125	No. 51 Dalgaoon	

DIPR /D/HLT/33/13-Jun-25



Sensex, Nifty tumble 1 pc on weak global trends, geopolitical tensions

MUMBAI, June 12: Benchmark Sensex tanked 823 points on Thursday following a selloff in oil & gas, power and capital goods shares in tandem with weak global market trends amid growing tensions in the Middle East.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 823.16 points or 1 per cent to settle at 81,691.98 with 27 of its constituents declining and three ending higher. During the day, it plunged 991.98 points or 1.20 per cent to 81,523.16.

Snapping its six-day winning streak, the broader NSE Nifty tumbled 253.20 points or 1.01 per cent to 24,888.20.

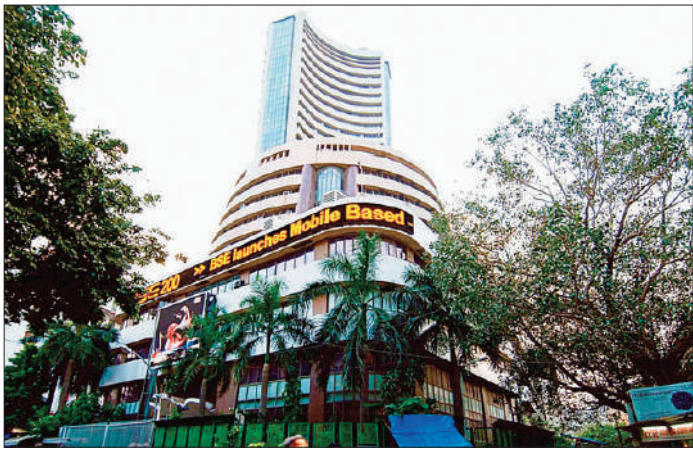
Fresh foreign fund outflows also dented investors' sentiment, traders said.

Among Sensex stocks, Tata Motors, Titan, Eternal, Power Grid, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra and Hindustan Unilever were among the biggest laggards.

Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints and Tech Mahindra were the gainers.

"Consolidation in domestic markets is evolving into a broad-based trend, now extending to large-cap stocks. Valuation concerns and rising oil prices -- driven by Middle East tensions -- are fuelling risk aversion among investors.

"Adding to the uncertainty, the



US is considering unilateral tariff hikes on several key trading partners, with a decision expected within the next one to two weeks, ahead of an early July deadline," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE midcap gauge tanked 1.52 per cent and smallcap index dropped 1.38 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, power tumbled 2.19 per cent, utilities (2.18 per cent), oil & gas (2.10 per cent), realty (2.07 per cent), consumer durables (2.02 per cent), industrials (1.98 per cent), auto (1.71 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.67 per cent) and metal (1.63 per cent).

As many as 2,729 stocks declined while 1,282 advanced and 140 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"The sell-off was triggered by a combination of factors, including renewed geopolitical tensions between Israel and Iran, a rise in crude oil prices, and expiry-related pressure following the breakdown of a key support level. These developments have made market participants more cautious," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Meanwhile, a London-bound Air India plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed in a residential area minutes after taking

off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon. Many people were feared killed.

Shares of aircraft manufacturer Boeing plunged nearly 8 per cent in pre-market trade on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 446.31 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said investors exited stocks at will weighed down by weak global sentiment coupled with the possibility of Israel attacking Iran and renewed tariff threat by US President Donald Trump.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled in the positive territory, while Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower. Equity markets in Europe were trading in the negative territory.

US markets ended lower on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.43 per cent to USD 68.77 a barrel.

On Wednesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 123.42 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at 82,515.14. The Nifty ended 37.15 points or 0.15 per cent up at 25,141.40. (PTI)

Retail inflation falls to 6-yr low of 2.82 pc in May on cooling food prices

NEW DELHI, June 12: Retail inflation dipped to an over six-year low of 2.82 per cent in May due to subdued food prices, remaining below the RBI's median target of 4 per cent for the fourth consecutive month, according to government data released on Thursday.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation was 3.16 per cent in April and 4.8 per cent in May 2024. The previous low was in February 2019 at 2.57 per cent. On easing inflation, the Reserve Bank effected a jumbo rate cut of 50 basis points last week, taking the total to 100 bps since February.

Food inflation was 0.99 per cent in May, significantly lower from 8.69 per cent in the year-ago month, according to the National Statistics Office (NSO) data.

"The significant decline in headline inflation and food inflation during the month of May 2025 is mainly attributed to a decline in inflation of pulses & products, vegetables, fruits, cereals & products, households goods & services, sugar & confectionary and egg and the favourable base effect," NSO said in a statement. The food inflation in May 2025 is the lowest since October 2021.

According to NSO data, inflation in rural areas was 2.59 per cent in May, while it was 3.07 per cent in urban India. Among states and UTs, the highest infla-

tion was recorded in Kerala at 6.46 per cent, followed by Punjab (5.21 per cent), Jammu and Kashmir (4.55 per cent), Haryana (3.67 per cent) and Uttarakhand (3.47 per cent). The lowest inflation was in Telangana at 0.55 per cent. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which has been tasked by the government to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side, has projected CPI inflation for 2025-26 at 3.7 per cent, with Q1 at 2.9 per cent, Q2 at 3.4 per cent, Q3 at 3.9 per cent, and Q4 at 4.4 per cent.

Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Icmr, said CPI inflation cooled further in May 2025 to a 75-month low of 2.8 per cent, led by the food and beverages segment, validating the decision of the Reserve Bank's Monetary Policy Committee to front-load rate cuts. Overall, the change in the monetary policy stance appears to be a fairly strong signal of a pause, especially when combined with the unexpected CRR cut, she said. "As of now, we expect rates to be unchanged in the August 2025 policy review. Nevertheless, given our lower inflation and growth forecasts vis-a-vis the projections of the MPC, we are not ruling out the possibility of a final 25 bps rate cut in October 2025, by when the monsoon outturn and its impact on food inflation would be clearer," Nayar said. (PTI)

Investors' wealth erodes by ₹ 5.98 lakh cr as mkts tumble

NEW DELHI, June 12: Investors' wealth eroded by ₹ 5.98 lakh crore on Thursday, tracking weak trends in equities where the BSE Sensex tumbled 1 per cent. Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined 1 per cent in tandem with weak global market trends amid growing tensions in the Middle East.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 823.16 points or 1 per cent to settle at 81,691.98. During the day, it plunged 991.98 points or 1.20 per cent to 81,523.16. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms dropped by ₹ 5,98,759.27 crore to ₹ 4,49,58,383.92 crore (USD 5.26 trillion).

"The selloff was triggered by weak global cues, volatility from the weekly F&O expiry, and renewed concerns over global trade and geopolitical tensions. Investors reacted to feeble global cues as markets assessed the uncertain outcome of US-China trade negotiations and rising tensions in the Middle East, which pushed oil prices higher and weighed on

risk appetite.

"The weekly expiry of derivatives contracts added to intraday volatility and profit-booking, amplifying the downward move," Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

From the Sensex firms, Tata Motors, Titan, Eternal, Power Grid, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra and Hindustan Unilever were among the biggest laggards.

Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints and Tech Mahindra were the gainers. Among sectoral indices, power tumbled 2.19 per cent, utilities (2.18 per cent), oil & gas (2.10 per cent), realty (2.07 per cent), consumer durables (2.02 per cent), industrials (1.98 per cent), auto (1.71 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.67 per cent) and metal (1.63 per cent). As many as 2,729 stocks declined while 1,282 advanced and 140 remained unchanged on the BSE. The BSE midcap gauge tanked 1.52 per cent and smallcap index dropped 1.38 per cent. (PTI)

LA-BRARY launched in Northeast

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 12: LA-BRARY, a Haryana-based lingerie brand, has officially launched its collection in the Northeast region in partnership with Guwahati-based distributor Khushi Enterprises.

According to an official statement, the brand aims to redefine the intimate wear market with its focus on size inclusivity, diverse color options, and customer-centric service. The launch marks LA-BRARY's entry into a region where access to well-fitting, stylish lingerie has often been limited.

The company positions itself as more than just a lingerie provider, emphasizing a mission rooted in body positivity, inclusivity, and self-expression.

Anuj Singla, CEO of LA-BRARY, said the company is proud to collaborate with prominent local businessman Ajay Verma, who brings decades of experience and deep knowledge of the regional market. "We are happy to be associated with Mr. Verma, whose expertise strengthens our commitment to providing high-quality, confidence-boosting lingerie to women across the Northeast," Singla stated.

Voice and Speech Training launched in Guwahati After Nearly Two Decades

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 12: After nearly two decades of successfully conducting voice and speech training across a wide range of organisations, institutions, and clubs in Assam, the widely acclaimed 'Voice and Speech Training Program' has formally launched its first dedicated institute in Sundarpur, Guwahati.

According to an official statement, the launch marks a significant milestone for the program, which has built a strong reputation over 19 years through its impactful sessions delivered across the state.

The newly established Voice and Speech Training Institute will commence operations from June 22, 2025. A formal inauguration ceremony, coupled with a press meet, was held at the institute's premises on Thursday, June 12, at 4:00 PM to mark the occasion.

Over the years, the training program has been availed by a host of reputed organisations including Sarba Siksha Abhijan (Assam), Indian

Oil Corporation Ltd., Oil India Ltd (Duliajan), Numaligarh Refinery Ltd. (NRL), North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi), and several elite clubs such as ZALONI Club (Oil India Ltd., Duliajan), CHAMPA Club (Bongaigaon Refinery), DIGBOI Club, KALIYANI Club (NRL), RANGCHALI Club (NRL), LEDO Club, and LUITPAAR Club (Oil India Ltd., Narengi), besides numerous schools and professional institutes across the state.

According to the official statement, the program has consistently received exceptional feedback from participants.

Designed as a 16-hour intensive module, the 'Voice and Speech Training Program' focuses on equipping individuals with comprehensive vocal techniques.

Participants are trained to speak English, Hindi, or any language of their choice with impeccable diction, articulation, and pronunciation. The program promises a transformative

experience that enhances vocal clarity, boosts confidence, and cultivates personal charisma—attributes that are beneficial across professional and social domains.

The opening ceremony of the institute was graced by several distinguished guests and well-known personalities.

Among the invitees were Shantikam Hazarika, former Chairman of the Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA); Sawpon Dowerah, former Academic Officer of SEBA; popular television actors Siddhartha Sharma and Deepjyoti Keot of Beharbari Outpost fame; and Prandeep Das and Mandeep Das from the musical band Bound Morphemes.

The event not only celebrated the institute's opening but also underscored the value of effective communication skills in today's world.

With its track record of success and wide-reaching impact, the institute is expected to attract individuals from diverse walks of life seeking to improve their vocal abilities.

Contd. from Page 3...

London-bound plane with 242

in Ahmedabad has stunned and saddened us. It is heartbreaking beyond words," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X.

"In this sad hour, my thoughts are with everyone affected by it. Have been in touch with Ministers and authorities who are working to assist those affected," he added. President Droupadi Murmu said her thoughts and prayers are with the affected people.

"The nation stands with them in this hour of indescribable grief," she said. Britain's King Charles III said he and his wife, Queen Camilla, were "desperately shocked by the terrible events in Ahmedabad this morning". "Our special prayers and deepest possible sympathy are with the families and friends of all those affected by this appallingly tragic incident across so many nations, as they await news of their loved ones," read his statement issued from Buckingham Palace.

Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the scenes emerging of a London-bound plane carrying many British nationals crashing in the Indian city of Ahmedabad are devastating.

The ill-fated flight was under the command of Capt Sumeet Sabharwal along with First Officer Clive Kunder. While Sabharwal has 8,200 hours of flying experience, Kunder 1,100 hours, the DGCA said in a statement. Immediately after departure from Runway 23, the aircraft fell on the ground outside the airport perimeter, it said.

"On Jun 12, 2025, Air India B787 Aircraft VT-ANB while operating flight AI-171 from (Ahmedabad to Gatwick) has crashed immediately after takeoff from Ahmedabad," the statement said, adding that they were 242 persons on board, including two pilots and 10 cabin crew.

Several eyewitnesses on the busy, everyday afternoon described the horror of what they had seen.

"The plane was flying very low and it crashed into the residential quarters of doctors and nursing staff of civil hospital and BJ Medical college," Hareesh Shah told PTI. "There are several five floor buildings which are residential quarters of doctors and nursing staff. Many people in those apartments were injured as along with the plane the buildings also caught fire," he said.

Another said several cars and vehicles parked in the premises also caught fire. Expressing his profound sorrow, Air India chairperson N Chandrasekaran said an emergency centre has been activated and support teams set up for families seeking information.

"Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with the families and loved ones of all those affected by this devastating event. At this moment, our primary focus is on supporting all the affected people and their families.

"We are doing everything in our power to assist the emergency response teams at the site and to provide all necessary support and care to those impacted. Further updates will be shared as we receive more verified information," he said in a post on X.

Aircraft maker Boeing said in a statement that it is in contact with Air India and stands ready to offer any support to the Tata-owned airline.

Thursday's tragedy is the second major air disaster in Gujarat's principal city. On October 19, 1988, an Indian Airlines plane crashed in its final approach to the Ahmedabad airport, killing 130 people. (PTI)

We are exploring path to

G7 (meeting), and as you are aware the invitation has been accepted," he said. The call was also an occasion for the two prime ministers to reflect or talk about India-Canada relations, and how it can be taken forward, the MEA spokesperson said.

Canada will be hosting the crucial G7 meeting later this month. "India and Canada are vibrant democracies, which are bound by shared democratic values and steadfast commitment to the rule of law. And, of course, very vibrant people to people ties," Jaiswal said.

"We believe that the forthcoming meeting between the two leaders on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Canada will offer an important opportunity for them to exchange views on bilateral and global issues, and explore pathways to set or reset the relationship, based on mutual respect, shared interests and sensitivity to each other's concerns," he said. Later in response to another query on the future trajectory of India-Canada ties, Jaiswal said, "We are exploring path to reset ties." (PTI)

Monsoon damages to delay

According to a company estimate in January 2020, the cost of the mega project, which was originally scheduled to be commissioned in December 2012, had escalated to around ₹ 20,000 crore. On completion, the Subansiri project, which is a run-of-river scheme, will generate around 7,500 million units of power annually in a "90 per cent dependable year" with the help of eight Francis turbines of 250 MW capacity each.

In June 2023, commissioning of the 2,000 MW hydro project was postponed till the end of the 2023-24 fiscal with more than 90 per cent of the total work of the project

completed by then. The Assam government in March 2022 had informed the state Assembly that partial commissioning of the 2,000 MW project was postponed till August 2022.

In December 2020, the company had set a target of March 2022 for commissioning the project, being constructed at Gerukamukh along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border. NHPC had commenced the construction work of the Subansiri project in January 2005 after obtaining forest clearance in October 2004.

Construction work of the project was stalled from December 2011 to October 14, 2019 due to protests by locals and many groups fearing safety and downstream impact. To address the concerns of the agitators, multiple committees were formed by the Assam government and the Centre. The outcomes of their reports varied from one to another. After clearing all the legal issues by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the NHPC re-started construction of the project from October 15, 2019. (PTI)

BJP East Karbi Anglong

of the Women Defence Academy. On healthcare, he said nearly two lakh doctors are being produced annually under the Modi government.

Addressing the conclave, MP Amarsing Tisso highlighted the Vikshit Bharat programme, which focuses on youth, farmers, and Dalits.

He said the Centre had sanctioned ₹44,859 crore for 3,613 projects in the Northeast and approved ₹27,000 crore for a semiconductor plant at Jagirroad, which is expected to create 30,000 jobs and transform the area into an electronic hub.

Tisso further mentioned the government's efforts toward tribal education, including the establishment of 470 Ekal Vidyalayas, benefiting 1.25 lakh tribal students. Chief Executive Member of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang, in his speech, said that the central government had sanctioned ₹94.11 lakh through NITI Aayog following a meeting with the Prime Minister on the implementation of Article 244(A).

He noted that a memorandum had been submitted requesting ₹100 crore for the development of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong, to which the Prime Minister responded promptly. Ronghang thanked Dilip Saikia for raising the demand for a Tribal University in Karbi Anglong in Parliament and expressed optimism that statehood within Assam would be realised under Saikia's leadership and the guidance of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Mastermind of honeymoon

there a machete that was later used to kill Raja, he said.

The three and the couple arrived in the Meghalaya capital Shillong around the same time before they started for Sohra, about 65 km from here, last month. Marak said, Raja (29) and Sonam (24) went missing in the hills of Sohra on May 23, while his body was found in a gorge near Weisawdong Falls on June 2.

A search continued for Sonam, who emerged in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur, around 1,200 km away, in the early hours of June 9 and surrendered. Police have also arrested her boyfriend Raj Kushwaha and three contract killers. (PTI)

'This has been possible due to

become ambassadors of India's timeless values through research, expression, and community service," he urged.

Governor Acharya extended his appreciation to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for his visionary leadership in safeguarding and promoting Assam's rich cultural and spiritual ethos.

He remarked that the Chief Minister's dedication has led to a cultural revival that is rooted in both tradition and progressive thinking.

The award presentation was attended by an array of cultural, political, and administrative dignitaries including Minister of Culture Bimal Bora; Assam chief secretary Dr Ravi Kotha; Padma Bhushan awardee and eminent Sattriya dancer Jatin Goswami; and several other noted personalities from the fields of art, literature, and governance.

The Srimanta Sankardeva Award, instituted by the Government of Assam, stands as one of the state's highest civilian honours, recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to the enrichment of Indian culture and society. The 2023 edition, as per the official statement, reaffirms the state's continued reverence for artistic excellence and spiritual legacy.

Arunachal Dy CM calls for

benefits and necessity of GST compliance. The meeting reviewed the state's GST collection performance, evaluated strategies for improving tax compliance, and explored ways to enhance overall revenue mobilisation, an official statement said here.

To ensure continuous improvement, Mein called for monthly performance reviews with a focus on increasing registration and boosting revenue collection. Highlighting the transformative impact of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), Mein said the unified tax system has eliminated cascading taxes and created a more integrated national mar-

ket.

Arunachal Pradesh adopted GST on July 1, 2017, in line with national rollout. Since its implementation, the state has recorded a substantial rise in its taxpayer base and GST revenue. The number of registered taxpayers grew from 7,365 in 2017-18 to 18,477 in the current financial year, marking an increase of nearly 151 per cent. GST collections also saw significant growth from ₹ 227.94 crore in 2017-18 to ₹ 1,825.87 crore in 2024-25, reflecting improved compliance and an expanded tax base, officials said. In the excise sector, the department collected ₹ 299.36 crore in 2024-25, marking a 46.62 per cent increase over the previous fiscal, they added.

To further assist taxpayers, the department has operationalised 16 GST seva kendras (GSKs) at key locations. These centres are equipped with biometric verification systems for Aadhaar-based authentication and physical premise checks to prevent fraudulent registrations.

Mein reiterated the state government's commitment to modernising tax administration, increasing transparency, and fostering a tax-compliant ecosystem to support sustained economic development. (PTI)

BRICS Forum united against

"We express strong condemnation of any acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed.

"We condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir on April 22, 2025, in which at least 26 people were killed and many more injured. We reaffirm our commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border movement of terrorists, terrorism financing and safe havens..." the joint declaration unanimously adopted by the BRICS Forum read.

"We urge to ensure zero tolerance for terrorism, and reject double standards in countering terrorism. We emphasise the primary responsibility of states in combating terrorism and that global efforts to prevent and counter terrorist threats must fully comply with their obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations..." it added.

The Indian delegation was chaired by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, with Harivansh and a few MPs attending. The meeting was held in Brasilia from June 3 to 5.

The BRICS, comprising countries like India, China, Brazil, Russia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, represents countries with 45 per cent of the world population and 40 per cent of the global GDP.

Harivansh said world parliamentarians steered consensus on Pahalgaon attack condemnation, giving a strong push to India's stand against terror.

Cross-border terrorism, its financing and providing it safe havens were subjected to an all-around condemnation at the summit, he said.

There were discussions on making stronger and more durable BRICS inter-parliamentary cooperation, uniting for the reform of the multilateral peace and security architecture, inter-parliamentary cooperation for responsible and inclusive artificial intelligence and on the search for new paths for economic development, Harivansh said.

The Indian delegation unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and forcefully called for the adoption of a zero-tolerance policy towards it, he said.

Harivansh said the nations underscored the need to coordinate their efforts to curb financial support to terrorist outfits, increase intelligence sharing, prevent the misuse of emerging technologies, and strengthen cooperation in investigation and judicial processes.

After the meeting, India was announced as the host for the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum next year, with Birla formally assuming the chairmanship.

He said India will now take an active lead in strengthening cooperation among BRICS parliaments.

MPs Surendra Singh Nagar, Vijay Baghel, Vivek Thakur, Shabari Byreddy, Lok Sabha secretary general Utpal Kumar Singh, Rajya Sabha secretary general PC Mody, and officers from the Lok Sabha Secretariat were part of the delegation.

The delegation also held bilateral meetings with Hugo Motta Wanderley da Nobrega, President of the Chamber of Deputies, Brazil, David Samuel Alcolombe Tobelem, President of the Federal Senate of Brazil, and Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Speaker of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

A meeting was also held with Ana Maria Mari Machado, Vice-President of the National Assembly of Cuba. (PTI)

Blowout at ONGC well

when an OIL well blowout incident took the lives of three employees of the PSU major and injured several others. Well no 5 at Baghjan in Tinsukia district spewed gas uncontrollably for 173 days since May 27 and it caught fire on June 9, 2020.

In a multi-agency effort, the damaged gas well at Baghjan in Assam was 'killed' and the blaze was fully doused on November 15, followed by the abandoning of the well on December 3, 2020 after completing all steps to control it. (PTI)

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025

THE HILLS TIMES 3

London-bound plane with 242 passengers, crew crashes

Chances of survivors slim ● Ex-Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani among passengers ● Pilot issues 'Mayday' call soon after take-off from Ahmedabad ● It is heartbreaking beyond words: PM

AHMEDABAD, June 12: An Ahmedabad-London Air India plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed into a medical college complex here minutes after takeoff on Thursday, possibly killing all on board in one of the country's worst air tragedies.

There was no official count of those killed even hours after the Boeing 787 Dreamliner (AI171) crashed in the city civil hospital and BJ Medical College near the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport and burst into a ball of fire.

As rescuers struggled to find survivors in the charred wreckage and pull out the injured, many of them with grievous burns, officials tried to assess the human magnitude of the disaster. Unofficial reports said chances of survival of those on board were remote and up to 25 people in the medical complex could also have died.

According to Air India, of the 230 passengers, 169 were Indians, 53 British, seven Portuguese and

one Canadian. The other 12 were two pilots and 10 crew members.

The pilot of the twin-engine wide bodied aircraft issued a 'Mayday' distress call, denoting a full emergency, soon after takeoff at 1.39 pm, the Air Traffic Control at Ahmedabad said.

The search was also on for the aircraft's black box -- the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder -- for clues to understand what happened in the last crucial moments.

The 11-year-old aircraft could be seen from miles away, losing altitude rapidly and combusting in a fiery blaze that sent plumes of thick black smoke spiralling up in the air. The aircraft climbed just about 600-800 feet before plummeting to the ground almost immediately, aviation sources said.

Former Gujarat chief minister and BJP leader Vijay Rupani was among the passengers on the doomed flight to London's Gatwick airport.

"The aircraft departed from



Ahmedabad at 1339 IST (0809 UTC) from Runway 23. It gave a MAYDAY Call to ATC, but thereafter no response was given by the aircraft to the calls made by ATC," according to a statement from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Visuals from the

wreckage area showed bodies being pulled out and the injured, many with burns, wheeled into the city civil hospital close by.

Eyewitnesses in Ahmedabad said the blaze was so intense that it led to several multi-storey buildings being burnt, trees singed and

Passenger survives Air India plane crash

AHMEDABAD, June 12: A passenger on board the London-bound Air India flight that crashed near the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon survived the horrific incident, a doctor at the city civil hospital said.

Vishwaskumar Ramesh was in 'A11' seat of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner which was carrying 242 passengers and crew. He was travelling to London with his brother.

Dr Shrik M who works in the trauma ward of the Ahmedabad civil hospital told PTI that Ramesh has been admitted to the hospital.

The aircraft crashed in a residential area here minutes after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport. (PTI)

cars damaged. One image showed the snout of the plane crashing through the top floor of a building that appeared to be a dining area of the hostel of nurses and doctors.

Elsewhere too, there were scenes of complete devastation with mangled metal of the wreckage, snarls of tangled wire and smoke rising from burning embers.

This is the first crash involving the Boeing Dreamliner, feted for its advanced features. It is also India's second biggest air disaster

since 2020 when an Air India Express flight skidded off a wet runway while landing at Kozhikode in Kerala and split into two. Of the 190 people on board, 21, including two pilots, lost their lives.

Airport operations in Ahmedabad were temporarily suspended and resumed towards the evening.

The shock of the disaster echoed through political corridors in India and abroad with heads of states and others offering their condolences. "The tragedy (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Concerned, praying for safety of passengers, crew, says Himanta

GUWAHATI, June 12: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said he was concerned by a plane crash near Ahmedabad and prayed for the safety of all passengers and crew.

The London-bound Air India plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon. Several casualties are feared.

"Deeply concerned by reports of an Air India flight crash in Ahmedabad. Praying for the safety and well-being of all passengers and crew members," Sarma said in a post on X.

The Boeing aircraft, which could be seen losing altitude quickly, crashed in the Meghainagar area near the Ahmedabad international airport around 2 pm. (PTI)

Monsoon damages to delay Subansiri project



GUWAHATI, June 12: NHPC's much-delayed 2,000 MW Subansiri hydro project along Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border has suffered "minor damages" during the recent monsoon rains though the main structure remained unaffected, the company said on Thursday.

The commissioning of the Subansiri Lower Hydro Electric Project has been further delayed till May 2026 from the earlier announced 2023-24 fiscal end, which was already more than 10 years late from the original completion schedule of December 2012, the NHPC said.

The project cost has also been anticipated to escalate more than four times to around ₹ 26,075 crore at the time of completion next year from the initial estimate of ₹ 6,285 crore in December 2002.

"No such structural damage has occurred to the dam structure which may cause safety concerns. Only minor damages to the spillway lip portion have occurred during this monsoon season," NHPC said in a statement.

During the monsoon season, the river flow is accompanied by silt, wooden logs and boulders, it added. "Rolling of the boulders

and wooden logs causes minor damages on the upper surface of the spillway glacis and lip portion during the passing of the river flow from the spillway gates. The functionality of the dam is not affected by such minor damage," the company said.

After the passing of the monsoon season, the area shall be inspected, and the minor damages shall be repaired and restored as a general practice in any hydroelectric project, it added.

The company asserted that there is no risk at all to the dam structure, which is 116 metres high from the river bed level.

The Subansiri Lower Hydro Electric Project, which faced multiple bottlenecks since its inception stage, has been delayed several times and its deadline for commissioning has been revised on many occasions. On its official website, NHPC said, "Date of Commercial Operation (COD) - Project is likely to be completed in MAY 2026."

It also stated that the project cost has now been anticipated to be ₹ 26,075.54 crore on completion compared to ₹ 6,285.33 crore as per the initial estimate in December 2002. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CBI arrests NEHU prof in bribery case

NEW DELHI, June 12: The CBI has arrested the Dean of School of Life Sciences, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong in an alleged bribery case of ₹ 3.43 lakh from Guwahati, officials said Thursday.

A businessman allegedly involved in the scam was also arrested, they said. According to the officials, Nirmalendu Saha, Professor of Zoology and Dean of School of Life Sciences at the University and businessman Pranjal Sharma indulged in corruption in the deals of scientific equipment, laboratory items, etc. Sharma allegedly facilitated Saha to obtain bribes for clearance of bills for the supply of equipment, they said. "CBI laid a trap and caught the accused redhanded," the CBI Spokesperson said. Further investigation is underway. (PTI)

We are exploring path to reset ties: MEA on India-Canada relations

NEW DELHI, June 12: Describing Indian and Canada as "vibrant democracies", the external affairs ministry on Thursday said New Delhi believes the forthcoming meeting between the prime ministers of the two countries on the sidelines of the G7 Summit will offer an important opportunity to exchange views and explore pathways to reset bilateral ties.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said this in response to a query during his weekly media briefing.

"Our Prime Minister had received a call from the Canadian Prime Minister last week. During the call, Prime Minister Mark Carney invited Prime Minister (Modi) to attend (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP East Karbi Anglong Committee hosts professional conclave to mark 11 years of Modi government



HT Bureau
DIPHU, June 12: The BJP East Karbi Anglong District Committee (BJP-EKADC) organised a Professional Conclave at the Arboretum cum Craft Centre in Matipung on Thursday to celebrate the completion of 11 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure.

The event saw participation from senior party leaders, including MPs, MLAs, and members of

the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC).

Assam BJP President and MP Dilip Saikia, who attended the event as Chief Guest, stated that since the Modi government assumed office in 2014, India has emerged as the fourth-largest economic power globally. He said the government has prioritised service to the poor, women empowerment, farmer development, and overall

progress.

Highlighting various achievements, Saikia said the Modi government has significantly improved the country's standing in economy, security, industrial growth, science, and technology.

He credited former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee for his contributions to tribal welfare and mentioned the establishment of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs under Vajpayee's leadership.

Referring to welfare schemes, Saikia said under the Jan Dhan Yojana, roads have been built in tribal areas. He claimed that in the past 11 years, around 34 crore people were lifted from Below Poverty Line (BPL) to Above Poverty Line (APL) status, reducing the BPL population to 5.3%. Encouraging organic farming among Karbi Anglong farmers, he said financial support is being provided by the Centre. He also cited steps taken for women's empowerment, including the establishment (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Mastermind of honeymoon murder: Sonam, Raj accuse each other

SHILLONG, June 12: Sonam Raghuvanshi confessed to be part of the conspiracy to kill her husband Raja during their honeymoon in Meghalaya, and accused Raj Kushwaha of being the mastermind of the Indore-based businessman's murder, a senior police officer said on Thursday.

On the other hand, Kushwaha, Sonam's suspected boyfriend, put the blame for orchestrating the murder on her, Deputy Inspector General of Police DNR Marak said on Thursday. Sonam and Kushwaha are among the five people arrested in connection with the murder of Raja Raghuvanshi, whose decomposed body was recovered from a gorge in Sohra area of East Khasi Hills district on June 2.

"Sonam confessed to be a part of the conspiracy to kill her husband but we are yet to establish who the mastermind of the plot is. Both Sonam and Raj are

blaming each other," Marak told PTI. He said the investigation has started to unearth the conspiracy.

"There are inconsistencies in the statements collected individually of all the accused persons. We are also investigating the amount of money Sonam promised to pay to the hitmen and how much she had already paid," Marak said.

According to the senior officer, the police are verifying if any of them had made a recce of Sohra and the jungles of Nongriat before. The couple had stayed at a homestay in Nongriat. None of the accused so far admitted to have conducted a recce, he said.

The SIT conducting the probe into the murder is seeking assistance from the police in Assam and other states to link all evidence in the case. The three hired killers from Indore stopped over for a night in Guwahati and procured from (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Arunachal Dy CM calls for GST drive to boost revenue



ITANAGAR, June 12: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Thursday directed the Tax, Excise & Narcotics department to step up efforts in bringing all eligible businesses, particularly hotels, restaurants, and resorts, within the GST threshold under mandatory registration.

Chairing a departmental review meeting here, Mein, who also heads the department, emphasised the need for awareness campaigns and outreach programmes in collaboration with Arunachal Chamber of Commerce & Industries (ACCI) to educate stakeholders about the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BRICS Forum united against terrorism: RS Dy Chairman Harivansh

NEW DELHI, June 12: India rallied all BRICS countries to unanimously condemn the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed and support New Delhi's stand against terrorism, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh said on Thursday.

Addressing the media here, he said India's continued advocacy for global unity in the fight against terrorism was widely appreciated at the 11th BRICS Parliamentary Forum, which concluded last week. He said India's stand against terrorism in the wake of the April 22 attack was unanimously reflected in the forum's final joint declaration. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'This has been possible due to Ma Kamakhya's blessings' Classical dancer Sonal Mansingh conferred with Sankardeva Award

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 12: Celebrating the timeless legacy of Assam's cultural renaissance figure, the Srimanta Sankardeva Award 2023 was ceremoniously conferred upon noted classical dancer Padma Vibhushan Dr Sonal Mansingh by Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra on Thursday.

The event was held in the presence of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, and several other dignitaries.

According to an official statement, the award presentation was not only an occasion to honour one of India's most distinguished cultural icons but also a tribute to the enduring vision of Srimanta Sankardeva, the 15th-16th century saint-reformer whose contributions to Assamese culture and spirituality continue to resonate across generations.

In his keynote address, Governor Acharya described Mahapu-

rush Srimanta Sankardeva as a spiritual and cultural visionary who went beyond the confines of geography and time.

"Srimanta Sankardeva was not just a saint of Assam or the Northeast; he was a symbol of India's collective cultural consciousness," he said, highlighting the saint's influence as both a unifier and a reformer.

Governor Acharya spoke at length about Sankardeva's pioneering role in shaping Neo-Vaishnavism or Ek Sarana Naam Dharma—a movement that challenged caste barriers and emphasized devotion, moral conduct, and communal harmony through art, music, drama, and scripture.

He elaborated on the saint's monumental contributions to Assamese cultural heritage, citing his composition of Borgeet, creation of the Ankiya Naat theatre tradition, and his Assamese translation of the Bhagavata Purana as enduring pillars of regional and national cultural identity.



The Governor also praised the Government of Assam for its initiatives in promoting Sankardeva's legacy, including the development and preservation of key cultural and religious institutions such as Batadrava Than, Patbausi Satra, and Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra. He also mentioned the establishment of the Srimanta Sankardeva Chair in various aca-

demic institutions across Assam and the country as a significant step in academic engagement with the saint's teachings.

Conferring the award on Dr Sonal Mansingh, Governor Acharya applauded her lifelong contribution to Indian classical dance, cultural activism, and educational outreach.

"This award is not just a tribute

to her persona, but a recognition of her relentless service in upholding and modernizing the spirit of Indian heritage," he said.

Dr Mansingh, who has mastered and propagated the Bharatanatyam and Odissi traditions, has also played a vital role in public cultural policy and youth engagement through her performances and leadership roles.

In her acceptance, Dr Mansingh expressed deep gratitude and noted the spiritual and artistic legacy of Srimanta Sankardeva as a guiding force for all cultural practitioners.

The award, she said, would further inspire her mission of bridging classical art with contemporary relevance.

During the ceremony, Governor Acharya also addressed the younger generation, urging them to draw inspiration from Srimanta Sankardeva's life and teachings.

"Let our younger generation take inspiration from the life and teachings of Srimanta Sankardeva. Let them (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Blowout at ONGC well: Emergency services pressed into service

SIVASAGAR, June 12: A blowout took place on Thursday at a crude well of energy major Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in Sivasagar district, and it is spewing gas uncontrollably at present, officials said.

No injury has been reported so far and the well has not caught fire yet. The incident occurred at the well no. RDS 147 of rig no SKP 135 in Rudrasagar oil field of ONGC. A private firm SK Petro Services was operating the well on behalf of the state-run Maharatna company.

According to a senior official, who is present at the site, told PTI that there is no danger currently and the company hopes to bring the well under control soon.

"There is an uncontrolled flow of gas. We are trying to control the well. All senior officials are at the site. We are actively mobilising all resources required for controlling the well and we hope to do it as soon as possible. Work is underway," he added.

Another official said that there has been no injury at the site, and the well has not caught fire yet.

"It is an old crude well and not under production. A perforation job was underway for zone transfer. It is a kind of servicing of the well. The production was supposed to start from a new zone after the perforation job."

"At the time of the incident, the logging perforation operation was going on. Suddenly gas started coming out in an uncontrolled manner immediately after the perforation, leading to the blowout," he added.

Presently, the well site is under control and all emergency services have been deployed, the official said. "Currently, a well killing job is in progress. Some locals in the nearby areas have decided to leave their homes temporarily fearing a blast from the blowout site," he added. This ONGC incident reminded people of the worst industrial disaster of the Northeast in 2020. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Elections in Bangladesh

The interim Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Government Dr. Muhammad Yunus has finally announced the holding of national elections in the country in the first half of April next year defying the demand of the main opposition party BNP to hold it in December this year. The final dates will be notified by the Election Commission. The EC will also be notifying the norms as also the criteria for the eligibility of the candidates for contesting the polls. He is expected to have a meeting with Tarique Rahman, the working chairman of the BNP and the son of the BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia. Tarique is the main strategist of the Bangladesh's main opposition party. His discussions with Dr. Yunus have special importance in view of the impending elections. As regards the stand of the opposition parties in Bangladesh, all the parties are preparing for the elections though the BNP still maintains that December is the best time since the months of February and March are not convenient in view of annual school examinations, Ramzan as also the possibility of sudden storms and incessant rains during those months. The Election Commission will take the final view on dates after looking at the representations.

For all parties, now one thing is certain that the national elections are taking place anytime between December and April and they would have to be fully ready for that. The EC will notify the lists of the parties eligible for taking part in the elections, but already, the trend is clear. Excepting the Awami League which has been barred by the law, all other parties including Jamaat El Islami are eligible to participate in the elections. There may be more than thirty political parties but the main parties presently are the frontrunner BNP, the newly set up the National Citizens Party (NCP) and Jamaat-El-Islami. Other smaller parties and loose fringe left combinations are there but they have not much influence in electoral terms in the present volatile Bangladesh.

To take the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) first. The BNP has been functioning in the parliamentary domain just few years after the founding of Bangladesh in 1971. The BNP's present chairperson Khaleda Zia was three times Prime Minister. She was out of the country for medical treatment. She came back last month and is now presiding over the strategy meetings though she has been asked by the doctors not to take strain of campaigning. So she is not campaigning much but guiding the local leadership in consultations with her son Tarique who is based in London. Tarique will be back to Dhaka as soon as the pending cases against him are disposed of in courts in Bangladesh. BNP has governing experience for a long period. The party has contacts with the bureaucrats as also a major section of the Bangladesh army. BNP can be called a centre-right party in Bangladesh. The party is flexible and the top leadership understands the importance of having friendly relations with such a powerful neighbour like India. BNP took a vehement anti-India position during Sheikh Hasina's tenure as the BNP thought that India was making use of Hasina to serve its interests and Hasina was sacrificing national interests to Indian government so that all her excesses are ignored by New Delhi.

Bangladesh is finally going for national elections by April 2026

The interim Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Government Dr. Muhammad Yunus has finally announced the holding of national elections in the country in the first half of April next year defying the demand of the main opposition party BNP to hold it in December this year. The final dates will be notified by the Election Commission. The EC will also be notifying the norms as also the criteria for the eligibility of the candidates for contesting the polls.

Chief Adviser Dr. Yunus is currently in London on a four day official visit to United Kingdom. He will be meeting the British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer as also other leading ministers of the Labour government.

As regards the stand of the opposition parties in Bangladesh, all the parties are preparing for the elections though the BNP still maintains that December is the best time since the months of February and March are not convenient in view of annual school examinations, Ramzan as also the possibility of sudden storms and incessant rains during those months. The Election Commission will take the final view on dates after looking at the representations.

For all parties, now one thing is certain that the national elections are taking place anytime between December and April and they would have to be fully ready for that. The EC will notify the lists of the parties eligible for taking part in the elections, but already, the trend is clear. Excepting the

Awami League which has been barred by the law, all other parties including Jamaat El Islami are eligible to participate in the elections. There may be more than thirty political parties but the main parties presently are the frontrunner BNP, the newly set up the National Citizens Party (NCP) and Jamaat-El-Islami. Other smaller parties and loose fringe left combinations are there but they have not much influence in electoral terms in the present volatile Bangladesh.

To take the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) first. The BNP has been functioning in the parliamentary domain just few years after the founding of Bangladesh in 1971. The BNP's present chairperson Khaleda Zia was three times Prime Minister. She was out of the country for medical treatment. She came back last month and is now presiding over the strategy meetings though she has been asked by the doctors not to take strain of campaigning. So she is not campaigning much but guiding the local leadership in consultations with her son Tarique who is based in London. Tarique will be back to Dhaka as soon as the pending cases against him are disposed of in courts in Bangladesh.

BNP has governing experience for a long period. The party has contacts with the bureaucrats as also a major section of the Bangladesh army. BNP can be called a centre-right party in Bangladesh. The party is flexible and the top leadership understands the importance of having friendly relations with such a powerful neighbour like India. BNP took a vehement anti-India position during Sheikh Hasina's tenure as the BNP thought that India was making use of Hasina to serve its interests and Hasina was sacrificing

Chief Adviser Dr. Yunus is currently in London on a four day official visit to United Kingdom. He will be meeting the British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer as also other leading ministers of the Labour government

national interests to Indian government so that all her excesses are ignored by New Delhi. BNP leaders now express the view that they will like to have normal relations with India if they come back to power after the national elections.

The second visible political party is the NCP. The NCP was founded in the last week of February this year. Only more than three months have passed. The party has still to set up all its units in districts at village levels. The party as a whole has no governing experience. Most of their top leaders were the vanguard of the anti-discrimination movement which toppled Sheikh Hasina from power on August 5 last year. The NCP is an unwieldy combination of diverse forces from the secularist to fundamentalists, from pro-Chinese to libertarians. They have some experienced trade union workers as also peasant leaders. But basically, the NCP is led by young radicals who are dreamers and talk of a new Golden Bangladesh to be built on the basis equity.

The NCP is totally anti-India. The leadership feels that Indian government was fully responsible

for all excesses of Awami League and along with Sheikh Hasina, Indian government led by Narendra Modi is also guilty. In fact NCP was most vocal in mentioning Indian role in Hasina's tenure to the international delegations which studied the anti-Hasina students movement. The NCP has now speeded up formation of its core committees for election purposes. The NCP is very much with Dr. Yunus in most of the programmes. The NCP looks at BNP as its main rival. NCP is also suspicious of Army role.

As regards Jamaat El Islami, the party has lot of dedicated workers. The party has lot of funds now after the Yunus regime withdrew earlier ban on foreign donations to it. The Jamaat on its own remains an insignificant force in elections. Earlier, it aligned with BNP and got some recognition, but right now, BNP and Jamaat are at loggerheads. Jamaat is supporting Dr. Yunus just like NCP. A section of Jamaat wants an understanding with the NCP but that may not fructify as the top leadership of NCP is against any dealing with Jamaat.

What is the political ambition of Dr. Yunus? This is also important. Dr. Yunus is 85 years old now. Despite giving threat of submitting resignation twice during his tenure, the Nobel Laureate is enjoying his time, say the sources. He will not mind being nominated President after the elections. But that depends on which combination comes to power after elections and what type of dealings take place. NCP and Jamaat will like Dr. Yunus to remain in political limelight, but will BNP agree? Dr. Yunus had connections earlier with Biden administration as he was known as a good friend of Clintons. But after the coming of Trump in the White House, Dr. Yunus lost that weight. He is now trying to establish fresh contacts

with Trump advisers taking advantage of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's latest embarrassing position vis a vis US administration over May 10 ceasefire.

How does India stand in this scenario? With Awami League not in the race for national elections, India has hardly any party among the contestants in which it can take interest. As regards Awami League, the leaders say that they will challenge the ban decision, but that may not make any impact as the law has been amended. AL leadership can draw global attention for holding fair elections with its participation with India's help, but the possibility of success is remote. Two international teams including members from the EU submitted reports accusing Sheikh Hasina regime of election frauds and excesses during July movement including unwarranted killings.

For the time being, Awami League leadership has very few options. Among the big nations, the U.S. is right now not interested in Bangladesh since it is too involved with other pressing issues. China is positioned against Awami League and it is presently doing very good business with the present Bangladesh regime. China has friends in both BNP and NCP. China's ambassador in Dhaka receives maximum visitors from the political parties now. China has its ambitions far more than the business in Bangladesh. The plan involves reactivating abandoned airports as also naval base in Chittagong. But China is not in a hurry. Beijing wants to win people's hearts through setting up a cluster of factories creating jobs and then working for its geo-political goals in Bangladesh which affect India.

How will Narendra Modi government plan to meet the challenge in Bangladesh? That is the big question. (IPA Service)

Assam's citizenship conundrum: Navigating security, rights, and historical wounds



By: Dipak Kurmi

On June 7, 2025, the Assam government, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, announced a contentious decision to operationalize the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950, a colonial-era law aimed at expediting the deportation of individuals identified as "foreigners" by district collectors, circumventing the established Foreigners Tribunals (FTs). This move, which Sarma claims is bolstered by the Supreme Court's October 2024 judgment upholding Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, has sparked a heated debate over the delicate balance between national security and the rule of law. With 330 individuals deported to Bangladesh in May 2025 alone, Assam's aggressive pushback strategy highlights the pressing need to address illegal immigration, yet it raises significant concerns about institutional checks, the rights of vulnerable communities, and the potential for executive overreach in a region marked by a fraught history of migration and identity politics. As Assam approaches the 2026 Assembly elections, the policy's implications—both legal and moral—demand a closer examination, particularly in a state where historical trauma, communal divides, and geopolitical realities converge.

Assam's complex relationship with migration dates back to the partition of India in 1947, when the division of Bengal created a porous 4,096-kilometer border with what is now Bangladesh. The creation of Bangladesh in 1971 further intensified migration, as waves of refugees fled economic hardship, political instability, and persecution. This influx triggered deep-seated identity anxieties among the Assamese, culminating in the Assam Agitation (1979-1985), a six-year movement

led by the All Assam Students Union that demanded the identification and deportation of illegal immigrants. The agitation resulted in the Assam Accord, which set March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for granting citizenship to migrants, a provision enshrined in Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955. Under this framework, foreigners who entered Assam between January 1, 1966, and March 24, 1971, could seek Indian citizenship, while those arriving after 1971 were deemed illegal and subject to deportation. The Supreme Court's October 2024 judgment, delivered by a five-member Constitutional Bench under then-Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, upheld Section 6A by a 4:1 majority, affirming the Assam Accord's legal foundation. The court also clarified that the 1950 Act remains valid and can be read alongside Section 6A to strengthen efforts against illegal immigration, but it did not sanction bypassing FTs or endorse summary expulsions based solely on bureaucratic discretion—a nuance Sarma's policy appears to overlook.

The Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950, originally enacted to manage post-Partition migration, grants district collectors the authority to expel individuals deemed foreigners without judicial oversight. Speaking in the Assam Legislative Assembly on June 9, 2025, Sarma declared that this law enables district collectors to "push back" anyone they prima facie identify as a foreigner, bypassing the 100 FTs established since 2005 to adjudicate citizenship cases. These quasi-judicial bodies, which determine citizenship based on the 1971 cut-off, have been the cornerstone of Assam's immigration framework, handling cases flagged by the Assam Police's Border Wing or those marked as "doubtful" voters. Sarma argued that the National Reg-

ister of Citizens (NRC), finalized in 2019, had slowed deportation efforts, leaving 19.06 lakh excluded individuals in limbo. He pointed to the deportation of 330 Bangladeshi nationals in May 2025 as evidence of the 1950 Act's efficacy, asserting that it allows for swift action without the delays associated with tribunal referrals. However, this approach has drawn sharp criticism from opposition parties and human rights advocates, who warn of its potential for arbitrariness and communal profiling, particularly against Bengali-speaking Muslims, often labeled as "Bangladeshis" regardless of their legal status.

The human cost of this policy is starkly illustrated by individual cases. Manowara Bewa, a woman from Dhubri district, was declared a foreigner in an FT in 2016 due to discrepancies in her ancestral documents. Despite a pending Supreme Court appeal, she was detained on May 24, 2025, and her family fears she was "pushed back" into Bangladesh—a practice where individuals are left in the no-man's land along the border, neither accepted by Bangladesh nor acknowledged by India. Similarly, Khairul Islam, a former school teacher declared a foreigner in 2016, was detained on May 23, 2025, and allegedly deported despite an ongoing Supreme Court case. He returned after two days in Bangladesh following appeals by his family, highlighting the procedural irregularities in Assam's deportation drive. These cases reflect the broader humanitarian crisis embedded in Assam's citizenship framework, where individuals face detention, statelessness, and separation from families without adequate legal recourse, often exacerbated by administrative failures within the FT system itself.

The Supreme Court's October 2024 judgment emphasized that deportations must adhere to the "archi-

ture of existing laws and procedures," a directive that critics argue Sarma's policy violates. By allowing district collectors to act unilaterally, the Assam government risks contravening Articles 14, 21, and 22 of the Constitution, which guarantee equality, life and liberty, and protection against arbitrary arrest. The FT system, despite its flaws, provides a mechanism for individuals to challenge declarations of foreign status, with appeals possible in the Gauhati High Court and the Supreme Court. The case of Rahim Ali, whose Indian citizenship was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2023—12 years after an FT declared him a foreigner and two years after his death—demonstrates the potential for judicial correction of erroneous rulings. Bypassing FTs jeopardizes this safeguard, potentially deporting individuals with pending appeals and undermining the fundamental right to be heard, a cornerstone of natural justice.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs' directive to crack down on undocumented foreigners, particularly from Bangladesh and Myanmar, has intensified Assam's deportation efforts. At the Matia transit camp in Goalpara, 70 of the 133 declared foreigners reportedly admitted to Bangladeshi nationality, but the absence of an extradition treaty with Bangladesh complicates the process. According to the Ministry of External Affairs in May 2025, over 2,000 verification cases remain pending with Bangladesh, which often refuses to accept individuals without confirmed nationality. The plight of 105 Rohingya and 32 Myanmarese inmates at Matia, rejected by Myanmar, further underscores the statelessness crisis. In a February 2025 hearing, the Supreme Court questioned the Assam government's indefinite detention of 270 inmates at Matia, directing the state to clarify deportation processes for those whose nationality remains unverified. This lack of clarity, coupled with the government's aggressive pushback policy, risks creating a humanitarian quagmire where individuals are neither deported nor released, trapped in legal limbo.

Sarma's polarizing rhetoric, including references to "flood jihad" and "land jihad," has deepened communal divides, particularly targeting Bengali Muslims, who form a significant portion of Assam's 34% Muslim population. Opposition parties, including Congress and the All India United Democratic Front, have accused the BJP-led government of exploiting the deportation issue for electoral gains ahead of the 2026 Assam Assembly elections.

The All BTC Minority Students Union's petition, dismissed by the Supreme Court on June 2, 2025, alleged that the state's "sweeping and indiscriminate" pushback policy violates constitutional norms, prompting the court to direct petitioners to the Gauhati High Court. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing families like that of Manowara Bewa, argued that detentions without adherence to the Supreme Court's D.K. Basu guidelines on arrests constitute a grave injustice, further highlighting the policy's legal vulnerabilities.

Assam's history of displacement and identity anxieties demands a nuanced approach to immigration. The Assam Agitation, rooted in fears of cultural and demographic erosion, led to the creation of FTs and the NRC, yet both mechanisms have faced criticism for administrative failures and biases. The NRC's exclusion of 19.06 lakh people, many of whom claim Indian lineage, remains unresolved, with Sarma noting that some declared foreigners illegally secured inclusion in the NRC. The Supreme Court's reluctance to entertain broad challenges to the deportation drive, as seen in the All BTC Minority Students Union case, reflects judicial deference to state authority, but it has not alleviated concerns about human rights violations. Reports from the Assam-based Citizens for Justice and Peace indicate that over 150,000 people have been declared foreigners by FTs since 2005, with thousands detained in camps under conditions criticized by the United Nations as "inhumane."

Addressing illegal immigration without sacrificing justice requires strengthening institutional checks, ensuring FTs operate transparently and efficiently. Assam must prioritize nationality verification with Bangladesh and explore diplomatic solutions for stateless individuals, such as the Rohingya, possibly through collaboration with international bodies like the UNHCR. Community engagement, including dialogue with minority groups, could mitigate communal tensions exacerbated by polarizing rhetoric. The rule of law demands that security measures do not trample the rights of the vulnerable, particularly those from marginalized communities who lack access to legal recourse. As Assam navigates this delicate balance, the government must ensure that deportation serves public safety rather than ideological or electoral ends, preserving the principles of justice and humanity in a region shaped by historical trauma and resilience. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

POST BAG

APSC Enforcement Inspector result enquiry

Sir/Ma'am

The Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) conducted the Enforcement Inspector exam on the 23rd of February this year. Still, the commission has failed to announce the results even after more than 100 days have elapsed. What is taking the commission so long to declare the results? Or are they waiting to clash the dates of interview with the upcoming skill tests of ADRE? They have a distinction in clashing dates, and we have seen that time and again. If the institution which shapes future bureaucrats acts in such a lackadaisical manner, how can we expect better administration from our bureaucrats? When will the commission mend its ways? The commission cannot always close their eyes and ears to criticism, they have to listen, and they have to act. They may have a lot of time with them, but most candidates do not have that luxury, so I urge the commission to declare the results at the earliest or the candidates have to knock on the court's doors.

A candidate
Assam

Regarding the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Sir/Ma'am

The present era can truly be called the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is now making deep inroads into every aspect of our daily lives—from education to healthcare, and from business to industry. In this context, it has become essential for individuals from all walks of life—students, professionals, entrepreneurs, and educators—to understand the appropriate and ethical use of AI. There is a common misconception that one must pursue certificate courses, diplomas, or higher education to gain knowledge of AI. However, the reality is that there are now numerous accessible platforms available to learn the fundamentals and practical applications of AI—such as online courses, webinars, e-learning platforms, and various training programmes. Importantly, the knowledge of AI is not limited to technologists alone. It has become an essential skill for students from arts, commerce, and science streams, as well as for working professionals and entrepreneurs. The more people understand and responsibly apply AI, the more it can simplify life, save time, and enhance productivity. Therefore, I sincerely urge the media to give greater importance to spreading awareness about this transformative technology, so that society at large can stay informed and empowered.

Dr. Buljit Buragohain
Assam Don Bosco University,
Airport Road, Azara,
buljit@gmail.com

KAAC signs MoU with Reliance Industries for integrated bio-gas project in Karbi Anglong



HT Correspondent
KHERONI, June 12: In a significant step towards promoting green energy and boosting rural development, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish an Integrated Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) project within the jurisdiction of the council.

The formal signing ceremony took place at 10:00 AM at the Conference Hall of the Kajir Ronghangpi Memorial Guest House in Taralango village, near Diphu.

The event witnessed the presence of Assam Cabinet Minister Ranaj Pegu, KAAC Chief Executive Member Tuliram Ronghang, Member of Parliament Amarsing Tisso, MLAs Darsing Ronghang (Howraghat) and Bidyasing Englung (Diphu), all Executive Members and Members of the Autonomous Council, the Principal Secretary of KAAC, MACs, Board Chairpersons, and other senior officials.

Reliance Industries Limited was represented by its Vice Chairman, Vamsee Krishna Jyothi, along with other top executives of the company.

Before the MoU was signed, Deputy Secretary of KAAC Ibon Teron outlined the administrative framework of the agreement.

He stated that the council will allot 4,000 acres of land for the project, and in return, Reliance Industries will provide an annual revenue of ₹6.6 crore to the council.

A 90-day clause has also been incorporated, allowing either party

to withdraw from the agreement if necessary.

The MoU includes a comprehensive plan for the upliftment of the rural economy and the creation of employment opportunities in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong.

As part of the initiative, local cultivators will be encouraged to grow Napier grass on their lands, which Reliance will procure through a buy-back arrangement.

Farmers may earn approximately ₹30,000 per acre annually through this system.

Speaking at the event, RIL Vice Chairman Vamsee Krishna Jyothi assured that the company is committed to fostering local employment and supporting farmers while ensuring the ecological balance of the region is maintained.

He expressed optimism about the project's potential to bring substantial socio-economic benefits to the area.

Later, KAAC officials held discussions on the feasibility and benefits of cultivating Napier grass—also known as elephant grass—as a sustainable raw material for the proposed Bio-CNG plant.

Given its rapid growth, high biomass yield, and suitability for anaerobic digestion, the grass is considered an ideal renewable energy resource.

The collaboration between KAAC and Reliance Industries marks a milestone in the region's development journey.

The Integrated CBG project is expected to not only boost the local economy but also promote sustainable practices and green energy solutions in Karbi Anglong.

Tributes and financial assistance to families Bodoland Martyrs' Day observed in Baksa

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 12: The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Government solemnly observed Bodoland Martyrs' Day on Thursday by paying homage to the brave individuals who sacrificed their lives during the Bodoland movement.

The commemorative event was held at the Integrated Textile Park in Kharuajan, located in Assam's Baksa district, and was marked by the ceremonial distribution of financial assistance to the families of martyrs and former members of the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT).

According to an official statement, a total of 724 beneficiaries—including families of martyrs affiliated with the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and BLT, as well as former BLT cadres—received financial grants as part of the day's programme.

The assistance was part of the BTR Government's continuing rehabilitation efforts aimed at ensuring long-term support for those who played key roles during the years of unrest and the subsequent peace process.

Cabinet Minister U G Brahma, who attended the programme as Chief Guest, led the gathering in paying tribute to the martyrs.

He recalled the contribution of late Sujit Narzary, recognised as the first martyr of the Bodoland movement, and extended heartfelt homage to all others who lost their lives in the struggle for Bodo rights and identity.



"Their sacrifice was not in vain. It sowed the seeds of peace, dignity, and progress in Bodoland," Minister Brahma said.

He further affirmed the Government's steadfast dedication to preserving the legacy of the martyrs and ensuring the welfare of their families through tangible support and remembrance.

As part of the financial assistance drive, cheques worth ₹3 lakh each were distributed to the families of ABSU and ex-BLT martyrs, while former BLT cadres received ₹50,000 each under the Government's rehabilitation programme.

These efforts, as per the official statement, reflect the commitment of the BTR Government to supporting those impacted by the movement and integrating them into the socio-economic framework of the region.

Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Chief Executive Member Pramod Boro, addressing the gathering, described the occasion as a significant reminder of the past struggles and the journey toward lasting peace and development.

"Peace has finally returned to the region under the current government, and our efforts are now focused on the socio-economic uplift of the Bodo community," Boro stated.

He also highlighted initiatives aimed at cultural preservation, institutional development, and economic advancement for the Bodo people.

"We are working towards the preservation and promotion of Bodo culture, identity, and heritage. New institutions are being developed to support the welfare and future of our community," he added.

Katiram Boro, Speaker of the Bodoland Territorial Council Legislative Assembly (BTCLA), delivered the welcome address, applauding the initiative and stressing the importance of remembering the sacrifices made during the Bodoland movement.

The event was attended by a host of dignitaries, including Rajya Sabha MP Rungwra Narzary, MLAs Lawrence Isary and Bhupen Boro, ABSU Vice President Khrwmdao Wary, Chairman of the Ex-BLT Welfare Co-operative Society Manoj Kumar Brahma, and Vice President of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha Sitaram Basumatary.

Their presence underscored the unified recognition of the contributions made by the martyrs and the shared responsibility of sustaining their legacy.

The observance of Bodoland Martyrs' Day served not only as a solemn occasion of remembrance but also as a reaffirmation of the BTR Government's pledge to peace, inclusion, and the enduring empowerment of the Bodo people.

'ASHA workers in Sivasagar unhappy with honorarium hike'

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, June 12: The recent hike in incentives for Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers announced by the Assam Cabinet has failed to satisfy ASHA workers in Sivasagar district, according to Niva Gogoi Mech, President of the Sivasagar District ASHA Workers Association.

The Assam Cabinet, on June 10, approved an increase in the fixed monthly honorarium for ASHA workers from ₹3,000 to ₹4,000, effective from October 1, 2025.

However, speaking to this correspondent on Thursday evening, Mech expressed disappointment over the revised amount, stating that it does not meet the workers' expectations or address their financial challenges. She further alleged that ASHA workers in the district have not received their honorarium since March, forcing many to face economic hardship.

Mech urged the state government to consider the ground realities and take more substantial and appropriate measures in support of ASHA workers.

Tezpur University hosts international webinar on 'Universality of Yoga for Health and Progress'

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, June 12: The Centre for Yoga and Sports Sciences at Tezpur University successfully hosted an international webinar titled "Universality of Yoga for Health and Progress", drawing participation from eminent speakers and scholars across the globe to reflect on the transformative impact of yoga on holistic well-being.

The event commenced with an inaugural address by the Vice-Chancellor of Tezpur University, Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, who attended as the Chief Guest.

Prof Singh emphasised the integral role of yoga within the various knowledge systems of Bharat.

He highlighted yoga not merely as a form of physical activity, but as a complete lifestyle that fosters mental, spiritual, and social harmony. The keynote address was delivered by Prof Ishwar Bhardwaj from Dev Sanskriti University and former Dean of the Faculty of



Medical Science & Health at Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar.

Prof Bhardwaj elaborated on yoga's holistic potential in addressing the root causes of human suffering, underlining the discipline's contribution to enhancing self-awareness and comprehensive well-being.

Prof Robin Dutta, chairperson of

the Organizing Committee, welcomed the participants and stressed the relevance of the webinar's theme, which resonates with the theme of International Yoga Day 2025: "Yoga for One World, One Health."

Prof Papori Baruah, Head of the Centre for Yoga and Sports Sciences, noted that one of the seminar's key highlights was the

presentation of 16 research papers submitted by various institutions from across the country.

These papers examined the multidimensional applications of yoga in improving physical, mental, and spiritual health.

The webinar featured participation from speakers and academicians based in India and abroad, including representatives from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Australia, and the USA.

Experts from institutions such as the University of Delhi, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Patanjali University, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, and Lakshmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education contributed to the discussions.

The event reaffirmed yoga's universal relevance and its growing significance in the pursuit of a healthier and more balanced world.

New Morigaon District Committee of Indian Red Cross Society formed

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, June 12: A new 25-member district committee of the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Morigaon, was formally constituted on Thursday during the organisation's annual general meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's conference hall.

The meeting was held in a solemn atmosphere under the presidency of Debashis Sarma, President of IRCS Morigaon and also the Deputy Commissioner of the district.

The meeting was attended by Deba Prasad Sarma, General Secretary of IRCS Assam, and Laba Sarma, State Coordinator of IRCS.

During the proceedings, Paramananda Goswami, the General Secretary of the outgoing committee, presented a detailed report on the expenditures of the past three years. In his address, President Debashis Sarma spoke at length about the objectives and responsibilities of the IRCS. He urged all members to remain prepared to serve the public during emergencies such as floods and other natural calamities.

Two arrested for spreading fake news on Dhubri violence

HT Correspondent

DHUBRI, June 12: In a significant crackdown on misinformation, Dhubri Police have arrested two individuals for allegedly publishing and circulating fake and inflammatory content on social media platforms in relation to the recent violence that occurred in Dhubri town.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Joychan Ali, son of Late Askor Ali, a resident of Dingdinga village under Fakirganj Police Station in South Salmara district, and Johrul Hoque Ahmed, son of Late Taher Ali Ahmed, a resident of Kaldoba Part-I under Agomoni Police Station in Dhubri district.

According to police sources, Joychan Ali was found to have uploaded a fabricated video designed to mislead the public and spread false narratives regarding the communal unrest.

In a similar instance, Johrul Hoque Ahmed allegedly disseminated multiple fake news items through social media, further aggravating communal tensions in the area.

The duo have been charged under various legal provisions for offences related to undermining the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India, as well as for committing deliberate and malicious acts intended to hurt religious sentiments.



A case has been registered at Dhubri Police Station under Case No. 274/2025.

Both accused were produced before the Dhubri Court on Thursday.

Law enforcement authorities have reiterated their resolve to take stringent action against individuals who misuse social media to incite violence and disrupt communal harmony.

The police have also appealed to the public to refrain from sharing unverified information and to depend solely on official channels for accurate updates.

AJYCP submits memorandum to President demanding safety of NE youth

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, June 12: The Asom Jatiyatadabi Yuva Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) on Tuesday submitted a memorandum addressed to the President of India, highlighting concerns over the safety and security of youths from the northeastern region who travel to metropolitan cities for education and employment.

Led by Central Executive Member Jitu Phukan, the AJYCP delegation submitted the memorandum through the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of Bokajan Sub-Division.

The student body expressed deep concern over the growing vulnerability of youths, especially women, from remote and underdeveloped areas of the Northeast, who often fall victim to heinous crimes such as rape, murder, and human trafficking in other parts of the country.

The memorandum cited the recent case of Rosmi Hojai, a 20-year-old woman from Dima Hasao, Assam, whose body was found in Uttarakhand on June 5, 2025.

It also referred to the deaths of Rose Sangma and Samuel Sangma, who were found hanging in their rooms under suspicious circumstances on June 25, 2021.

AJYCP urged the President of India to ensure that justice is delivered in these cases and called for concrete measures to guarantee the safety and security of northeastern youth in metropolitan regions.

Assam Assembly standing committee reviews development initiatives in Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, June 12: A delegation from the Assam Legislative Assembly's Department-related Standing Committee, led by its Chairman and Tinsukia MLA Sanjay Krishan, visited Nagaon district on Thursday to assess the implementation of government schemes and review developmental progress across sectors.

The visit began with a review meeting held at the District Commissioner's office, chaired by District Commissioner Narendra Kumar Shah.

At the outset of the meeting, the attendees observed a two-minute silence in memory of those who lost their lives in the recent Ahmedabad plane crash.

Heads of various departments presented progress reports and ongoing initiatives in the district during the meeting.

The Chairman of the Committee emphasised the need for efficient and effective execution of government schemes to strengthen Nagaon's develop-

ment trajectory, both within Assam and in the broader national context.

Ahead of the meeting, the committee members visited several key locations in the district, including Nagaon Medical College, the Bamboo Chipping Unit at Niz Borbhogia, Kamala Oil Mills in Borbhogia, Salna Tea Estate, the Farmer Producer Company (FPC) at Benganati, a dairy farm on Laokhowa Road, and the office of the Joint Director of District Health Services.

The committee reviewed the status of works and infrastructure at these sites.

Committee members Pramod Borthakur (MLA, Biswanath), Dipu Ranjan Sarma (MLA, Samaguri), and Manoranjan Talukdar (MLA, Sarbhog) were also present during the visit. District Development Commissioner Debajani Choudhury, Deputy Secretary Dipali Pegu, Under Secretary Nibesh Chakraborty, and several other officials attended the review meeting.

Indian Railways introduces major reforms in Tatkal Booking System

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 12: In a move aimed at increasing transparency, improving accessibility, and ensuring fair ticket availability, Indian Railways has introduced a series of significant reforms in its Tatkal ticket booking system.

These measures are intended to safeguard the interests of genuine passengers, especially individual users and common travellers, while cracking down on systemic misuse and fraudulent practices.

According to an official statement, the reforms have been rolled out with the goal of ensuring that the Tatkal quota—originally meant for passengers requiring last-minute travel—is no longer disproportionately exploited by unauthorized agents and bot-based booking tools.

The Indian Railways, through the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), has already begun implementing some of these reforms, while others are slated for phased introduction in the coming weeks.

One of the most critical achievements cited in the official release is the identification and blocking of over 2.5 crore sus-

picious IRCTC user IDs over the past six months.

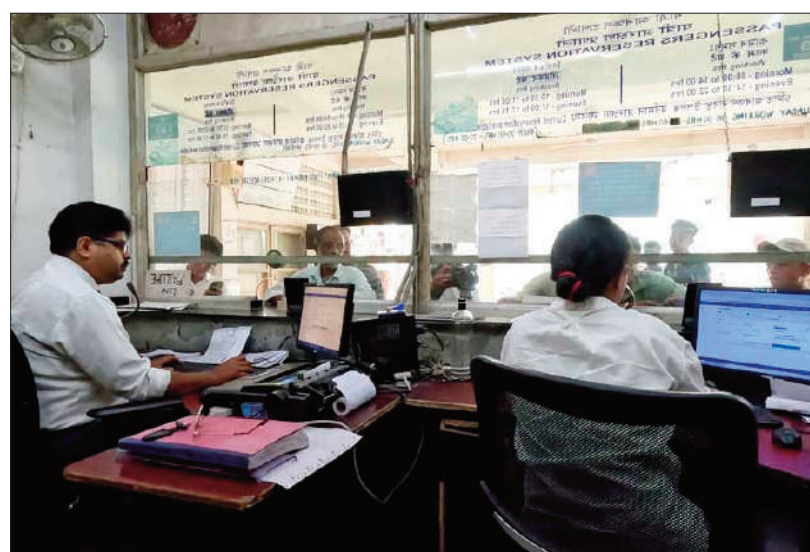
These accounts were reportedly linked to unfair booking practices, including the use of automated software or "bots" that circumvent normal booking procedures to hoard Tatkal tickets.

The removal of these users is said to have resulted in a noticeable improvement in the availability of confirmed tickets for genuine passengers, particularly across stations under the Northeast Frontier (N.F.) Railway zone.

To further strengthen the booking process, Indian Railways has initiated key software modifications which came into effect on June 12.

As part of this ongoing digital overhaul, more targeted enhancements are scheduled to be introduced in July. Beginning July 1, 2025, Tatkal bookings on the IRCTC app will only be permitted for Aadhaar-verified user accounts.

This will be followed by the introduction of an OTP-based Aadhaar authentication system on July 15, which adds an additional layer of identity verification to ensure the authenticity of the user.



In a major step to make the booking process more equitable, the Railways has reserved the first 30-minute window of Tatkal bookings exclusively for individual users.

From 10:00 to 10:30 a.m. for AC

classes, and from 11:00 to 11:30 a.m. for non-AC classes, only individual users will be allowed to book Tatkal tickets through the IRCTC website, app, or through PRS (Passenger Reservation System) counters.

Travel agents and authorized agencies will only be permitted to book tickets after this initial window—beginning 10:30 a.m. for AC and 11:30 a.m. for non-AC classes—ensuring greater chances for individual passengers to secure confirmed seats.

To further bolster the authenticity of Tatkal bookings at railway station counters, Indian Railways is introducing a mobile number verification process.

With effect from July 15, 2025, passengers or their representatives booking Tatkal tickets at PRS counters will be required to provide a valid mobile number.

An OTP will be sent to this number, and only upon successful verification will the Tatkal ticket be issued. This measure aims to minimize fraudulent bookings and establish a clear traceability system for every Tatkal reservation made at railway counters.

At the same time, Indian Railways has clarified that the new Aadhaar requirements will apply only to individual users booking online Tatkal tickets.

Passengers without Aadhaar will still be permitted to book tickets through PRS

counters and authorised agents, ensuring that the reforms do not exclude users lacking digital access or formal identification documents.

However, safeguards will remain in place to protect against misuse and uphold system integrity.

The Northeast Frontier Railway has been actively implementing these reforms across its network, ensuring their smooth rollout and effective enforcement.

According to the official statement, passengers across the region have already begun to experience the positive effects of these changes, reporting increased access to confirmed Tatkal tickets and improved user experience.

These initiatives mark a decisive step by Indian Railways toward creating a more passenger-friendly, transparent, and secure booking ecosystem.

By prioritising the needs of the common traveller and closing loopholes long exploited by unscrupulous actors, the reforms are expected to significantly improve the reliability and fairness of Tatkal bookings for millions across the country.

UN nuclear watchdog board finds Iran isn't complying with obligations

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

VIENNA, June 12: The UN nuclear watchdog's board of governors on Thursday formally found that Iran isn't complying with its nuclear obligations for the first time in 20 years, a move that could lead to further tensions and set in motion an effort to restore United Nations sanctions on Tehran later this year.

Iran reacted immediately, saying it will establish a new enrichment facility "in a secure location" and that "other measures are also being planned." "The Islamic Republic of Iran has no choice but to respond to this political resolution," the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran said in a joint statement.

Nineteen countries on the International Atomic Energy Agency's board, which represents the agency's member nations, voted for the resolution, according to diplomats who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the outcome of the closed-doors vote.

Russia, China and Burkina Faso opposed it, 11 abstained and two did not vote.

In the draft resolution seen by The Associated Press, the

board of governors renews a call on Iran to provide answers "without delay" in a long-running investigation into uranium traces found at several locations that Tehran has failed to declare as nuclear sites. Western officials suspect that the uranium traces could provide evidence that Iran had a secret nuclear weapons program until 2003.

The resolution was put forward by France, the UK, Germany and the United States.

Iran under pressure as Trump warns of possible airstrikes

Speaking to Iranian state television after the vote, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran said that his agency immediately informed the IAEA of "specific and effective" actions Tehran would take.

"One is the launch of a third secure site" for enrichment, spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said. He did not elaborate on the location. Iran has two underground sites at Fordo and Natanz and has been building tunnels in the mountains near Natanz since suspected Israeli sabotage attacks targeted that facility. The



other step would be the advanced centrifuges at Fordo. "The implication of this is that our production of enriched materials will significantly increase," Kamalvandi said.

According to the draft resolution, "Iran's many failures to uphold its obligations since 2019 to provide the Agency with full and timely cooperation regarding undeclared nuclear material and activities at multiple undeclared locations in Iran ... constitutes non-compliance with its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement."

Under the so-called safe-

guards obligations, which are part of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran is legally bound to declare all nuclear material and activities and allow IAEA inspectors to verify that none of it is being diverted from peaceful uses.

The draft resolution also finds that the IAEA's "inability ... to provide assurance that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful gives rise to questions that are within the competence of the United Nations Security Council, as the organ bearing the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security." The vote comes at a sensitive time as tensions in the region have been rising, with the US State Department announcing on Wednesday that it is drawing down the presence of people who are not deemed essential to operations in the Middle East.

US President Donald Trump has previously said that Israel or the US could carry out airstrikes targeting Iranian nuclear facilities if negotiations failed. The US and Iran have been holding talks on Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear programme. Oman's foreign minister said earlier Thursday that a sixth round of negotiations will be held in his country on Sunday.

The draft resolution makes a direct reference to the US-Iran talks, stressing its "support for a diplomatic solution to the problems posed by the Iranian nuclear programme, including the talks between the United States and Iran, leading to an agreement that addresses all international concerns related to Iran's nuclear activities, encouraging all parties to constructively engage in diplomacy." (AP)

House will vote on Trump's request to cut funding for NPR, PBS, foreign aid

WASHINGTON, June 12: House Republicans are moving to cut about USD 9.4 billion in spending already approved by Congress as President Donald Trump's administration looks to follow through on work by the Department of Government Efficiency when it was overseen by Elon Musk.

The package to be voted on Thursday targets foreign aid programs and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which provides money for National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service, as well as thousands of public radio and television stations around the country.

Republicans are characterizing the spending as wasteful and unnecessary, but Democrats say the rescissions are hurting the United States' standing in the world.

"Cruelty is the point," Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said of the proposed spending cuts.

The Trump administration is employing a tool rarely used in recent years that allows the president to transmit a request to Congress to cancel previously appropriated funds. That triggers a 45-day clock in which the funds are frozen pending congressional action. If Congress fails to act within that period, then the spending stands.

The benefit for the administration of a formal rescissions request is that passage requires only a simple majority in the 100-member Senate instead of the 60 votes usually required to get spending bills through that chamber. So, if they stay united, Republicans will be able to pass the measure without any Democratic votes.

The administration is likening the first rescissions package to a test case and says more could be on the way if Congress goes along.

Republicans, sensitive to concerns that Trump's sweeping tax and immigration bill would increase future federal deficits, are anxious to demonstrate spending discipline, though the cuts in the package amount to just a sliver of the spending approved by Congress each year. They are betting the cuts prove popular with constituents who align with Trump's "America first" ideology as well as those who view NPR and PBS as having a liberal bias.

In all, the package contains 21 proposed rescissions. Approval would claw back about USD 900 million from USD 10 billion that Congress has approved for global health programs. That includes cancelling USD 500 million for activities related to infectious diseases and child and maternal health and another USD 400 million to address the global HIV epidemic.

The Trump administration is also looking to cancel USD 800 million, or a quarter of the amount Congress approved, for a program that provides emergency shelter, water and sanitation, and family reunification for those forced to flee their own country.

About 45 per cent of the savings sought by the White House would come from two programs designed to boost the economies, democratic institutions and civil societies in



developing countries.

The Republican president has also asked lawmakers to rescind nearly USD 1.1 billion from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which represents the full amount it's slated to receive during the next two budget years. About two-thirds of the money gets distributed to more than 1,500 locally owned public radio and television stations. Nearly half of those stations serve rural areas of the country.

The association representing local public television stations warns that many of them would be forced to close if the Republican measure passes. Those stations provide emergency alerts, free educational programming and high school sports coverage and highlight hometown heroes.

Advocacy groups that serve the world's poorest people are also sounding the alarm and urging lawmakers to vote no.

"We are already seeing women, children and families left without food, clean water and critical services after earlier aid cuts, and aid organisations can barely keep up with rising needs," said Abby Maxman, president and CEO of Oxfam America, a poverty-fighting organization.

Rep Jim McGovern, D-Mass., said the foreign aid is a tool that prevents conflict and promotes stability but the measure before the House takes that tool away.

"These cuts will lead to the deaths of hundreds of thousands, devastating the most vulnerable in the world," McGovern said. "And at a time when China and Russia and Iran are working overtime to challenge American influence."

Republicans disparaged the foreign aid spending and sought to link it to programs they said DOGE had uncovered.

Rep Chip Roy, R-Texas, said taxpayer dollars had gone to such things as targeting climate change, promoting pottery classes and strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion programs. Other Republicans cited similar examples they said DOGE had revealed.

"Yet, my friends on the other side of the aisle would like you to believe, seriously, that if you don't use your taxpayer dollars to fund this absurd list of projects and thousands of others I didn't even list, that somehow people will die and our global standing in the world will crumble," Roy said. "Well, let's just reject this now." (AP)

UN to vote on resolution demanding Gaza ceasefire

UNITED NATIONS, June 12: The UN General Assembly is expected to vote Thursday on a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages held by Hamas, and the opening of all Israeli border crossings for deliveries of desperately needed food and other aid.

The resolution, drafted by Spain and obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press, "strongly condemns any use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare."

Experts and human rights workers say hunger is widespread in Gaza and some 2 million Palestinians are at risk of famine if Israel does not fully lift its blockade and halt its military campaign, which it renewed in March after ending a ceasefire with Hamas.

Last week, the UN Security Council failed to pass a resolution demanding a ceasefire in Gaza and calling on Israel to lift all restrictions on the delivery of aid. The United States vetoed the resolution because it was not linked to the release of the hostages, while all 14 other members of the council voted in favour.

There are no vetoes in the 193-member General Assembly, where the resolution is expected to pass overwhelmingly. But unlike in the Security Council, assembly resolutions are not legally binding, though they are seen as a barometer of world opinion.

After a 10-week blockade that barred all aid to Gaza, Israel is allowing the United Nations to deliver a trickle of food assistance and is backing a newly created US aid group, which has opened several sites in the centre and south of the territory to deliver food parcels.

But the aid system rolled out last month by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has been troubled by near-daily shootings as crowds make their way to aid sites, while the longstanding UN-run system has struggled to deliver food because of Israeli restrictions and a breakdown of law and order.

The draft resolution being voted on Thursday references a March 28 legally binding order by the top United Nations court for Israel to open more land crossings into Gaza for food, water, fuel and other supplies. (AP)

Bangladesh wanted good ties with India, but 'something always went wrong': Yunus



LONDON, June 12: Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has said that his interim government wanted good relations with India, but "something always went wrong".

During an interaction with Chatham House think tank director Bronwen Maddox in London on Wednesday, Yunus addressed a wide range of issues including bilateral ties with India and the democratic roadmap for the country, starting with a "July Charter" next month. Maddox referenced an informal diplomatic note issued to India seeking deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's

extradition and sought an update on the matter. "This will continue... we want the whole process to be very legal, very proper... We want to build the best of relationship with India. It's our neighbour, we don't want to have any kind of basic problem with them," Yunus said.

"But somehow things go wrong every time because of all the fake news coming from the Indian press... and many people say it has connections with policymakers on the top," he said.

"So, this is what makes Bangladesh very jittery, very, very angry. We try to get over this anger but a whole barrage of things keeps happening in cyberspace. We can't just get away from that... suddenly they say something, do something, anger comes back," he said.

"This is our big task, to make sure we can have at least a peaceful life to go on with our life. To create the life we are dreaming of," he added.

On an audience question about the "unclear role of India" about Hasina, Yunus responded: "All the anger

(against Hasina) has now transferred to India because she went there."

"When I had a chance to talk to Prime Minister Modi, I simply said: you want to host her, I cannot force you to abandon that policy. But please help us in making sure she doesn't speak to Bangladesh people the way she is doing (online). She announces on such and such date, such and such hour, she will speak and the whole (of) Bangladesh gets very angry," he said.

Yunus claimed Prime Minister Modi told him that Hasina's social media activities cannot be controlled.

"It's (an) explosive situation, you can't just walk away by saying it's the social media," he added.

The close ties between India and Bangladesh came under strain after Hasina's ouster.

She faces multiple cases in Bangladesh after being ousted on August 5 last year following a major student-led agitation in the country, which forced her to flee Dhaka. (PTI)

3 killed, scores injured as Russia targets Ukraine with new attacks

KYIV, June 12: Russian forces have pummelled Ukraine with drones and other weapons, killing three people and injuring scores of others despite international pressure to accept a ceasefire, officials said Thursday.

According to the Ukrainian air force, Russia launched a barrage of 63 drones and decoys at Ukraine overnight. It said that air defences destroyed 28 drones while another 21 were jammed.

Ukraine's police said two people were killed and six were injured over the past 24 hours in the eastern Donetsk region, the focus of the Russian offensive. One person was killed and 14 others were also injured in the southern Kherson region, which is partly occupied by Russian forces, police said.

The head of the Kharkiv region, Oleh Syniehubov, said that 15 people, including four children, were injured by Russian drone attacks overnight.

Kharkiv city mayor Ihor Terekhov said Russian drones targeted residential districts, educational facilities, kindergartens and other civilian infrastructure.

"Kharkiv is holding on. People are alive. And that is the most important thing," Terekhov said.

The Russian military has launched waves of drones and missiles in recent days, with a record bombardment of almost 500 drones on Monday and a wave of 315 drones and seven missiles overnight on Tuesday. The recent escalation in aerial attacks has come alongside a renewed Russian battlefield push along eastern and northeastern parts of the more than 1,000-kilometre front line. (AP)

Hamas says it killed 12 Israeli-backed fighters, Israeli-supported group says they were aid workers

CAIRO, June 12: A unit of the Hamas-run police force said it killed 12 members of an Israeli-backed militia after detaining them early Thursday in the Gaza Strip. Hours earlier, an Israel-supported aid group said Hamas attacked a bus carrying its Palestinian workers, killing at least five of them.

The militia, led by Yasser Abu Shabab, said its fighters had attacked Hamas and killed five militants but made no mention of its own casualties. It also accused Hamas of detaining and killing aid workers. It was not immediately possible to verify the competing claims or confirm the identities of those killed. The Israeli military circulated the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's statement on its social media accounts but declined to provide its own account of what happened.

Aid initiative already marred by controversy and violence

The aid group's operations in Gaza have already been marred by controversy and violence since they began last month, with scores of people killed in near-daily shootings as crowds headed toward the food distribution sites inside Israeli military zones. Witnesses have blamed the Israeli military, which has acknowledged firing only warning shots near people it

said approached its forces in a suspicious manner.

Earlier this week, witnesses also said Abu Shabab militiamen had opened fire on people en route to a GHF aid hub, killing and wounding many.

The United Nations and major aid groups have rejected the Israeli and U.S.-backed initiative, accusing them of militarising humanitarian aid at a time when experts say Gaza is at risk of famine because of Israel's blockade and renewed military campaign.

They were aid workers'

In a statement released early Thursday, the foundation said Hamas had attacked a bus carrying more than two dozen "local Palestinians working side-by-side with the US GHF team to deliver critical aid" near the southern city of Khan Younis. "We condemn this heinous and deliberate attack in the strongest possible terms," it said. "These were aid workers. Humanitarians. Fathers, brothers, sons, and friends, who were risking their lives everyday to help others."

It did not identify the men or say whether they were armed at the time.

Israel and the United States say the new system is needed to prevent Hamas from siphoning off aid from the long-

standing UN-run system, which is capable of delivering food, fuel and other humanitarian aid to all parts of Gaza. UN officials deny there has been any systematic diversion of aid by Hamas, but say they have struggled to deliver it because of Israeli restrictions and the breakdown of law and order in Gaza.

UN officials say the new system is unable to meet mounting needs, and that it allows Israel to use aid as a weapon by controlling who has access to it and by essentially forcing people to relocate to the aid sites, most of which are in the southernmost city of Rafah, now a mostly uninhabited military zone. Some fear this could be part of an Israeli plan to coerce Palestinians into leaving Gaza.

Hamas says it killed traitors.

Hamas has also rejected the new system and threatened to kill any Palestinians who cooperate with the Israeli military. The killings early Wednesday were carried out by the Hamas-run police's Sahn unit, which Hamas says it established to combat looting.

The unit released video footage showing several dead men lying in the street, saying they were Abu Shabab fighters who had been detained and killed for collaborating with Israel. (AP)

Netanyahu survives attempt to dissolve parliament

JERUSALEM, June 12: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government survived an attempt to dissolve parliament early Thursday morning, with most of his ultra-Orthodox coalition partners joining him in voting against a bill that would have forced them to register for military service while the country is at war.

The vote was the most serious challenge to Netanyahu's government since Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack, the biggest security failure in Israel's history and the trigger for the ongoing war in Gaza. The bill's failure means that no other bill to dissolve Knesset can be submitted for at least six months, shoring up Netanyahu's embattled coalition.

The ultra-Orthodox parties are furious that the government has failed to pass a law exempting their community from mandatory military service. The issue has long divided the Jewish Israeli public, especially during the 20-month war in the Gaza Strip.

Israel's opposition had hoped that the public anger over the exemptions would help topple the government. But just two of the 18 ultra-Orthodox members of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, supported the bill to dissolve.

Most agreed to vote against the bill after Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein said he and the ultra-Orthodox parties had reached an understanding on the basis of a new draft law, which they will continue discussing over the coming week.

Military service is mandatory for most Jews in Israel, but the politically powerful ultra-Orthodox, who make up roughly 13 per cent of Israeli society, have traditionally received exemptions if they are studying full-time in religious seminaries. The ultra-Orthodox, also known as Haredim, or "God-fearing" in Hebrew, say that integrating into the army threatens their traditional way of life.

Each year, roughly 13,000 ultra-Orthodox men reach the conscription age of 18, but less than 10 per cent enlist, according to parliament's State Control Committee, which held a hearing examining the issue. (AP)

Critical minerals give China an edge in trade negotiations

GANZHOU, June 12: China's dominance over critical minerals in global supply chains was a powerful bargaining chip in trade talks between Beijing and Washington that concluded with both sides saying they have a framework to pursue a deal.

China has spent decades building the world's main industrial chain for mining and processing such materials, which are used in many industries such as electronics, advanced manufacturing, defense and health care.

Mines and factories in and around Ganzhou, a key production hub for rare earths, underpin China's control over the minerals. Many residents grew up collecting rocks containing the valuable minerals from the forested hills surrounding the southern city and today make a living from mining, trading or processing them.

Critical minerals as a trade issue

Responding to ever higher tariffs and other controls on advanced technology, China told exporters of

certain key rare earths and other critical minerals to obtain licenses for every shipment abroad. Approvals can take weeks, leading to supply chain disruptions in the US and other countries.

President Donald Trump said Wednesday that China would make it easier for American industry to obtain much-needed needed magnets and rare earth minerals, clearing the way for talks to continue between the world's two biggest economies. In return, Trump said, the US will stop efforts to revoke the visas of Chinese nationals on US college campuses.

But details remain scarce. Beijing has not confirmed what the negotiators agreed to, and Chinese President Xi Jinping and Trump himself have yet to sign off on it.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry said Saturday it had approved a "certain number" of export licenses for rare earth products, apparently acknowledging Trump's personal request to Xi during a phone call last week. And on Wednesday, the



Ganzhou-based rare-earth conglomerate JL MAG Rare-Earth Co confirmed it had obtained some export licenses for shipments to destinations including the US, Europe and Southeast Asia.

Experts say, however, Beijing is unlikely to do away with the permit system enabling it to control access to those valuable resources.

"I think what the Chinese have proven is they have now created an entire export control regime for rare earths," said Daniel Kriten-

brink, a partner at The Asia Group consultancy. "They can turn that spigot on and off at will."

The old scenario in which China might deregulate its critical minerals export is if the US fully removes tariffs imposed on Chinese goods as part of the trade war, said Wang Yiwei, a professor of international affairs at Renmin University, echoing the Chinese government's earlier stance.

"Without that," he said, "it will be difficult to blame China for continuing to strengthen its export controls."

An industry built over decades with government support

In 1992, Deng Xiaoping, the leader who launched China's ascent as the world's biggest manufacturing power, famously said "the Middle East has oil, China has rare earths," signalling a desire to leverage access to the key minerals. Several generations later, Beijing has made its rich reserves of rare earths, a group of 17 minerals that are abundant in the earth's crust but hard, expensive and environmentally polluting to process, a key element of China's economic security. In 2019, during a visit to a rare earth processing plant in Ganzhou, Xi described rare earths as a "vital strategic resource." China today has an essential monopoly over "heavy rare earths," used for making powerful, heat-resistance magnets used in industries such as defence and electric vehicles.

The country also produces around 80 per cent of the world's

tungsten, gallium and antimony, and 60 per cent of the world's germanium — all minerals used in the making of semiconductors, among other advanced technologies.

The risks of dependency on Chinese suppliers first came into focus in 2010, when Beijing suspended rare earths exports to Japan due to a territorial dispute. The ban was lifted after about two months, but as a precaution, Japan invested in rare earths processing plants in other countries and began stockpiling the materials.

Beijing's across-the-board requirement for export licenses for some critical minerals has put pressure on world electronics manufacturers and automakers.

Some auto parts makers in Europe have shut down production lines due to delays in supply deliveries, according to the European Association of Automotive Suppliers. In the US, Tesla CEO Elon Musk said a shortage of rare earths is affecting his company's work on humanoid robots. (AP)

wl
du
ha

Minister urges proactive delivery of welfare schemes, calls for mineral surveys to boost local economy

Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal reviews implementation of central schemes in Namsai District

HT Bureau
NAMSAI, June 12: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law & Justice and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal, chaired a key review meeting with the District Administration and heads of departments at the Deputy Commissioner's Conference Hall in Namsai on Thursday.

According to an official statement, the meeting was held to assess the implementation of various central government schemes and to strengthen coordination between the Centre and state machinery.

During the interaction, the Union Minister emphasized the need for effective delivery of welfare programmes and urged officials to step up outreach efforts.

In particular, he called upon government officers to come forward as Nikshay Mitras under the Prime Minister's

TB Mukti Bharat Abhiyan. This initiative seeks to provide tuberculosis patients with nutritional, diagnostic, and vocational support.

Meghwal underscored the importance of community involvement in health initiatives to eliminate TB from the country.

He also highlighted the necessity of intensifying Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaigns for flagship schemes such as Janani Suraksha Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, and PM Surya Ghar.

According to him, increased public awareness is essential to ensure the intended beneficiaries are informed and empowered to avail themselves of these schemes.

In his address, Meghwal encouraged the district authorities to explore opportunities for economic development by conducting surveys to identify untapped mineral resources in the region.



He noted that mineral exploration could potentially offer long-term benefits for the local economy. Acknowledging the challenges raised

by the district officials in various sectors, the Union Minister assured the gathering that the concerns would be appropriately addressed.

He urged the officials to maintain proactive communication with central ministries to ensure timely support and resolution of issues.

Namsai MLA Chau Zingnu Namchoom actively participated in the meeting and contributed valuable inputs.

He drew the Minister's attention to the specific challenges faced by the district and sought necessary central support to address them.

Deputy Commissioner Namsai, Superintendent of Police, and all departmental heads were present at the meeting and briefed the Union Minister on the status of implementation of central schemes in their respective domains.

Prior to the review meeting, Meghwal visited the construction site of the Vat-

salya Sadan at Piyong, accompanied by MLA Namchoom, DC Namsai, and representatives from the executing agencies.

The Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) and her team provided an overview of the objectives of the centre and the range of services it aims to offer for the welfare of children and women.

The Executive Engineer apprised the Minister of the progress of the construction work.

Expressing satisfaction over the ongoing work, Meghwal commended the quality of execution and urged both the agency and the contractor to uphold high standards through to the project's completion.

The visit and review concluded on a constructive note, with renewed commitments to enhance coordination, improve the implementation of welfare schemes, and accelerate the developmental pace in Namsai district.

DC Tawang chairs high-level meeting on tourism regulation and monthly NCORD review



HT Bureau
NAMSAI, June 12: A high-level coordination meeting was convened today in Tawang under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Namgyal Angmo, IAS, to deliberate on key issues surrounding tourism development and the district's preparedness in curbing drug-related activities.

The meeting brought together representatives from security agencies, district officials, and stakeholders from the tourism industry to address growing concerns and chart a forward-looking approach. The information was provided in an official statement.

Held in the backdrop of rising tourist footfall in Tawang, the meeting focused primarily on regulating the movement of foreign tourists in sensitive locations.

With the region's strategic and ecological sensitivity, ensuring proper compliance with national security protocols emerged as the central theme of the discussion.

The meeting was attended by Brigadier Bhu-

pul Singh, Commander of Tawang Brigade, Superintendent of Police Dr D W Thongon, Divisional Forest Officer Piyush Gaikwad, Assistant Commissioner Sangey Wangmu Mosobi, and District Tourism Officer Tsering Deki.

Also present were executive members from the Hoteliers Association, Taxi & Tour Operators Association, Homestay Owners Association, Market Welfare Committee, and intelligence agency representatives.

Tourism stakeholders expressed the need for clearer and more uniform guidelines for foreign tourists, particularly those visiting high-interest areas that are also considered sensitive.

In response, Deputy Commissioner Namgyal Angmo assured the gathering that concerns would be forwarded to higher authorities for necessary policy interventions.

However, she reiterated that national security remains the topmost priority and urged full cooperation from all involved in managing tourism-related activities.

Following the tourism deliberation, the

Monthly NCORD (National Committee on Drug Control) Meeting was held, focusing on the district's anti-narcotics strategy and law enforcement updates.

Superintendent of Police D W Thongon delivered a comprehensive presentation on crime and public safety statistics in the district.

According to the SP, since the arrest of a drug peddler and several consumers last year, Tawang has not reported any new drug-related cases.

He highlighted the intensification of night patrolling operations and the installation of surveillance cameras at critical entry and exit points in and around the town as part of the preventive security framework.

Thongon also called on the community to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activity linked to drug abuse or anti-social behaviour.

He emphasised the significance of public cooperation in curbing the spread of narcotics and maintaining law and order.

Deputy Commissioner Angmo lauded the efforts of law enforcement agencies and encouraged continued proactive coordination between local administration and citizens.

She stressed that ensuring a crime-free and welcoming environment was a shared responsibility that required commitment from all segments of society.

During an interactive session, valuable insights were shared by representatives of the paramilitary forces, intelligence units, and members of the tourism sector.

The discussion emphasised the importance of enhancing coordination between agencies and maintaining a secure atmosphere for both residents and tourists.

As Tawang emerges as a key tourist destination, the district administration underlined its commitment to balancing development with safety and sustainability, ensuring the region continues to thrive while preserving its strategic and cultural integrity.

East Siang DC calls for strengthened urban flood management and disaster preparedness measures



HT Bureau
NAMSAI, June 12: East Siang Deputy Commissioner Sonalika Ji-wani on Thursday chaired a high-level review meeting at the DC's Conference Hall in Pasighat, focusing on monsoon preparedness, urban flood management, and overall disaster mitigation planning.

The review, held under her capacity as Chairperson of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), was attended by administrative officers, heads of departments, and senior police officials.

According to an official statement, Ji-wani stressed the need for strengthening the Urban Flood Management Cell in the district and instructed concerned departments to submit detailed reports on the current status of city drainage systems.

She also called for updates on desilting and cleaning operations across Pasighat and its sub-divisional areas.

The DC underscored the importance of effective planning for the

upcoming monsoon season, particularly in terms of stockpiling essential and lifesaving medicines, ensuring availability of essential commodities and petroleum products for at least three months, and timely pruning of overgrown trees to prevent accidents.

She also highlighted the necessity of identifying vulnerable buildings and locations, developing robust rescue and rehabilitation strategies, and preparing temporary shelters at Pasighat, Mebo, and Ruksin sub-divisions.

Ji-wani instructed all departments to maintain updated manpower and resource inventories and ensure timely dissemination of public safety advisories through various media platforms.

She further emphasized coordinated efforts among departments to ensure seamless response mechanisms during any natural calamity.

During the meeting, District Disaster Management Officer (DDMO) T Tasi briefed attendees on ongoing initiatives, including the

submission of daily situation reports.

He informed that Aapda Mitra volunteers are actively conducting Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities in the district, such as making public announcements in Pasighat and promoting awareness on dos and don'ts during the prevailing heat-wave conditions.

Earlier in the day, Ji-wani also held a coordination-cum-interactive session with administrative officers and heads of departments.

She called for proactive governance and reorientation of administrative approaches to ensure government welfare and development schemes effectively reach intended beneficiaries.

"We must work together as Team East Siang to make our governance delivery more inclusive and efficient," she remarked.

Ji-wani also reiterated the district administration's commitment to promoting industrial development and entrepreneurial growth, stating that efficient urban management and sustainable planning in Smart City Pasighat remain key priorities.

"Our goal is to make East Siang one of the top-performing districts in all developmental indicators," she added.

The meeting was attended by SDO Akanksha T, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Mebo) Nancy Yirang, Municipal Executive Officer Jayanti Pertin, SDO Sanjay Taram, Deputy SP Ayup Boko, administrative officers, and heads of various departments.

Man arrested for molesting girl Drug peddler apprehended with heroin in Pasighat under Operation Dawn 2.0

ITANAGAR, June 12: A 41-year-old man has been arrested by the Capital Police here, for allegedly sexually molesting a 13-year-old girl in March this year, a senior police official said on Thursday.

Tai Shiva, the accused, who serves as the president of the Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe Forum, was arrested from Doimukh on Wednesday night while reportedly attempting to flee, Capital Superintendent of Police (SP) Rohit Rajbir Singh said in a statement.

Following the arrest, the Special Judge (POCSO) at Yupia, on Thursday, granted a four-day police remand to enable custodial interrogation and collection of evidence.

A case has been registered at Itanagar Women Police Station under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) along with Sections 8 and 12 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

The incident came to light when the minor girl's parents noticed sudden behavioural changes in her and filed a formal complaint at the Women Police Station, Itanagar, on Wednesday, Singh said. (PTI)

HT Bureau
NAMSAI, June 12: In a major breakthrough under the ongoing anti-narcotics initiative Operation Dawn 2.0, the East Siang Police apprehended a suspected drug peddler and seized 4.65 grams of suspected heroin in Pasighat.

According to an official statement, the operation was conducted based on credible intelligence inputs and marks a continued push by the district administration to curb the drug menace in the region.

The accused, identified as Riton Doley, a native of Namsing village in Mebo, was apprehended in the

Jarkong area of Pasighat.

Doley, reportedly involved in the illegal trade of narcotics for a considerable period, was caught red-handed during the raid.

The operation was led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Ayup Boko, who is also the In-charge of the Anti-Drug Squad (ADS) in East Siang.

The team included Inspector Atan Taki, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Pasighat Police Station; Sub-Inspector K Tangha; ASI R Lowang; SI (SG) T Kampong; and Lady Constable K G Pangkak.

The operation was carried out in

coordination with members of the Anti-Drug Warriors Pasighat, a local volunteer group actively supporting the district police's anti-narcotics campaign.

The team conducted the search operation in strict adherence to the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. The search was carried out in the presence of an Executive Magistrate, ensuring full legal compliance. Apart from the suspected heroin, the police recovered ₹4,900 in cash from the suspect's premises. All seized items were documented and secured in

the presence of independent witnesses. The accused and the recovered items were taken to the Pasighat Police Station, and the case has been registered under PS/GT/PS/C/No.46/2025, invoking sections 21(a) and 27(a) of the NDPS Act. The investigation is currently underway following the arrest of the accused.

Superintendent of Police, East Siang, Pankaj Lamba, IPS, has lauded the efforts of the ADS team.

He reaffirmed the district police's unwavering stance on maintaining a zero-tolerance policy against drug trafficking and substance abuse.

Khandu, Mein express grief over plane crash near Ahmedabad



ITANAGAR, June 12: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday expressed grief over the tragic crash of an Air India aircraft near Ahmedabad airport, terming it a devastating incident.

The London-bound flight, carrying 242 passengers and crew members, crashed moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad International Airport five minutes after taking off at 1.38 pm local time.

While the exact number of casualties is yet to be officially announced, several fatalities are feared.

"Deeply shocked by the tragic Air India flight crash in Ahmedabad. My heartfelt prayers are with the passengers, crew members, their families, and all those affected by this devastating incident. May strength prevail in this hour of grief," Khandu posted on X.

State Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein also expressed his condolences and shared his concern over the heartbreaking incident.

"Deeply concerned by the tragic crash of the Air India flight near Ahmedabad, shortly after take-off. My thoughts and prayers are with the passengers, crew, and their families during this unimaginably difficult time," Mein posted on social media. The crash has sent shockwaves across the country, prompting an outpouring of sympathy and solidarity from leaders and citizens alike. Emergency services were pressed into action immediately, and rescue operations were underway at the crash site. (PTI)

Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyaan culminates successfully in Tawang with strong farmer participation

HT Bureau
NAMSAI, June 12: The 15-day nationwide campaign, Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyaan, concluded successfully on Thursday at the premises of the Tawang Green Farmers Produce Company near Gankardung Gonpa in Tawang.

The campaign, which began on May 29 from Khartooh village, aimed to empower farmers by disseminating modern scientific knowledge and raising awareness about key government schemes tailored to support the agricultural sector.

Throughout the campaign, a series of activities were undertaken to ensure direct engagement with the farming community.

According to an official statement, agricultural scientists from Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Tawang and the National Research Centre (NRC) on Yak Dirang, along with officials from departments including Agriculture, Horticulture, Veterinary, and Fisheries, visited more than 60 major villages across Tawang district.

These field visits enabled one-on-one interactions with farmers, where on-ground challenges were discussed and relevant schemes explained in detail.

The valedictory function of the Ab-



hiyaan was graced by the presence of Kisan Morcha General Secretaries Jam-bey Tenzin, who served as the chief guest, and Dorjee Wangchu, the guest of honour. Progressive farmers from Kyidphel and Tawang blocks also took part in the concluding ceremony.

Addressing the gathering, Anjanand Tripathy, Head of KVK Tawang, thanked the participating farmers and departments

for their active involvement.

He underlined the importance of bridging the gap between laboratory-based research and real-world application in the fields.

Tripathy emphasised that the Abhiyaan served as a crucial platform for transferring scientific knowledge directly to the rural agricultural community.

The event featured informative presen-

tations by several key speakers. Dr D Medhi, Principal Scientist from NRC Yak Dirang; Dr Avang Tamin, DAHV & DD Officer; Koncho Gyatso, Sub-Divisional Horticulture Officer (SDHO); and Tashi Lungtan, Agriculture Development Officer (ADO), elaborated on flagship schemes such as Atma Nirbhar Pashu Palan, Atma Nirbhar Bhagwani, and Atma Nirbhar Krishi.

They encouraged the farmers to avail benefits from these schemes for sustainable and self-reliant agricultural development.

Guest of Honour Dorjee Wangchu stressed the importance of localized scientific training tailored to the needs of farmers in the region. He appreciated the campaign's approach in bringing valuable information to the grassroots and called for strengthened inter-departmental collaboration to maximise outreach and effectiveness.

Chief Guest Jam-bey Tenzin echoed these sentiments and urged concerned departments to involve Kisan Morcha members in the process of identifying genuine beneficiaries of government schemes.

He noted that these members, owing to

their close ties with the farming community, could help ensure better and more targeted implementation.

An interactive session was held during the programme, allowing farmers to raise queries and concerns directly with the officials and scientists.

The session proved to be fruitful in fostering mutual understanding and clarifying various aspects of scheme implementation and agricultural best practices.

As part of the closing programme, dignitaries were felicitated by Lakshmi Priya Borah, Subject Matter Specialist (Plant Protection), and Dr A N Tripathy.

Agricultural inputs were also distributed to selected progressive farmers by NRC Yak Dirang as a token of encouragement for their efforts.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by the KVK Tawang team, marking the successful end of the Abhiyaan.

This initiative stands as a significant stride toward achieving the vision of a self-reliant agricultural sector, not only for Tawang but as a model for rural agricultural development across the country.

India suffered 3 diplomatic setbacks from US, govt's foreign policy driven by domestic politics: Cong

NEW DELHI, June 12: The Congress on Thursday claimed India has suffered three "huge diplomatic setbacks" from the US which is constantly hyphenating India and Pakistan and that the Modi government's foreign policy has "failed" as it is driven by domestic political considerations.

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

"Yesterday, Indian foreign policy and diplomacy received three huge, undeniable setbacks. The General of the US Central Command gives a statement that Pakistan is a phenomenal partner in counter-terrorism. What is phenomenal? On May 2, 2011, Osama Bin Laden was found in Abbottabad and you are calling that country a phenomenal partner," Ramesh told PTI.

So, the first "setback" is the US general giving a "clean chit" to Pakistan, he said.

US Army General Michael Kurilla, Commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), has said Pakistan is "in an active counterterrorism fight right now and has been a phenomenal partner in the counterterrorism world".

The United States has to have a relationship with Pakistan and with India, and noted that it cannot be a "binary switch" where Washington cannot have ties with Islamabad if it has relations with New Delhi, Kurilla said during a testimony before the US House Armed Services Committee on Tuesday.

Ramesh further said, "Failed Marshal Asim Munir, who gave such inflammatory, incendiary and provocative statements, talked about the two-nation theory, Hindus and Muslims, and there is a direct relation between his statement and what happened in Pahalgam on April 22. Same Asim Munir gets a special invitation to go to America on US Army Day on June 14, which is incomprehensible."

The third setback is that the US state department spokesperson again repeated that it was US President Donald Trump who was responsible for bringing about a de-escalation between India and Pakistan, the Congress leader said.

He said again the US has hy-



phenated India and Pakistan while Prime Minister Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar are completely silent on it.

"He (Modi) meets members of delegations but does not have time for an all-party meeting to meet leaders of political parties. Our democracy is based on political parties not on individuals," Ramesh said.

Leaders of opposition parties have written to the PM to call a special session of Parliament but the government has rejected the request and instead announced the monsoon session from July 21.

"Is he (PM Modi) going to allow a special debate on our challenges with China and Pakistan, and now our challenge with the US. We thought that we were having an extended honeymoon with the US but it has delivered three huge setbacks to Indian diplomacy yesterday," Ramesh said.

This is a "failure" of the government of India, of the PM, of his External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, of his Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and of his drum beaters, Ramesh said. "I am shocked that these setbacks have come two days after the prime minister has met the delegation of MPs," he told PTI. Ramesh accused the PM of playing politics by picking and choosing individuals.

Modi govt democratised use of technology in 11-year rule: Shah

NEW DELHI, June 12: The Modi government has democratised the use of technology and harnessed its power for the business sector, making Bharat a leading digital economy in the world in the last 11 years, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Thursday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government completed 11 years on June 9. "The Modi government democratised the use of technology and harnessed its power for the business sector, making Bharat a leading digital economy in the world in the #11YearsOfDigitalIndia," Shah wrote on X.

The home minister said whether it is healthcare, education, trade, or commerce, PM Modi has transformed every sector of the economy and society through the digital revolution.

According to an official statement, over the past 11 years, India has made remarkable progress in its journey towards becoming a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. From expanding internet access in remote villages to revolutionising public service delivery through digital platforms, the country has bridged the urban-rural divide like never before. The digital economy, which contributed 11.74 per cent to



the national income in 2022-23, is projected to grow to 13.42 per cent by 2024-25, driven by advancements in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and digital infrastructure, the statement said.

It said a robust digital infrastructure forms the backbone of a modern economy and over the past 11 years, India has significantly expanded mobile networks and improved internet connectivity in rural areas. For a tech-driven future, the government has expanded the digital horizon over the last 11 years. From boosting infrastructure to enhancing digital skills, India is becoming more digitally enabled and connected.

Internet connections jumped from 25.15 crore in March 2014 to 96.96 crore in June 2024, the statement said. As of May 2025, the total cumulative amount transferred through direct benefit transfer (DBT) has crossed ₹44 lakh crore, it said. (PTI)

40 held over clash in South 24 Parganas; situation under control: Bengal Police

KOLKATA, June 12: Forty people have been arrested in connection with a violent clash between two groups in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, which left several police personnel injured and prompted the administration to impose prohibitory orders, an officer said on Thursday.

The incident, which occurred in Maheshitla under the Rabindranagar Police Station area on Wednesday, stemmed from a dispute over the construction of a shop and alleged encroachment on government land.

The unrest quickly spiralled, resulting in vandalism, and additional forces were deployed to bring the situation under control.

"A clash between two groups occurred yesterday afternoon in Rabindra Nagar PS area and adjacent areas of Nadial PS over an illegal construction and consequent plantation on govt land without any permission whatsoever and replacement of an existing shop in the process, resulting in brick-battering at police and isolated vandalism in the vicinity," the police said.

The police resorted to "necessary use of force and dispersed the crowd", they said.

The situation is "now peaceful and under control", a senior officer said.

"Prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNSS have been imposed in Rabindra Nagar PS area in the interest of peace. Representatives of all political parties or groups are advised not to visit the area till 163 BNSS is in place. (PTI)

Modi govt committed to providing 33 pc reservation to women: Gadkari

NAGPUR, June 12: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the Modi government was committed to providing 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, and it has taken a decision to that effect.

Describing the 11 years of the Modi government as "very important" in the country's history, he said what failed to happen in the 60 years prior to that was achieved by the present dispensation cutting across sectors.

Addressing a press conference in Nagpur on the completion of 11 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government, he expressed confidence that the country's logistics cost will come down to 9 per cent by the end of this year, which will boost exports and help businesses and industries to grow.

When asked about the issue of women's quota, Gadkari said, "It is our commitment to provide 33 per cent reservation to women and we have also taken a decision to that effect."

In September 2023, President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the women's reservation bill - Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam - which seeks to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. There are reports that the Modi government is likely to roll out 33 per cent reservation for women ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

Talking about the achievements of the Modi government, Gadkari said the development of the country and the progress of villages, farmers, labourers and all sections of society in the past 11 years under the leadership of PM Modi is before everyone to see. "These 11 years are very important in the history of our country. The work which could not happen in 60 years of the Congress rule happened very effectively in all sectors in these last 11 years," Gadkari said.

Highlighting the works carried out by the government, he said it prioritised development of power, transport, water and communication sectors.

He cited a study conducted by IIM Banga-

lore, IIT Kanpur and IIT Chennai on road infrastructure development in the country, which stated that the logistics cost of the country which was 16 per cent earlier, has come down by 4 to 6 per cent to 10 per cent. He called it a good achievement and said it will help in the growth of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"The logistics cost of our country was 16 per cent, while that of China was 8 per cent and America and European countries 12 per cent. As per the study, the logistics cost of the country has come down by 4 to 6 per cent, which means it decreased to 10 per cent from 16 per cent due to the work carried out in the road sector," he said. "Three to four years back, I had talked about bringing our logistics cost to a single digit and I believe that by December end (this year), the logistics cost will be 9 per cent which will boost our exports more and increase our business and industries," the minister said.

Describing port connectivity as a very important factor and a growth engine for the country's development as imports and exports are linked to it, he said 111 port connectivity projects of ₹ 75,000 crore and 2,700 km of length were currently either underway, completed and being planned.

The faster the movement in ports the lesser the cost of transport, he said. "Our turnaround time for transportation has reduced by 30 to 40 per cent. Similarly, new satellites and dry ports have come up in the country, which has helped bring down the logistics cost," he said.

Gadkari also said that his ministry carried out infrastructure development works of ₹ 5 lakh crore in Maharashtra in the last 11 years.

The Vadnavan port (being developed in Palghar district) will become the second largest container port in the world with proposed construction of an eight-lane road worth ₹ 4,000 crore, he said.

"The government brought changes in every sector in the country under the leadership of PM Modi and India will keep progressing in the years to come as well," he said. (PTI)

India slips to 131st position in Global Gender Gap Index 2025

NEW DELHI, June 12: India has ranked 131 out of 143 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, slipping two places from its position last year.

With a parity score of just 64.1 per cent, India is among the lowest-ranked countries in South Asia, according to the report released on Thursday.

India ranked 129 last year out of 146 countries.

"In 2025, India ranks 131st, with an overall gender parity score of 64.4 per cent. Compared to the 2024 edition, India sees a relative drop in rank due to the performance of other economies," it said.

The Global Gender Gap Index measures gender parity across four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment.

The Indian economy's overall performance improved in absolute terms by +0.3 points.

"One of the dimensions where India increases parity is in Economic Participation and Opportunity, where its score improves by +.9 percentage points to 40.7 per cent. While most indicator values remain the same, parity in estimated earned income rises from 28.6



per cent to 29.9 per cent, positively impacting the subindex score," the report said.

Scores in labour force participation rate remained the same (45.9 per cent) as last year -- India's highest achieved to date.

In educational attainment, the report said, India scored 97.1 per cent, reflecting positive shifts in female shares for literacy and tertiary education enrolment, which resulted in positive score improvements for the subindex as a whole.

"India also records higher parity in health and survival, driven by improved scores in sex ratio at birth and in healthy life expectancy," it said.

However, similar to other countries, parity in healthy life expectancy is obtained despite

Bangladesh emerged as the best performer in South Asia, jumping 75 ranks to rank 24 globally.

Nepal ranked 125, Sri Lanka 130, Bhutan 119, Maldives 138 and Pakistan ranked at the bottom among all countries at 148.

"In 2025, Southern Asia ranks 7th, with a gender parity score of 64.6 per cent. Of the seven economies that make up the regional block, only Bangladesh (24th, 77.5 per cent) places in the top 50," the report said.

In Economic Participation and Opportunity, the region scores 40.6 per cent. Over time, Southern Asia has increased its parity score for economic representation for senior workers (+9.1 percentage points) and for professional and technical workers (+17.2 percentage points).

However, the parity score in estimated earned income has dropped by -7.8 percentage points.

In Educational Attainment, Southern Asia ranks sixth at 95.4 per cent. Economies show high levels of variance in literacy parity: in Nepal and Pakistan, the literacy parity score is below 75 per cent, while full parity is observed in the Maldives. (PTI)

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, (S.E.) WORKS KAAC::SECRETARIAT DIPHU-782460 No KAAC/HRN/W-61/Pt/2024-25/202(A) Dtd. 06/06/2025. TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs.10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of Works Department and will be received by the undersigned upto 4 P.M. on 02/07/2025 and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderers or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be a holiday/non-working days, the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any assigning reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted rate.

SL No	Name of Works	Tender Amount (Rs.)	A/A Amount (Rs.)	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion
1	Construction of paver block road with drain for Artu Phli Kecheleng atowar at Ronghang Rongbong	Rs. 91,53,000.00	Rs. 91,53,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General=2%	120 days
2	Construction of 3 nos. Senoi Miji atum ahem at Ronghang Rongbong.	Rs. 51,72,000.00	Rs. 51,72,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General=2%	90 days
4	Construction of paver block road from Rong Ahithi to Badong at Ronghang Rongbong	Rs. 97,28,000.00	Rs. 97,28,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General=2%	120 days

Detail N.I.T/ documents and name of works amounts may be obtained from Office of the S.E. (Works) KAAC, Diphu during working hours on payment of Rs.1000/-

Terms & Conditions N.B

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/works for all division under CPWD- 2020-21.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
- The contractor shall Repair/Re-construction if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works. The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuses to Repair/ Re-construction the work.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E. (W), KAACBranch Secretariat Hamren Authority.
- The following upto date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
 - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate/GST.
 - Council Registration.
 - Call Deposit.
 - Council receipt.
 - Caste Certificate.
 - Pan Card/ Adhaar Card
 - Account number
 - Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund.
 - The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer, (Works),
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,
DIPHU

Parents of man killed in love triangle demand exemplary punishment of killers

AGARTALA, June 12: The parents of the 26-year-old Shariful Miah, who was allegedly killed and his body stored in an ice-cream freezer in Tripura's Dhalai district, on Thursday demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible for the murder of their son. A total of six persons have been arrested in connection with the murder.

Shariful, a resident of Masjidpara area of Agartala used to work as an electrician was in a relationship with a 20-year-old woman. The cousin of the woman also wanted to be with her.

Shariful's parents said they would urge Chief Minister Manik Saha to ensure exemplary punishment for those who murdered their son.

Shariful's father Alamgir Miah said BJP state vice president Papia Dutta visited his family and expressed deep shock over the murder of his son.

"Madam (Papia Dutta) assured me she will facilitate a meeting with Chief Minister Manik Saha. If I get a chance to meet the CM, I will urge him to ensure exemplary punishment for those who have murdered my son," he said. "I still can't believe my son is no longer alive... It was Dibakar Saha who called up my son on June 8 (around 9 pm) to offer a gift and murdered him brutally. I cursed the people who are involved in murdering my innocent son to face stringent punishment so that no family suffers such an extreme loss," Shariful's mother Masuda told PTI.

Masuda said she knew her son was in a relationship

with a woman. "Only two and half months back, Shariful told me that he had developed a relationship with a woman. I asked the woman's religion. When he told me she was a Hindu, I had warned my son about the adverse impact but he continued with the relationship. It appears the woman was in deep love with my son," she said. Masuda alleged that Dibakar Saha, who is the cousin of the woman, single-handedly plotted the murder and executed it because he (Dibakar) wanted to cement his relationship with the woman to grab her properties.

Masuda said she contacted the woman after her son had gone missing since June 8 but did not get any clue regarding the whereabouts of her son.

According to police, the cousin of the woman plotted a well-designed plan to kill the boyfriend and invited him to the house of a relative in South Indiranagar in West Tripura on June 8.

The cousin, who is an MBBS graduate from Bangladesh, strangled him to death with the help of three other persons present there, the police said.

Then they stuffed the body in a trolley bag. The next day, the cousin called his parents, who live in Gandacherra, to come to Agartala and take the trolley bag with them, police said.

"Accordingly, his parents came to Agartala with a car and took the trolley bag to Gandacherra. They concealed the body in an ice cream freezer in their shop," they said. (PTI)

'Mangalsutra', ring left behind at homestay helped police crack Meghalaya murder case: DGP

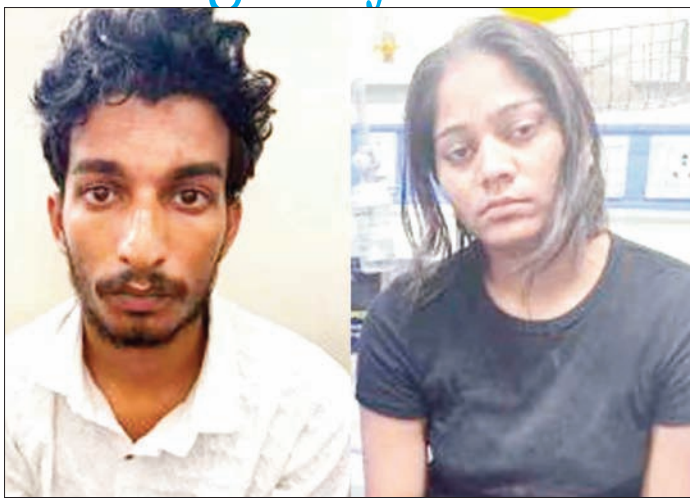
SHILLONG, June 12: Raja Raghuvanshi and his wife Sonam had left their suitcase at a homestay in Sohra before going missing, and the 'mangalsutra' and a ring found in it helped investigators crack the honeymoon murder case, Meghalaya DGP, I Nongrang, said.

Sonam (25) and Raja (29) got married in Indore on May 11 and reached Meghalaya via Guwahati in Assam on May 20 for their honeymoon. Both of them went missing on May 23 in Sohra in East Khasi Hills district, hours after checking out of a homestay at Nongriat village.

"We recovered Sonam's 'mangalsutra' and a ring from the suitcase the couple abandoned at a homestay in Sohra. A married woman leaving behind the ornaments gave us a clue to pursue her as a suspect in the case," Nongrang told PTI on Wednesday evening.

"Mangalsutra" is a necklace worn by married Hindu women.

Raja's body was found in a



gorge near Weisawdong Falls on June 2. A search continued for Sonam, who emerged in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur, around 1,200 km away, in the early hours of June 9 and surrendered. Police have also arrested her boyfriend Raj Kushwaha and three contract killers.

The couple walked into the homestay in Sohra on May 22 without any prior booking, another police officer, who is part of the investigation, told PTI.

They did not get a room there, and thus, decided to keep their suitcase at the homestay, as it

would have been difficult to trek over 3,000 steps with it to the Nongriat village to see the double-decker root bridge, he said.

While their suitcase remained at the Sohra homestay, they spent the night at another homestay in Nongriat before checking out early on May 23.

They trekked back to Sohra, took their scooter from the parking and went to Weisawdong Falls, where Raja was allegedly killed by the three contract killers in front of his wife, he added.

PTI had on Saturday reported that a tour guide had seen the couple with three Hindi-speaking men while they were climbing back to Sohra from Nongriat.

"The accused persons have admitted to the crime, and with all the evidence, there is no room to deny," the police officer said.

A court in Shillong has sent Sonam, her boyfriend and the three hitmen to eight days of police custody. (PTI)

Meghalaya govt felicitates tourist guide, 35 others for assisting police in probe

SHILLONG, June 12: The Meghalaya government on Thursday felicitated a tourist guide and 35 others for helping the state police trace the body of Raja Raghuvanshi, who was allegedly killed by his wife Sonam and her four aides during their honeymoon in the state, and in the investigation process.

State minister Paul Lyngdoh distributed cash rewards of ₹ 5.4 lakh to travel guide Albert Pde and 35 others, including several mountaineers, and tour facilitators, for actively assisting the police in search operations during a preliminary investigation into the case.

Raghuvanshi and his wife went miss-

ing while vacationing in Sohra area in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district on May 23. His body was found in a gorge on June 2, while a search for his wife was conducted.

Pde had said he saw the couple accompanied by the three men as they were climbing over 3,000 steps from Nongriat to Mawlakhat around 10 am on May 23. The tourist guide had claimed that he identified one of the suspects from the photos provided by the police.

Addressing the event, Lyngdoh, the state tourism minister, urged visitors to come to Meghalaya, claiming that "unlawful activities would not be tolerated".

He said the government is planning to install CCTV cameras in key tourist spots.

Sonam, aged 24, was arrested from Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh, while her aides were apprehended from Indore in Madhya Pradesh for their alleged role in conspiring and killing Raja Raghuvanshi.

The woman was brought here on Tuesday midnight, while the other accused reached on Wednesday on transit remand, a senior officer said.

A court in Shillong on Wednesday sent Sonam and her four aides to eight-day police custody, an official said. (PTI)

Raj Bhavan felicitates Nagaland board exam toppers

DIMAPUR, June 12: Celebrating academic excellence, the toppers, rank holders and achievers of HSLC and HSSLC examinations 2025, conducted by the Nagaland Board of School Education, were felicitated at Dr Imkongliba Ao Hall, Raj Bhavan, Kohima, under the aegis of Governor La Ganesan, on Thursday.

In his message, Ganesan said this moment of triumph is not theirs alone, but also a reflection of the unwavering support of parents, families, teachers, and schools.

He highlighted the critical role the educators play, not just in imparting knowledge, but in cultivating discipline, curiosity, and ambition among students.

Extending heartfelt congratulations to all toppers and successful candidates, he lauded their hard work, perseverance,

and intellectual achievement, noting that their success marks a significant milestone on the road to even greater accomplishments.

Ganesan asked the students to reflect on the privileges they enjoy, peace, stability, and access to quality education, while reminding them of the responsibility that comes with such blessings.

"You are not just students; you are the nation-builders of tomorrow," he stated, calling on them to uphold values such as honesty, hard work, adaptability, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

He also urged the students to contribute to Viksit Bharat - A Developed India by 2047, a vision he holds dear.

"Though I may not live to see this dream realised, you will be its architects, and you will enjoy its fruits," Ganesan added.

Teen undergoes rare spine surgery successfully at NEIGRIHMS

SHILLONG, June 12: A 16-year-old girl with a severe case of scoliosis deformity, a condition involving abnormal curvature of the spine, underwent successful corrective spinal surgery at the Department of Orthopaedics, NEIGRIHMS, Shillong.

The intricate operation was performed by the surgical team led by Dr Sachlang Debbarma (Associate Professor), along with Dr Tashi G Khonglah (Additional Professor) and Dr Penthungo Ezung (Senior Resident), under the guidance of Prof Sharat Agarwal and Prof Bhaskar Borgohain, Head of the Department.

Highlighting interdepartmental collaboration, advanced intra-operative



neuro-monitoring was used during the surgery to ensure precision and prevent spinal cord injury, supervised by Dr John Lyngdoh of the Department of Physiology.

The Department of Anaesthesiology, led by Dr Rajani Thabab, maintained patient stability throughout.

A dedicated nursing team led by sister in charge Watila Chungmeri, with vital support from OT staff, ensured seamless coordination and care during the procedure.

The girl is in stable condition and recovering well with ongoing physiotherapy.

Dr Sachlang Debbarma

said scoliosis is a progressive spinal deformity that, if untreated, can cause chronic pain, respiratory issues, and reduced quality of life.

Early diagnosis and timely surgical intervention are key to improving long-term outcomes. This procedure is among the first of its kind performed at a government medical institute in Northeast India. NEIGRIHMS Director Prof Nalin Mehta praised the Department of Orthopaedics for the milestone in specialized orthopaedic spine care.

He said the procedure highlights the institute's growing ability to manage complex spinal disorders through multidisciplinary teamwork and advanced surgical technology. (NNN)

2 Nagaland govt school students selected for Japan science prog

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, June 12: Two government school students from Nagaland have been selected to attend the Sakura Science High School Programme 2025 in Japan.

The programme will be held from June 13 to June 21. The Union ministry of education, under the Samagra Shiksha Nagaland, selected Shethilu Medeo from Ruzhukhrie Government Higher Secondary School, Kohima and Iris Zomawii Lushai from Chumoukedima Government

Higher Secondary School, Chumoukedima, to participate in the programme.

The two meritorious students passed their HSLC exam from government schools and are now pursuing science stream in government schools in the state.

The Sakura Science High School Programme (SSHP) is a youth exchange programme in the field of Science.

It is a prestigious initiative by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), supported in India through the ministry of

education. The programme aims to foster scientific curiosity, cultural exchange and international collaboration among exceptional high school students.

Gihukali Sema, PGT, Government Higher Secondary School, Chumoukedima, has been selected as their supervisor.

This seven-day programme will be sponsored by the Union ministry of education. It will include visits to schools, universities and various technological and cultural sites in Japan.

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF WORKS

KAAC::SECRETARIAT

DIPHU-782460

No KAAC/HRN/W-61/Pt-(a)/2025-26/01

Dtd. 12/06/2025.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing Non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs.10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of Works Department and will be receive by the undersigned upto 4 P.M. on 2/07/2025 and will opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderers or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be any holiday/Non-working day, the tender will be opened in the next working day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted rate.

SL No	Name of Works	Tender Amount (Rs.)	A/A Amount (Rs.)	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion
1.	Construction of Pavers Block road from Rong Arak to Amlong at Ronghang Rongbong.	3,30,60,000.00	3,30,60,000.00	ST/SC/ OBC=1% General=2%	Days 30

Detail N.I.T/ documents and name of works amounts may be obtained from Office of the Addl. Chief Engineer (Works) KAAC, Diphu during working hours on payment of Rs.1500/-

Terms & Conditions

N.B

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/ works for all division under CPWD- 2020-21.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender, without which no tender will be accepted.
- The contractor shall Repair/Re-construct if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works. The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuses to Repair/ Re-construction the work.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the Addl. Chief Engineer (W), KAAC/KAAC Authority.
- The following upto date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
 - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate/GST registration.
 - KAAC Registration (Contractual).
 - Call Deposit.
 - Caste Certificate.
 - Bank Account number & Pan Card.
- Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund.
- The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-

Additional Chief Engineer (Works),
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,
Diphu

Memo No. KAAC/HRN/W-61/Pt-(a)/2025-26/01(A)

Dtd. 12/06/2025.

No.A/BKD/Tenden/SOPD/2025-26/244-46

Date 06/06/2025

SHORT NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court fee Stamp of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty five) only with validity period of 180 days, which will subsequently be converted and drawn up in the printed F-2 form are invited from the registered contractors of A.P.W.D. Class-I (A), (B), (C) & Class-II & Class-III category according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the work stated below.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimate Amount	Earnest Money (in Rs)	Cost of Tender Paper
1	Construction of Box Culvert at Daokhijan village under SOPD fund for the year 2025-26	Rs. 15,00,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-
2	Construction of Box Culvert at Ghoramara village near Sonaram Ranchinary under SOPD fund for the year 2025-26	Rs. 15,00,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-
3	Construction of Box Culvert at Korebari village near L.P. School under SOPD fund for the year 2025-26	Rs.15,00,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-
4	Construction of Box Culvert at Kalabari village under SOPD fund for the year 2025-26	Rs.15,00,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-
5	Construction of Box Culvert at Maddangun village near Bimal Basumatary house under SOPD fund for the year 2025-26	Rs.15,00,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-
6	Construction of Box Culvert at Sarania Tangabari village near Sanjib Boro House under SOPD fund for the year 2025-26	Rs.15,00,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-
7	Construction of Box Culvert at Choudharypara village near Bhagirat Uzir house under SOPD fund for the year 2025-26	Rs.10,00,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-

The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2 PM on 26.6.2025 and will be opened on the same date and place at 3.30 PM in the office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Baksa Forest Division, Mushalpur. In the event of any unusual occurrence due to strike, bandh, holiday etc. the same will be received and opened on the next working day at same place and same time.

Details N.I.T may be seen in all workings days in the office of the undersigned. The Tender paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent from 10.00 Hrs to 4.00 Hrs on all working days from 13/06/2025 to 26.06.2025 on payment of Rs.500/- (Rupees Five Hundred) only in the form of DD/Bankers Cheque in Favour of **Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar payable at SBI, Kokrajhar.**

Sd/-

Divisional Forest Officer,
Baksa Forest Division, Mushalpur

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/844

ZOYA AKHTAR-AYESHA SOOD ON 'IN TRANSIT': WE WANTED TRANS PEOPLE TO TELL THEIR OWN STORIES

NEW DELHI, June 12: The idea for "In Transit", a four-part docu series about the lives of trans and non-binary individuals, was born out of the many stories filmmakers Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti came across while auditioning for a trans character in the second season of their critically-acclaimed series "Made in Heaven".

Directed by Ayesha Sood and produced by Akhtar and Kagti through their Tiger Baby banner, "In Transit" is set to premiere on Prime Video on Friday.

"Made in Heaven" has been praised for giving centrestage to LGBTQ individuals, first with a gay lead in Arjun Mathur's wedding planner Karan and then by introducing a trans character with Mehar, who was played by Trinetra Haldar Gummaraju, in season two.

Zoya said they "got crazy feedback from the LGBT community" through the show as the community felt represented in an authentic way. "When we wrote a trans character, we realised we knew very little... So, we started interviewing people and the people that spoke to us were very honest and they shared a lot, including their dreams. Mehar was a specific kind of character, so that story came out of these interviews.

"We realised that this is something that we need to expand on in a different format. They need to tell the audience their own story and we pitched that to Amazon Prime who went for it in one call so we are lucky," Akhtar told PTI in a virtual interview.

The filmmaker said they decided to rope in Sood to direct the series as they wanted someone who could shepherd the project in an authentic way, without adding any shock value to it.

Sood, a filmmaker, photographer and editor who runs the media company Jamun Collective, said when Akhtar and Kagti approached her with the idea, she was a little flummoxed as trans experience is a huge canvas. "I was like, 'How do you tell the story of trans people?' Like women in India, the canvas is huge... There are so many diverse experiences of being a woman in India, likewise, being trans in India is our baseline setting and it is vast, unique and complex. How do we

bring that out in the stories?

"So, we talk about things that are universally moving to all of us, like identity, our place in the world, our relationships with families and finding love. These are universal things that move everybody," Sood told PTI. The team had a long period of research, and eventually found a way as well as a structure to tell these stories.

"The Indian idea of being trans is vast. So we wanted to get a broad range of stories and people from different contexts and we wanted to be uniquely rooted in India. These are real people from different walks of life who are expressing their trans-ness," Sood said.

"It was also a matter of who could tell their stories to us. It's not easy for everyone to be on camera... These are tough lives, so it was also about who could actually tell us these stories," she added.

"In Transit" is the second project from the documentary slate that Akhtar and Kagti are planning to produce through their banner, following "Angry Young Men", a cinematic exploration of iconic screenwriter duo Javed Akhtar and Salim Khan's film-mography.

A third, "Turtle Walker" by Taira Malaney, will chronicle the extraordinary journey of conservationist Satish Bhaskar.

Akhtar, known for films such as "Luck By Chance", "Dil Dhadakne Do" and "Gully Boy", said she loves documentaries as the format allows a filmmaker to explore different stories. There is also a lot of interest for documentaries in India now, she added.

"There's a lot more exposure and I think people are interested in stories. Certain stories are good as short films, certain things lend themselves to eight hours of narrative. Certain things are good as features, and certain stories need to be told in their most authentic, true self," Akhtar said.

Sood credited the OTT platforms for nurturing the format.

"We now have a growing audience for documentaries. The platforms are entirely to be praised for this. They have brought documentaries into your living room and everybody is watching them. Along with it, the craft has also elevated." (PTI)



ALEXANDER PAYNE TO RECEIVE HONORARY LEOPARD AWARD AT LOCARNO FILM FESTIVAL 2025



LONDON, June 12: American filmmaker Alexander Payne is set to receive the honorary Leopard award at this year's Locarno Film Festival, the organisers announced on Thursday.

Payne will also present his films The Descendants (2011) and Nebraska (2013), and participate in a public discussion with the festival audience. He is known for beloved films like Election (1999), About Schmidt (2002), Sideways (2004), Nebraska (2013), and most recently, The Holdovers (2023).

"A new name for #Locarno78! Our honorary leopard – the Pardo d'Onore, presented by #Manor – will be given to the internationally recognized and celebrated American filmmaker #AlexanderPayne on August 15, 2025," the organisers wrote on X.

"Alexander Payne is an erudite auteur with an encyclopedic cinephile knowledge. Gifted with an unerring sense for the bittersweet facets of human comedy, he is a filmmaker with sensibilities at once exquisitely classical and modern," Giona A. Nazzaro, Artistic Director of the Locarno Film

Festival, said in a statement.

"An impeccable director of actors who has worked with such names as Jack Nicholson, George Clooney, Reese Witherspoon, Laura Dern, Matt Damon, Bruce Dern, and Paul Giamatti, in Payne we find a knowledge of the savoir-faire of Hollywood cinema, its poetry, and its uniqueness," Nazzaro added.

Previous recipients of the Leopard award include Manoel de Oliveira, Bernardo Bertolucci, Ken Loach, Jean-Luc Godard, Abbas Kiarostami, Terry Gilliam, Alexander Sokurov, William Friedkin, Alain Tanner, Jia Zhang-ke and Leos Carax.

Werner Herzog, Agnès Varda, Michael Cimino, Marco Bellocchio, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Jean-Marie Straub, Todd Haynes, Bruno Dumont, John Waters, John Landis, Kelly Reichardt, Harmony Korine, and Jane Campion have also been honoured with this award.

The 78th edition of the Locarno Film Festival will be held from August 6 to 16. (PTI)

Shiladitya Bora forays into Odia cinema with 'Bindusagar'

MUMBAI, June 12: (PTI) Film director-producer Shiladitya Bora on Thursday announced his foray into Odia cinema with an upcoming film, titled "Bindusagar".

Featuring popular Odia actors Prakruti Mishra and Dipanwit Dashmohapatra, the family drama is directed by Abhishek Swain, best known for his acclaimed 2024 movie "Jajabara 2.0".

Bora, known for films like "Picasso" and "Yours Truly", said he aims to take Odia cinema all over the world and hopes the film will resonate with people everywhere. "Odisha is producing some fantastic content in recent times; however, it's still underexposed to the audiences across the world. The Odia film industry is on

the verge of breaking out, and we want to be one of the early movers when that happens. "We want to make a film that will appeal equally to the youth, the working class, as well as to the Odia diaspora living overseas. 'Bindusagar' is our vision of 'Made in Odisha, for the world,' Bora said in a statement. (PTI)

Three new songs of slain singer Sidhu Moosewala released on his birth anniversary

NEW DELHI, June12: The family of slain Punjabi musician Sidhu Moosewala has released three new songs of the singer on his 32nd birth anniversary.

The tracks -- "0008", "Neal", and "Take Notes" -- were unveiled on the official social media handles of the late singer on Wednesday and have garnered millions of views on YouTube.

The newly released songs are part of the "Moose Print" extended play (EP).

"Happy Birthday @sidhu_moosewala 'Moose Print' out now on all streaming platforms & Youtube !!!" read a post on Moosewala's Instagram page.

While "Take Notes" has amassed over 8.5 million views on YouTube, "0008" and "Neal" received over 6.5 million views.

Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, was shot dead in Punjab's Mansa district on May 29, 2022. Moosewala was killed when he, along with his friend and cousin, was travelling in a jeep to Jawahar Ke village in Mansa.

The singer-rapper enjoyed a cult following in India and abroad with songs like "So High", "Same Beef", "The Last Ride", "Just Listen" and "295".

With the release of three new tracks, the total number of songs released posthumously has risen to 11.

The first posthumous release of a Moosewala song was "SYL", which came out in June 2022, less than a month after the singer was shot dead. The track, which addressed the contentious Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal issue, garnered millions of views and likes before being removed from YouTube.

The second track, "Vaar", released in November 2022, paid tribute to the bravery of Hari Singh Nalwa, the commander-in-chief of the Khalsa army during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign.

His third song, "Mera Na", featuring Nigerian artist Burna Boy and UK-based producer Steel Banglez, was released in April 2023.

The fourth track, "Chorni", came out in July 2023, followed by a fifth, titled "Watch Out" in November 2023.

The sixth release, "Drippy", a collaboration with Mxrci and AR Paisley, arrived on February 2024, while the seventh track "Attach" dropped in April same year. The eighth track came out in January this year. (PTI)

Heartbroken, shocked and speechless: Bollywood celebs on Gujarat plane crash

NEW DELHI, June 12: Actors Akshay Kumar, Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal and filmmaker Karan Johar on Thursday expressed shock and offered prayers for the safety and well-being of all those aboard the Air India plane that crashed near a locality close to Ahmedabad airport.

Air India flight AI 171 from Ahmedabad to London, Gatwick, was involved in a crash shortly after takeoff, outside the airport. There were 242 passengers on board the plane.

"Shocked and speechless at the Air India crash. Only prayers at this time," Akshay posted on social media platform X.

Akshay was to attend a promotional event for Telugu movie "Kannappa" with co-star Vishnu Manchu on Friday in Indore (MP) but it has been cancelled in the wake of the tragedy. The team has also decided to defer the trailer launch by a day.

Salman Khan's scheduled appearance at an event for the Indian Supercross Racing League on Thursday was also called off after the plane crash.

Actor Allu Arjun said he was heartbroken by the tragic crash.

"My deepest condolences to the families of the victims. May their souls rest in peace. Truly heart-wrenching," he added.

Alia posted on her Instagram Stories, "This is devastating! My heart aches for all the passengers and crew, thoughts and prayers with everyone on board and their loved ones."

Actor Kareena Kapoor Khan said she was gutted by the news of the plane crash.

"Praying for everyone aboard. The passengers, crew and their families."

No words for the sorrow this brings," Kareena wrote on Instagram.

"Heartbreaking to hear about the plane crash in Ahmedabad. Praying for miracles for lives to be saved and for the injured to heal. May those who lost their lives rest in peace, and may their loved ones find strength in this dark hour," wrote actor Manoj Bajpayee.

Vicky also called the news of the plane crash



"devastating".

"Making my heart sink reading about 242 persons on board. Praying for everyone's safety and recovery," he added.

Karan Johar wrote, "Devastating news about the ill fated AIR INDIA flight Information of lives lost and injured is still coming in... am praying for all onboard ... my thoughts and prayers for the families and loved ones of the passengers on-board." Actor Sunny Deol said he was praying with all his heart for survivors.

"May they be found and receive the care they need. May those who lost their lives rest in peace, and may their families find strength in this unimaginable time," he wrote.

Ishaan Khatter said he was "disturbed" to hear about the crash. "Prayers go out to all those affected," he added.

Sara Ali Khan said, "Sending strength and prayers to all those affected by the plane crash in Ahmedabad today."

Riteish Deshmukh said he was "heartbroken and in shock after hearing about the tragic plane crash".

"My heart goes out to all the passengers, their families, and everyone affected on the ground. Holding them all in my thoughts and prayers during this incredibly difficult time," he added.

Actor Parineeti Chopra posted, "Can't imagine the pain of the family members of the ill fated Air India flight today. Praying for God to give them strength during this time."

Actors Randeep Hooda and Sonu Sood also shared condolences on X.

"Heartbreaking to hear about the tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad. My thoughts and prayers are with all those affected. Hoping for survivors and strength for the rescue teams. May the departed rest in peace, and may their families find the strength to endure this immense loss, Randeep said.

Sonu wrote, "Prayers for Air India flight that crashed in Ahmedabad after take off to London."

Actor-politician Kangana Ranaut said, "The news of the Ahmedabad plane crash is extremely tragic and painful. I pray to God for everyone's safety, may God provide strength to all affected families in this hour of crisis." (PTI)

PSG aims for Club World Cup glory after historic Champions League win



PARIS, June 12: Just weeks after winning the Champions League for the first time in its history, Paris Saint-Germain's eyes are now fixed on FIFA's shiny new Club World Cup.

The newly-crowned European champion can add the world title to a trophy haul that also included a French league and cup double this season.

"We want to finish the season in style with the cherry on the cake," coach Luis Enrique said.

PSG had already qualified for the rebooted Club World Cup in the United States, but its Champions League triumph may still have come as a relief to FIFA.

That's because, while the winner of the bumper tournament will officially be crowned the best club soccer team in the world, there are some notable absentees from the 32-team roster.

Some big names are missingThe

Club World Cup will be without the champion of the most popular league in the world — the Premier League — given Liverpool's failure to meet the qualifying criteria.

The same goes for Barcelona and Napoli — champions of Spain and Italy, respectively.

No place either for current Asian champion Al-Ahli from Saudi Arabia or Pyramids — the African champion from Egypt.

FIFA likely breathed a sigh of relief then when PSG and Inter Milan advanced to the final of the Champions League, with both teams having already secured their place at the Club World Cup via ranking points for recent runs in Europe's top club competition. Had either of the losing semifinalists — Barcelona or Arsenal — gone on to lift the trophy, then the flagship new tournament would have been without the reigning champion of Europe as well.

The qualifying criteria were based on winners of continental trophies in the four years prior to the tournament, but not including the season directly before it.

That's why Chelsea — Champions League winner in 2021 — has a seat at the table despite finishing fourth in the Premier League last month. Chelsea is arriving at the Club World Cup with a new team, coach and even owners since it won the Champions League four years ago. The club is one of 12 from Europe, including stellar names like Real Madrid, PSG, Manchester City, Bayern Munich, Inter and Juventus.

South American clubs are Europe's top rivals. Some of Latin America's biggest teams are in the tournament — including reigning Copa Libertadores champion Botafogo from Brazil. Three other Brazilian teams have qualified: Palmeiras, Flamengo and Flumi-

nense.

Argentina's famous rivals River Plate and Boca Juniors will also be there — and are expected to be backed by thousands of fans traveling to the U.S.

It is the Latin American contingent that likely will likely present the biggest challenge to the European teams.

"Everyone wants to compete — the question is how you prepare to win, to try to win. That's what challenges me," said Marcelo Gallardo, River Plate head coach. "I want to win. I don't want to just go and see what happens."

Will it work? FIFA president Gianni Infantino believes the tournament is what the sport has been waiting for — a world championship for club soccer.

"For the first time in history, the 32 best clubs in the world will compete in a tournament to determine finally who is the best club in the world," he said this week.

In its previous format, which involved a mini-tournament of just seven teams instead of 32, it never fully captured global interest. Played in the middle of the season for Europe's top leagues, it had the feel of an exhibition, rather than a serious tournament. European teams dominated the modern era, winning all but one of the last 17 editions.

The new format will be a much more exacting examination of the eventual winner — not least because there are so many teams from Europe, but also because there has been a marked drive to improve levels in countries like the U.S. and Saudi Arabia following a slew of star signings such as Lionel Messi, who has transformed Inter Miami.

Eye-catching matches

PSG vs. Atletico Madrid, June 15, Los Angeles

It will be an early test for PSG

against Atletico. This is the type of match that could grace the later stages of any Champions League campaign between two of Europe's finest.

Chelsea vs. LAFC, June 16, Atlanta

LAFC got in through the back door via a playoff against Club America of Mexico and its reward is an opening game against two-time Champions League winner Chelsea.

Real Madrid vs. Al-Hilal, June 18, Miami

The anticipation around this one would have been so much more intense had Saudi Arabian club Al-Hilal not released Neymar in January, but it still has other star signings like striker Aleksandar Mitrovic. Madrid has a new coach in Xabi Alonso, who can get off to a flying start by winning the world title.

PSG vs. Botafogo, June 19, Los Angeles

Champions League winner against the reigning Copa Libertadores champion. This is the type of match that would have been the final in the tournament's previous guise — the best of Europe vs. the best of Latin America.

Bayern Munich vs. Boca Juniors, June 20, Miami

Two soccer giants from different continents clash at the Hard Rock Stadium. This is what this tournament is all about. Expect an electric atmosphere with Boca's fans likely to massively outnumber those cheering on German champion Bayern.

Juventus vs. Manchester City, June 26, Orlando

City may have relinquished its Premier League title and ended the season empty-handed for the first time in eight years, but there's still chance for Pep Guardiola to salvage the campaign with the world title. (AP)

Rugby can be viable career option in another 3-4 years: Rugby India boss Rahul Bose



NEW DELHI, June 12: Professional rugby is yet to become a financially viable career option in India but national federation president Rahul Bose believes that the Rugby Premier League can bring about a change in the scenario in the next three to four years.

Bose, 57, a reputed actor who has featured in critically acclaimed films like 'English August', Mr and Mrs Iyer, and Chameli, has represented the country in 17 international games and has been the face of the sport in India for more than two decades.

With the GMR-backed RPL starting on June 15, Bose was chuffed about Indian players not only getting the kind of exposure that is needed to become better version of themselves, but also earning contracts ranging between Rs 50,000 to Rs 5.5 lakh for the two-week event.

"The top player was bought for five and a half lakhs in the auction. Can this be a financially viable sport for somebody to follow or for somebody to pursue? Definitely, in another three to four years from now," Bose told PTI in an exclusive interview. From his time when lovers of rugby and all those passionate about the game didn't earn a single penny, Rugby India is now paying its national campers anywhere between Rs 60,000 to Rs 1 lakh, which is impressive considering the current market of the sport.

"Our sport is played by the poorest of the poor. Our national campers earn between Rs 60,000 to Rs 1 lakh. So, if I am currently looking at an annual income of Rs 3 lakh, a small family can just about make a living of Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 staying in a village.

"I am not at all saying this is enough. We need to put in as much money as possible in their hands," Bose explained.

The Rugby India head is happy that out of 1600 plus registered players in the country, his federation is in a position to help at least a sizeable number of them financially.

"But are we in a position where we can say that at least out of our 1600 players, who play this sport at the state level, can we at least give this kind of income to about every year to about maybe 200 players? That should be the key."

Bose then explained why RPL is important for Indian Rugby.

"If you look at Indian cricket, for example, it started in 1932. But, our first significant series victory was in 1971, 40 years in an eight-nation sport at the time. So, in a 120-nation sport, it might take us 75 years to be in that top 25 percent."

"Now what a well-run league does is, it collapses this time and creates a pool of talent for the country, which normally you would not do so fast."

He believes that the work of a federation is 20 times more the work of any league.

"The work of a federation is 20 times the work of any league and the rugby federation was awarded the 'Best sports federation for development in this country' by FICCI three months back. We are an extremely ethical, transparent, accountable, efficient process oriented organization."

Asked about the gulf in standard between Indian players and those coming from premier nations like New Zealand and South Africa, Bose felt the gap can only be bridged by playing with the best.

"So there is definitely a gulf. It is not a big gulf, but there is a gulf, which is being bridged by what we call the 'Bridge players', like Canadians, the Germans, and the players from Hong Kong. We will see how this plays out."

"We'll be tracking it very carefully during this edition of the lead, and we will obviously do whatever we can to make sure that the rugby is competitive and world class in the format."

The main aim for India players would be to upgrade their skill-sets and it wouldn't just depend on a tournament but also on systems put in place by Rugby India. "How can it not be (upgrading skills) be? But is that what we are relying on to upgrade the skills of our national team? Of course not," he said.

"It would be narrow minded and lazy of a federation. As I said, the work we do is 20 times more than this. As soon as this RPL gets over on June 29, on July 7, we have our under 18 tournament nationals. So we are not letting the grass grow under our feet. (PTI)

Wolfsburg hires new coach

WOLFSBURG (GERMANY), June 12: Wolfsburg hired Paul Simonis as its new coach on Thursday after he won the Netherlands' top cup competition with his previous club Go Ahead Eagles.

The 40-year-old Simonis joins on a two-year contract with a task to "realign VfL Wolfsburg with fresh impetus," managing director for sport Peter Christensen said.

Simonis' Dutch Cup win with Go Ahead Eagles in April was a surprise for a club which hadn't won a major trophy in 92 years, and came in his first career head coach role. The team's league finish of seventh was also its best in decades. (AP)

Poland coach resigns after dispute with star striker

WARSAW (POLAND), June 12: The coach of Poland's national soccer team announced Thursday has resigned as head coach, days after a spat with star striker Robert Lewandowski.

"I have come to the conclusion that, given the current situation, the best decision for the good of the national team is my resignation from the position of head coach," Michal Probiez said in a statement published by the Polish Football Association.

Probiez stripped Barcelona striker Lewandowski of his position as team captain on the eve of a World Cup qualifier against Finland earlier this week, and named Inter Milan midfielder Piotr Zielinski as the new captain.

Lewandowski reacted by saying he would no longer play for the national team as long as Probiez remains head coach. Poland went on to suffer an embarrassing 2-1 defeat to Finland, to



put its qualifications hopes into jeopardy.

The 36-year-old Lewandowski, who has

played a record 158 games for his country and is the leading scorer with 85 goals, is arguably the most outstanding player in the history of Polish soccer.

Lewandowski pulled out of last Friday's friendly over Moldova, citing tiredness from a La Liga title-winning season with Barcelona.

Probiez, who took over in September 2023 after the disappointing tenure of Fernando Santos, managed to secure qualification for the 2024 European Championship but has since struggled.

The Polish Football Association's president, Cezary Kulesza, had summoned Probiez on Wednesday to discuss the matter.

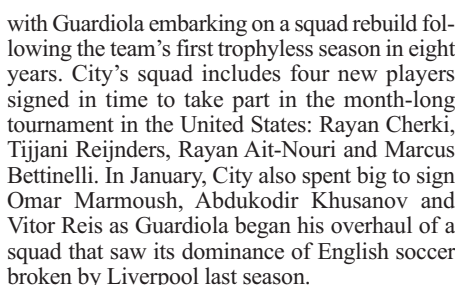
"I give coaches a lot of freedom, but with that comes responsibility. I expect results, first and foremost," Kulesza said. "These were difficult days for the fans of the national team." (AP)

Jack Grealish left out of Man City squad

MIAMI, June 12: Jack Grealish has been left out of Manchester City's squad for the Club World Cup. City manager Pep Guardiola named a 27-man squad for the tournament, which kicks off in Miami on Saturday, with Grealish a notable omission.

The England forward was a British record signing when he moved to City from Aston Villa for 100 million pounds (\$139 million then) in 2021 and went on to help the club win three Premier League titles, the Champions League and a host of other trophies. But he has become an increasingly peripheral figure and made only seven league starts last season.

The 29-year-old Grealish's absence from the Club World Cup will add to the growing expectation that he will leave during the offseason,



with Guardiola embarking on a squad rebuild following the team's first trophyless season in eight years. City's squad includes four new players signed in time to take part in the month-long tournament in the United States: Rayan Cherki, Tijjani Reijnders, Rayan Ait-Nouri and Marcus Bettinelli. In January, City also spent big to sign Omar Marmoush, Abdou Diallo, Khusanov and Vitor Reis as Guardiola began his overhaul of a squad that saw its dominance of English soccer broken by Liverpool last season.

If Grealish goes, he is likely to be one of a number of players to move on. Kevin De Bruyne is leaving at the end of his contract this month and Kyle Walker is also likely to go after a loan move to AC Milan in January; as expected, neither player was in the squad. (AP)

ISSF World Cup: Sift Kaur Samra wins bronze medal

MUNICH, June 12: Top Indian shooter Sift Kaur Samra tackled a strong field with aplomb to claim the bronze medal in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions event at the ISSF World Cup here on Thursday.

The 23-year-old Samra, who holds the current world record in women's 50 metre rifle three positions event which she had set while winning the gold medal at the 2022 Asian Games, shot 453.1 in the eight-player final.

Norway's Jeanette Hegg Duestad won the gold medal with 466.9, while Emely Jaeggi of Switzerland bagged silver with 464.8.

Emely was placed ninth in the qualifications with 590 but made the final as two markswomen among the top eight were shooting for ranking points only (RPO). (PTI)

US Open tee time awaits Docherty less than a month after horrific car accident



OAKMONT (USA), June 12: What Al-istair Docherty thought was smoke was really the powder bursting out of the freshly deployed airbag. There was no mistaking the blood and glass covering everything in the wrecked white minivan.

Docherty was driving May 20 when he got T-boned in an intersection, two days before the Korn Ferry's Visit Knoxville Open. On June 2, the 31-year-old, who missed his PGA Tour card by two spots at the end of last season, qualified for the U.S. Open.

At 6:45 a.m. Thursday, Docherty will tee off at Oakmont. It's no stretch to say he's happy to be here, but Docherty wants

more than just a good memory to close out this wild three weeks.

"It's not a miracle," Docherty said after wrapping up a practice round that hardly looked possible less than a month ago, as he was tangled in the blood and glass. "I'm very thankful. But it's definitely where I believe I'm supposed to be. Everything works out for a reason. I'm just trying to take advantage."

The pictures tell the story best.

One is of the passenger's side of the minivan, sitting in the grass near the intersection, crumpled almost beyond recognition after getting slammed by an SUV that ran a red light.

Another is Docherty lying in a hospital bed, lips pierced, eyes barely open, wearing a hospital gown draped over part of his neck collar.

"My car spun around a few times. I felt glass and everything come at me," Docherty said. "I opened my eyes and thought I saw smoke. I jumped out of the car as quickly as possible. It ended up being the stuff coming out of the airbag. I walked around a little dazed, and I was covered in blood and glass."

At the hospital, doctors and nurses were able to clean the glass off his body — no major damage there. The scans came back clean — nothing broken, either.

Docherty said his shoulder and legs took the brunt of the crash. Constant work with the physical therapist allowed him to set his sites on June 2 at Duke University Golf Club. He shot 72-64 in the 36-hole qualifier to earn one of seven spots available there.

The third part of that photo essay is him holding his invitation to play in the U.S. Open this week.

Docherty knows he's lucky to be here but he's aiming for more — knowing a strong performance in this, his first major, could result in his second life-changing moment in a month. (AP)

IMPROVEMENT OF ELECTRIC WIRING IN STAFF QUARTERS

Tender Notice No.: Dy.CEE/PS/MLG/HQ/49/25-26. **Dated:** 09-06-2025. **E-** Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Tender No.:** DYCEE-PS-MLG-HQ-49-25-26. **Name of Work:** At Maligaon : Improvement of electric wiring in staff quarters at Maligaon area. **Advised Value :** ₹. 1,21,44,466/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹. 2,10,700/-. **Date and time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 01-07-2025.** For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. CEE/PS/Maligaon/HQ
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

E-AUCTION FOR PAY & USE TOILETS CONTRACT OVER LUMDING DIVISION

E-Auction at Diphu, Lankaj, Bokajan, Jirania, Nagaon & Silchar Railway Station for "Pay and Use Toilet Contract" Over Lumding Division. **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing fee. **Trips/Days.** 1096.

Auction Catalogue No. PNU-LMG-04-2025

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	PNU-LMG-LKA-Toi-10-25-1 (Pay and Use - Toilets)	Operation and maintenance of Pay & use toilet at Lankaj station
AA/2	PNU-LMG-JRANA-Toi-21-22-2 (Pay and Use - Toilets)	E- auction for awarding of rights for operation and maintenance of Pay & use toilet at Jirania station
AA/3	PNU-LMG-NGAN-Toi-39-22-1 (Pay and Use - Toilets)	E- auction for awarding of rights for operation and maintenance of Pay & use toilet at Nagaon station
AA/4	PNU-LMG-HJI-Toi-12-25-1 (Pay and Use - Toilets)	Operation and maintenance of Pay & use toilet at Hojai station
AA/5	PNU-LMG-BXJ-Toi-62-25-1 (Pay and Use - Toilets)	Provision of pay and use toilet at Bokajan railway station for a period of 03 years.
AA/6	PNU-LMG-DPU-Toi-13-22-1 (Pay and Use - Toilets)	E- auction for awarding of rights for operation and maintenance of Pay & use toilet at Diphu station (2nd class waiting hall at PF-01 and toilet blocks at PF-02, Tinsukia end near FOB)
AB/1	PNU-LMG-SCL-WRL-48-23-1 (Pay and Use - Lounges / Waiting / Retiring / Cloak Rooms)	Operation and management of clock room at Silchar railway station (PF/01)

Auction Start Date & Time: 11:00 hrs. of 30-06-2025. **Auction Close Date & Time:** 12:30 hrs. of 30-06-2025. Prospective bidders are requested to visit E-Auction Leasing Module on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager (C), Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

E-AUCTION FOR LEASING OUT OF SLR COMPARTMENT & VPH

E-Auction for leasing contract of SLR compartments & VPH by various trains originating from Tinsukia Division through e-Auction on single/round trip basis for a period of 2 years. **Description:** Seq No. AA/1 to AA/28 : Parcel Space in SLR Coach (Single Compartment) and Seq No. AB/1 : Parcel Space in Parcel Van. **Auction Start Date & Time:** 10:00 hrs. on 01-07-2025. **Auction Close Date & Time:** 15:10 hrs. on 01-07-2025. **Rate Unit:** Seq No. AA/1 to AA/28: Per Trip Licensing Fee; Seq No. AB/1 : Per Round Trip (Two Way).

Auction Catalogue No.: TSK-SLR-VP-57		
Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Trips/Days
AA/1	22502-SLR-F1-NTSK-SMBV-23-1 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/2	15670-SLR-F2-DBRG-GHY-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/3	15604-SLR-F2-LEDO-GHY-22-2 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/4	15642-SLR-F2-NTSK-SCL-23-1 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/5	15642-SLR-F1-NTSK-SCL-23-1 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/6	20505-SLR-F1-DBRG-NDS-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	209
AA/7	15670-SLR-F1-DBRG-GHY-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/8	15928-SLR-F2-NTSK-RNY-22-2 (Parcel-SLR)	418
AA/9	15604-SLR-F1-LEDO-GHY-22-2 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/10	15962-SLR-F1-DBRG-HWH-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	209
AA/11	15933-SLR-F1-NTSK-ASR-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/12	15968-SLR-F1-LEDO-RNY-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	314
AA/13	15928-SLR-F1-NTSK-RNY-22-2 (Parcel-SLR)	418
AA/14	15909-SLR-F1-DBRG-LGH-23-1 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/15	15670-SLR-R1-DBRG-GHY-24-1 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/16	15960-SLR-F1-DBRG-HWH-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	522
AA/17	15930-SLR-F1-NTSK-TBM-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/18	15642-SLR-F1-NTSK-SCL-23-1 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/19	15968-SLR-F2-LEDO-RNY-22-2 (Parcel-SLR)	314
AA/20	20503-SLR-F1-DBRG-NDS-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	521
AA/21	15928-SLR-F1-NTSK-RNY-22-2 (Parcel-SLR)	418
AA/22	22504-SLR-F1-DBRG-CAPE-23-1 (Parcel-SLR)	418
AA/23	15604-SLR-R1-LEDO-GHY-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/24	13281-SLR-F1-DBRG-RJPB-22-2 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/25	15903-SLR-F1-DBRG-CDG-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	209
AA/26	15946-SLR-F1-DBRG-LTT-23-1 (Parcel-SLR)	209
AA/27	15968-SLR-R1-LEDO-RNY-22-1 (Parcel-SLR)	314
AA/28	12423-SLR-F1-DBRG-NDS-22-2 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AB/1	13281-13282-VP-1-DBRG-RJPB-22-1 (Parcel-Parcel Van)	105

The Auction catalogue has already been uploaded on 09-06-2025 on IREPS website.

Divisional Commercial Manager (IC), Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

Come out of comfort zone, fight every ball to have memorable England tour: Gambhir

BECKENHAM (ENGLAND), June 12: India head coach Gautam Gambhir has called on his team to move out of its "comfort zone" and make the upcoming Test series against England a "memorable" one, especially in the absence of retired stars Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and R Ashwin.

India will search for their maiden series victory in England since 2007, when the five-match rubber starts with the first Test at Leeds on June 20.

"There are two ways of looking at this tour. One is we are without our three most experienced players or we got this phenomenal opportunity to do something special for the country," Gambhir told BCCI.tv, referring to the recent retirements of Ashwin, Rohit and Kohli.

The former India opener said he can feel the "passion and the commitment" to achieve something special flowing through the current bunch, led by Shubman Gill.

"When I look around in this group, I think I see the hunger, the passion and the commitment to do something special. If we make sacrifices, if we come out of our comfort zone, if we start fighting not every day but every session, every hour and every ball, I think we can have a memorable tour," he added.

Gambhir welcomed the whole squad to the tour of England, and extended a special tribute to some of the members, starting with



B Sai Sudharsan.

"First Test calls are always special, so I want to welcome Sai, who has a fabulous three months with the bat and make sure you have a very very successful red ball career."

Gambhir hoped that pacer Arshdeep Singh would remain his impactful self in red-ball cricket as well.

"I want to welcome Arshdeep Singh. You have been phenomenal with the white ball

and I am sure you will make it count with the red ball in your hand."

The 43-year-old then patted Gill and his deputy Rishabh Pant.

"I want to congratulate Shubman as well, captain for the first time. There is no bigger honour than leading your country's Test team. Congratulations. Rishabh Pant as well, who is part of the leadership group now," he noted.

Gambhir was lavish in his praise for Karun Nair, who stitched a stirring comeback to Team India on the back of a wonderful run in domestic cricket.

"Comebacks are never easy, someone who has made a comeback after seven years, had a phenomenal last year.

"The amount of runs that you have got, and most importantly that never say die attitude, which is something that got you back into the team, and that is something inspiring for everyone in this group. Welcome Karun Nair," said Gambhir.

Karun said he was "grateful" to get a second chance to play for India.

"Grateful for this opportunity again. I am really looking forward to grabbing this opportunity with both hands. I am sure there will be a lot of feelings, once I go out there but right now I can't express them," said Karun.

Put ourselves under pressure at nets: Gill Skipper Gill urged his colleagues to put themselves under a bit of pressure so that they will not be overwhelmed by situations when the series starts.

"Let's make each and every net session meaningful. Let's put ourselves under a little pressure. When we are going out there, it's not about going out there and just surviving, let's find out our game, how we are going to play when we are put under pressure — be it bowlers or batters," he said. (PTI)

Intra-Squad Warm-up

Chance to track current form, bowling combinations

BECKENHAM (KENT), June 12: The artist in Kuldeep Yadav would look to keep an accurate Ravindra Jadeja on toes when both the slow left-arm bowlers take the field during the senior Indian team's four-day intra-squad warm-up game against India A starting here on Friday.

The match will be the senior team's only simulation game before the opening Test against England at the Headingley from June 20.

The intra-squad game acts like a pre-cursor to the Test match. The Indian team under head coach Gautam Gambhir opted for a "closed door" session to prevent the opposition from getting any ideas on the tactical front, emulating a long-established practice among European football clubs. They had done the same during the tour of Australia earlier this year. As bowling coach Morne Morkel said on Wednesday, building the stamina to bowl and field 90 overs a day is very different from normal net sessions.

The four-day game, which doesn't have the official first-class status, gives batters a second go if someone is dismissed cheaply.

With 360 overs of match simulation available over four days, it will give the team management a chance to allow the bowling unit get enough overs under their belt. That would be handy in ensuring that the bowlers — be it a spinner or a pacer — have the requisite rhythm in actual match. Gambhir will have some work to do in terms of zeroing in on lone specialist spinner for Headingley.

There is Ravindra Jadeja, whose superior batting becomes a huge factor in SENA countries but against England's 'Bazballers', Kuldeep Yadav's versatility could complement pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah better if India harbour any hopes of picking 20 wickets.

Jadeja versus Kuldeep is the biggest playing eleven jigsaw puzzle that needs to be sorted by Gambhir and the coaching staff.

Similarly, the intra-squad game will also give the coaches and skipper Shubman Gill a chance to see which of Akash Deep's fuller length or Prasad Krishna's back of the length stuff works better in these conditions.

Bumrah, who will be playing a red-ball game after six months, will also get a chance to bowl multiple spells and test his fitness having only played IPL since his comeback from a lower back stress injury. (PTI)

Club World Cup refs to wear eye-level cameras

MIAMI, June 12: Referees at the Club World Cup will wear eye-level cameras to finally allow fans to see exactly what the officials are looking at during a soccer match.

Well... not quite.

FIFA has announced the innovation will be implemented at its newly-expanded tournament, which kicks off in Miami on Saturday. But on closer inspection, the technology appears to be more about improving the experience for television viewers than improving the game.

For instance, only "non-controversial" images will be shown during the match. FIFA has not specified what that means, but don't look for goal-scoring incidents and potential red cards to be included.

The camera will be attached to the referee's earpiece.

"It is a trial," Pierluigi Collina, chairman of the FIFA referees committee, said Wednesday. "What will be the future? We will see."

"We have said that we want to, let's say, offer a new experience to TV viewers. We want to show something, let's say, entertaining. I don't think that we always need to think of the controversial or potentially controversial incidents on the field of play."

Footage will be checked before being broadcast, rather than shown live.

FIFA says the refcam view could be used to show unique angles of goals scored and offer different perspectives of the game that normal cameras cannot see. But if restricted to that, it would appear to be a missed opportunity in a sport that is increasingly using advances in technology to improve the accuracy and transparency of decision-making.

Another innovation at the Club World



Cup — a month-long tournament staged in the United States and featuring 32 of the best soccer teams in the world — is to show footage being reviewed by VAR for the first time on big screens inside the stadium. In theory, the refcam would make referees more accountable for their decisions by allowing fans to see exactly what the official saw before making a call.

But it is not even clear how much it would be used to help VAR.

While Collina said all footage would be available to the VAR, he questioned how useful the refcam would be in such circumstances.

"Honestly, can you believe that a camera position just besides the referee's eyes can see something that the referee's eyes cannot see? Honestly, I think it's difficult to believe," he said.

FIFA, itself, has made clear where it believes the footage would be of most use, saying the test was designed to "explore whether the new camera angle can improve the experience for those watch-

ing on television and online by showcasing the referee's perspective."

It added that the tests would be used to make guidelines for future use.

"Step by step" Collina said. "We need to do something new and the simpler the better."

Time wasting

FIFA also announced a clampdown on time wasting by goalkeepers at the Club World Cup.

Previous rules specified keepers can't hold onto the ball for longer than six seconds, but Collina said that was frequently being flouted.

The time limit has now been extended to eight seconds, but referees will be much stricter in enforcement.

The referee will also count down from five seconds with their hand to indicate the time remaining. If a keeper holds onto the ball for longer than eight seconds, a corner kick will be awarded to the opposition, rather than an indirect free kick, which was the previous punishment. (AP)

Since we run IPL team, we are capable of running Rugby league: GMR Sports CEO Trivedi



NEW DELHI, June 12: Rugby might rank low in the popularity charts of India's sporting landscape but it has tremendous potential to garner eyeballs with the upcoming Rugby Premier League (RPL), feels GMR Sports CEO and the event's promoter Satyam Trivedi.

The inaugural RPL will be held from June 15 to 29 at the Mumbai Football Arena in Andheri featuring six franchises Delhi Redz, Hyderabad Heroes, Kalinga Black Tigers, Chennai Bulls, Mumbai Dreamers and Bengaluru Bravehearts.

Trivedi, who has considerable experience of running multiple IPL franchises, including the GMR co-owned Delhi Capitals, told PTI about the rationale behind the group becoming a driving force in organising the inaugural edition of Rugby Premier League.

"We thought that we've been managing this business for a very long time. And I think of the scale of managing an IPL team, you can imagine is one of the largest properties, and we've developed capabilities internally," Trivedi said.

"So idea was that, why don't we leverage our experience, our expertise, and move up the value chain and look at opportunities outside franchise. So when this opportunity came, obviously it started with a franchise conversation."

"But we just took one day to go back and say that not at a franchise level, but we want to invest at a League level," he recalled when asked about how it all started.

The format will be Rugby 7s, which is recognised as an Olympic sport.

Unlike traditional Rugby Union format where there are two halves of 40 minutes each with 15 players per side,

the 7s is a format where there are seven players on field with two halves of 7 minutes.

However in RPL, keeping the TV audience in mind, it has been tweaked to four quarters of four minutes each with two-minute break between quarters.

Trivedi underlined why he thought the league can work in the long run.

"It's a shorter format and we think it works very well. Because if you look at the consumer pattern... They want to look at shorter format. The attention span has drastically gone down."

"We had to keep that in mind. So we think that this is a great on-ground as well as television product. That's one reason to hold the league," he reasoned.

"Secondly, Rugby India is a great Federation to work with. They are very committed. (Actor) Rahul Bose, who is the president of Rugby India, is also very committed towards the development of sport. Today, there are 250 districts in India where rugby is played," he added.

Trivedi also gave a peek into the kind of money marquee players will be getting for the two-week tourney.

"International marquee player coming here for two weeks and one week of camp or maybe 10 days of camp, they would get about USD 15,000. The bridge players (from Tier-2 Rugby Nations) will be getting around USD 2500."

The Indian players will be paid between ₹ 50,000 to ₹ 550,000.

"The salary cap was kept at ₹ 77 lakh per team," he informed. (PTI)

India will be well prepared but we know where we want to get to as Test team: McCullum

LONDON, June 12: England head coach Brendon McCullum believes India have arrived well-prepared and full of belief for the upcoming five-match Test series but his team is also clear about where it wants to be in the eagerly-anticipated showdown beginning June 20 in Leeds.

The series will kick off India's new World

Test Championship cycle.

"They're an outstanding cricketing nation, who will come here with high hopes, and we are looking forward to seeing them," McCullum told 'Sky Sports Cricket'. England on the other hand have just completed a whitewash of the West Indies in a six-match white-ball series. Their focus now

shifts to the red-ball format as they gear up to take India and also prepare for the Ashes later this year.

"It's important the guys refresh. We know where we want to get to as a Test team." England will be without tearaway pacer Mark Wood, who has been ruled out of at least the first three Tests due to injury. (PTI)

Radha Yadav replaces injured Shuchi Upadhyay in India squad for England tour

MUMBAI, June 12: Left-arm spinner Radha Yadav on Thursday replaced injured Shuchi Upadhyay in the India women's squad for their upcoming tour of England for five T20Is and three ODIs starting on June 28.

The BCCI informed in a statement that the 20-year-old left-arm spinner Upadhyay, who made her ODI debut last month during the tri-series in Sri Lanka, has sustained a left shin injury.

"The Women's Selection Committee has named Radha Yadav as a replacement for Shuchi Upadhyay in Team India's squads for the England tour," the BCCI said.

"Shuchi was ruled out of the tour after sustaining a left shin injury, which was diagnosed during the pre-tour camp at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (COE) in Bengaluru," it added.

The women's team's tour begins with the opening T20I on June 28 at Nottingham with the second match slated on July 1 at Bristol. The third T20I will be at the Oval on July 4, fourth on July 9 at Manchester and fifth on July 12 at Birmingham.

The three ODIs will be played on July 16, 19 and 22 at Southampton, Lord's and Chester-le-Street respectively.

Squads:

T20Is: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Yastika Bhatia (wk), Harleen Deol, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Sree Charani, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Sayali Satghare, Radha Yadav.

ODIs: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Yastika Bhatia (wk), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Sree Charani, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Sayali Satghare, Radha Yadav. (PTI)

Swastha Hospital

Comprehensive Heart Care
for Better Health

CARDIOLOGIST

UPPER ASSAM'S ONLY AI CATHLAB

First to start a dedicated primary angioplasty programme in Upper Assam

Equipped with advanced technology and an experienced medical team.

OUR EXPERTISE INCLUDES:

- Primary Angioplasties
- Complex Angioplasty
- CTO PCI
- Angiography and Angioplasty
- Temporary & Permanent Pacemaker Implantations
- Balloon Valvuloplasty
- Left main Coronary Artery Intervention
- Septal Pacing
- Physiological Pacing
- Peripheral Artery Disease Treatment
- Emergency Cardiac Interventions

Interventional Cardiologist

DR. REJA MD. WASIF BORA
MD (Medicine) DM (Cardiology)

MON-FRI OPD FOR APPOINTMENT
FULL-TIME CARDIOLOGIST AVAILABLE **+91 60029-64445**

ADDRESS: SWASTHA HOSPITAL, AMC ROAD, GRAHAM BAZAAR TINIALI, NEAR CIRCUIT HOUSE, DIBRUGARH
INFORMATION CENTER AT 'THE HILLS TIMES' OFFICE, 2ND MILE, NAMSAL, ARUNACHAL PRADESH.
PHONE NUMBER: 70027-86249, 96128-45442

The Hills Times
in association with

ORGANIZING A FREE HEALTH CAMP

Swastha Hospital

15TH JUNE, 2025

<p>CONSULTANT CARDIOLOGIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest pain or discomfort Shortness of breath Fatigue or weakness Swelling in legs, ankles or feet Coughing or wheezing <p>DR. REJA BORA DM (CARDIOLOGY)</p>	<p>CONSULTANT NEPHROLOGIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swelling in feet, ankles, or around the eyes. Fatigue or feeling unusually tired. Changes in urination (color or frequency) Loss of appetite or nausea. Persistent itching or dry skin. <p>DR. ANKIT RAY DM (NEPHROLOGY)</p>	<p>CONSULTANT UROLOGIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain or burning during urination Frequent urination, especially at night Blood in urine Pain in the lower back, pelvis or side Urinary tract infection <p>DR. DIVAKAR CHOUBEY MCH (UROLOGY)</p>
--	---	---

VENUE - POI PEE MAU GROUND, NAMSAL. TIME: 10:00 AM ONWARD

7002786249, 9612845442 6901968877, 6000530755