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Is state BJP on early poll mode?

Himanta predicts NDA win in 2026 polls • New wave of welfare schemes to be unveiled from August

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday expressed confidence in a historic victory for the BJP-led NDA in the 2026 Assembly elections, citing an upcoming wave of welfare schemes set to roll out from August.

Addressing reporters here, Sarma stated, "As we are starting a new wave of welfare schemes from August, which will continue until February, the results can be any number given the unprecedented welfare schemes we are rolling out from August 16."

He added, "I can feel the vibes—the result will be un-

precedented, and the NDA will be somewhere in the sky."

The CM's remarks signal the BJP's early election strategy, focusing on welfare initiatives to consolidate support ahead of the polls.

While he did not disclose specifics of the schemes, sources suggest they may include enhanced financial aid, housing projects, and agricultural support.

Political analysts view Sarma's statement as an attempt to counter opposition criticism over unemployment and inflation while reinforcing the BJP's development narrative.

The opposition Congress and AIUDF, however, dis-

missed the claims as "election gimmicks," accusing the government of delaying benefits until the poll cycle.

The BJP, which secured 75 seats in the 2021 elections, aims to expand its dominance in 2026.

With Sarma's aggressive campaigning and welfare promises, the party is banking on a repeat of its 2016 and 2021 performances—but the opposition insists anti-incumbency and grassroots discontent could alter the outcome.

As the political heat rises, Assam braces for a high-stakes battle with welfare and governance set to be key battlegrounds.

NDFB peace pact laid foundation of peace: Himanta CM launches 'Bodoland Speaks' highlights BTR's peace journey

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday inaugurated a landmark event titled 'Bodoland Speaks: From Vision to Action' at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati, marking a significant milestone in the Bodoland Territorial Region's (BTR) journey from conflict to peace and progress.

The event, organised under the Bodoland Happiness Mission by the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), aimed to highlight the socio-economic transformation that has taken place in BTR in recent years.

According to an official statement, the chief minister also launched several key publications during the programme, including BTR Communication Bridge – A Practical Resource of 1001 Words and 1001 Sentences in 18 Regional Languages, Transforming Bodoland – A Journey of Change in BTR, and Lookin' Within: My Reflections authored by BTC Chief Executive Member (CEM) Pramod Boro.

The Annual Report of the Bodoland Happiness Mission (2024–25) was also unveiled.

Chief Minister Sarma further conferred the Bodoland Lifetime Achievers Award upon 18 distinguished individuals for their exceptional contributions to the preservation and promotion of folk culture in the BTR.

In his address, Sarma praised the Bodoland



Happiness Mission as a transformative initiative that has played a crucial role in establishing peace, stability, and a sense of well-being across the BTR. Recalling the decades of unrest that began in 1968, he said the region had once been gripped by violence, demands for self-determination, and an atmosphere of fear and agitation that disrupted lives across communities.

He stated that the situation began to change significantly after 2014 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who ushered in a new era of peace and reconciliation.

Sarma emphasised that the watershed moment came in 2020, with the signing of the historic tripartite Bodo Peace Accord between the Centre, the Assam government, and factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB). This accord, he said, had laid the foundation for genuine and lasting peace in the region.

"In the past four years as Chief Minister, I have not heard a single gunshot in the BTR—a testament to the success of this peace accord," he said, expressing gratitude to the people of Bodoland and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Myanmar-sourced weapons entering India via some cadres of Manipur insurgent outfits

IMPHAL/NEW DELHI, July 6:

Security agencies in Manipur have intensified a probe into an arms smuggling racket from Myanmar with potential nationwide ramifications, following the arrest of a senior leader from a Valley-based Insurgent Group (VBIG).

The investigation focuses on alleged gun-running operations by some cadres of banned outfits, sourcing weapons from Myanmar and reportedly distributing them across India using forged documents and the help of registered gun houses.

The case was cracked by Manipur police in the last week of June, leading to the arrest of four people, including Sinam Somendro Meitei alias 'Richard,' a self-styled Lieutenant Colonel and Project Secretary of the banned terror outfit United National Liberation Front (UNLFP).

Richard's arrest highlights a concerning aspect of the UNLFP's current engagement with peace processes. While the organisation announced a ceasefire in November 2023 and signed an agreement



with the Manipur government, it has since been accused of dragging its feet on surrender negotiations.

The officials said the group has failed to deposit its weapons or provide a list of its members as stipulated by the ceasefire agreement and also alleged that some members of the group have been indulging in extortion and other anti-social activities.

The operation in the present case

began after specific intelligence about an arms-smuggling-dealing-middleman gang in the greater Imphal area was received on June 24.

This led to the initial detention of Lanchenba Nongthombam, proprietor of Nongthombam Gun House who was found to be selling firearms without proper documentation, and his disclosure led the police to Richard, the officials alleged. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM wishes Dalai Lama on birthday

GUWAHATI, July 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday wished the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, on his 90th birthday. In a post on X, the chief minister wished him good health and a long life.

"On his birthday, I offer my warmest wishes to His Holiness, The @DalaiLama.

"For years, he has preached peace, compassion and unity across the world and inspired millions of people to live a life of truth & simplicity," Sarma said. Thousands of people had gathered at Tsiglagkhang in Dharamshala to celebrate the 90th birthday of the 14th Dalai Lama. (PTI)

Ten former NDFB cadres released on bail

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, July 6: Ten former cadres of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) were released on bail from Nalbari District Jail on Saturday, following over a decade of incarceration in connection with cases previously investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

According to official sources, the cases against the individuals had been transferred from the NIA to the jurisdiction of the Assam government, after which the district court granted them bail.

Members of the Ex-NDFB Welfare Association, led by General Secretary Danswring Narzary, were present outside the jail to welcome (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Interpretation of Constitution has to be pragmatic: CJJ

MUMBAI, July 6: Chief Justice of India Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai has said the interpretation of law or the Constitution has to be "pragmatic" and in a way that suits the needs of society.

Speaking at a felicitation organised for him by the Bombay High Court here on Saturday, he also said he recently received complaints about the rude behaviour of "some of the colleagues", and urged judges to protect the institution's reputation.

Citing a past Supreme Court judgement, CJJ Gavai said any law or the Constitution has to be interpreted in the context of "problems faced by the present generation."

"The interpretation has to be pragmatic. It has to be one that suits the needs of society," he added. Judges are expected to

work as per their conscience, the oath of office and law, but "should never be perturbed once the matter is decided," he said.

A judge should cut off his mind from the matter and forget what happens to it thereafter, he said.

Talking about the appointment of judges, the CJJ asserted that "at no cost the independence of judiciary shall be compromised".

While making appointments either to the Supreme Court or high courts, the collegium ensures merit is maintained while there is diversity and inclusiveness, he said.

CJJ Gavai complimented the Bombay High Court -- where he once practised as a lawyer and served as a judge -- for its work, and said he feels proud when people appreciate its judgements. He also said (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CEM Ronghang leads BJP grassroots outreach in Karbi Anglong



HT Correspondent
KHERONI, July 6: In a bid to strengthen grassroots engagement ahead of the 2026 Assam Assembly elections, Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Ang-

long Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, led an interaction programme with members of the Booth 'Teenjoniam Committee' and Secretaries of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from East and

West Karbi Anglong districts. The event was held at the Ru Rangina Sarpoo Open Stage, Taralango, Diphu. The programme aimed to bolster developmental dialogue and strategic coordination at the grassroots level.

Addressing the gathering, CEM Ronghang underscored the importance of welfare schemes such as 'Ration Cards', 'Orunodoi 3.0', and infrastructure development, including roads, in addressing the needs of the local population.

As part of a comprehensive strategy, Ronghang directed Mandal and booth-level committees to conduct a village-wise survey of households across all political affiliations-including BJP, APHLC, Congress, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Eminent historian Udayaditya Bharali dies, condolences pour in

GUWAHATI, July 6: Eminent historian, social thinker and political commentator Professor Udayaditya Bharali died here on Sunday after a prolonged illness, his family members said.

He was 78 years old and survived by his wife and two daughters. Bharali was suffering from a prolonged illness and was on dialysis for several months, making him very weak physically, a close aide said.

Born in 1947 in Moran, Bharali began teaching History at the premier Cotton College in Guwahati from 1968 and retired in 2006 as the Principal of the same institute. He also served as the Head of the Department of History at the oldest college of the

Northeast. A known follower of Leftist ideologies, he was associated with the CPI(M) and was a sympathiser of the Naxal movement. He was well-regarded among the opposition parties of Assam.

Later on in his life, Bharali became part of a larger citizens' forum and worked to build a common force against the ruling BJP. He has always been a critic of the state government and its policies.

The noted academician has penned several important books such as 'The Political History of Assam, Vol-1', published by the Government of Assam as an Associate Editor, and 'Hundred Years' History of Cotton College: 1901-2001' as a writer.

He is also a recipient of several accolades, including the Bishnu Prasad Rava Award by the apex literary body Assam Sahitya Sabha in 1996.

Bharali was associated with several social organisations and sports bodies. He was the Assistant Secretary of the Assam Cricket Association, and Vice President and Joint Secretary of the Guwahati Sports Association.

Condoling his demise Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma expressed deep anguish over the passing away of the eminent educationist and former Principal of Cotton College earlier this morning. "HCM conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and offered prayers for the eternal peace of the departed soul," the Chief Min-

ister's Office said in a post.

Senior Congress Leader and Chairman of Campaign Committee Bhupen Kumar Borah expressed deep sadness on the passing away of the "revered teacher, historian, distinguished intellectual and a thoughtful figure in every critical moment of Assam's national life".

"We pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul and extend our heartfelt condolences to the grieving family and all his admirers," he added.

Asom Gana Parishad president and Assam Agriculture Minister Atul Bora also condoled Bharali's demise and termed him a distinguished educator, thinker and eloquent writer. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Flood situation in Karbi Anglong: District administration initiates relief measures

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 6: In view of rising water levels and continuous rainfall in Karbi Anglong, the District Administration has initiated prompt and coordinated measures to address the emerging flood-like situation in several areas.

Karbi Anglong Deputy Commissioner Nirola Phangchopi has directed all concerned departments to remain alert and take immediate action to safeguard lives and property.

Additional Deputy Commissioner and in-charge of Relief and Rehabilitation, Mansoor Ahmed, has been entrusted with overseeing follow-up action and coordinating relief efforts.

Reports from the field confirmed that the Dhansiri River has inundated Tengahola Basti under Ghorialdubi Revenue Village, af-



fecting 63 houses as per initial assessments by the Diphu Field Officer.

In Okreg, district officials visited flood-hit areas to assess the situation, while a vaccination camp was conducted at Lower Mohendi-

jwa to prevent the outbreak of zoonotic diseases.

In Nilip, a few cattle were reported to have been washed away due to rising floodwaters.

Infrastructural damage has also been reported due to flash floods

triggered by incessant rainfall. Causeway No. 10/1 on the Chowkhola-Tarapung road has been washed away, and the approach roads to Causeways No. 2/1 and 3/1 on the Santilango-Chatiana road have also been destroyed.

Culvert No. 8/2 on the Koilamati-Phangcherop road has suffered similar damage.

The administration has urged all departments to submit damage reports and updates through the Disaster Reporting and Information Management System (DRIMS), and officials are collecting geotagged photographs to support relief and restoration planning.

The District Administration is closely monitoring the situation and has appealed to residents to stay alert and follow all advisories issued through official channels.

Deputy CM joins Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebrations in Tezu



HT Correspondent
TEZU, July 6: Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Chowna Mein, joined hundreds of devotees and dignitaries at the Dhargyeling Tibetan Settlement in Tezu on Sunday to celebrate the

90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

The celebration, held at the sacred Lhagon Jangchup Choeling Monastery, was marked by prayers, cultural performances, and tributes from the Tibetan com-

munity and well-wishers.

According to an official statement, Mein, accompanied by His Eminence Drogchen Ganor Rinpoche, offered prayers for the long life and good health of His Holiness. Speaking at the event, the Deputy Chief Minister described the Dalai Lama as a spiritual beacon not just for Tibetans but for humanity at large.

"His life and message transcend borders, reminding us all of the power of kindness, forgiveness, and inner strength," he said.

Mein also welcomed the Dalai Lama's announcement to continue the Institution of the Dalai Lama, calling it a historic decision that reaffirms the spiritual and cultural identity of the Tibetan people. "It has strengthened the hopes of millions of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

FM discusses issues of bilateral cooperation with Russian, Chinese counterparts

NEW DELHI, July 6: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held a series of bilateral meetings, including with Russian and Chinese counterparts, and discussed issues of bilateral cooperation and interests.

These meetings were held on the sidelines of the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

During a meeting with Anton Siluanov, Finance Minister of Russia, Sitharaman expressed gratitude for the support extended by President Vladimir Putin after the Pahalgam terror attack, the finance ministry said in a post on X.

The two leaders discussed India-Russia long-standing partnership. The finance minister observed that India and Russia enjoy exemplary levels of mutual trust and understanding and our Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership remains resilient and steadfast, it said. The two sides also discussed issues of bilateral cooperation, including cooperation in the financial sector, along with matters related to NDB.

In another bilateral meeting with her Chinese counterpart Lan Fo'an, both leaders discussed strengthening collaboration across a wide range of areas due to the



common rich human capital, deep civilisational ties, and expanding economic influence.

The two leaders recalled their last meeting in Samarkand in September 2024 on the sidelines of the AIB Annual Meetings, another post by the finance ministry said.

Sitharaman underlined that India and China are uniquely positioned to drive inclusive global growth and innovation as the two nations are the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world.

The finance minister suggested that deeper engagement between the two countries can help amplify

the voice of developing economies, and shape global narratives that reflect the priorities and aspirations of the global South, it said.

During bilateral meeting with Thomas Djiwandono, Vice Finance Minister of Indonesia, Sitharaman said India looks forward to hosting the Indonesia Economic and Financial Dialogue soon. She also thanked Indonesia for their support in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, a separate post on X by the finance ministry said.

The two leaders also discussed

BRICS, UPI, and RuPay, G20, MDB Reforms, bilateral trade, tourism, FinTech and financial markets, it said.

In the bilateral meeting with Finance Minister of Brazil Fernando Haddad, she discussed issues of bilateral interests.

The two leaders discussed issues of mutual interest, including South-South cooperation, amplifying the voice of the Global South, COP30, and climate finance issues, and engagement in regional and global forums such as the United Nations, G20, BRICS, WTO and IBSA, the finance ministry said in another social media post.

Appreciating the deep work by Brazil during its BRICS Chairship, including commitment to a multipolar world order, and expansion of BRICS, Sitharaman said India supports the agenda and priorities set by Brazil, and hopes to carry forward the outcome-oriented cooperation when India takes over the Chairship in January 2026.

She said India and Brazil, as strategic partners, share warm and cordial ties spanning across multiple sectors, and are cooperating closely in multiple sectors to further strengthen strategic partnership. (PTI)

OPPO launches Reno14 Series with AI, telephoto camera

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 6: OPPO India has officially launched the Reno14 Series, offering a comprehensive smartphone experience with powerful AI features, advanced imaging capabilities, and robust performance.

According to an official statement, the series includes the Reno14 and Reno14 Pro models, starting at a net effective price of ₹34,200 during the initial sales period. The Reno14 Series introduces a 3.5x lossless optical zoom with up to 120x digital zoom, water-resistant durability, and the highest number of AI photography and productivity tools in its segment.

It also includes advanced AI editing features such as AI Editor 2.0, AI Recompose, AI Perfect Shot, AI Unblur, AI Best Face, and AI Eraser 2.0. The devices are built with Corning Gorilla Glass 7i and boast IP66, IP68, and IP69 ratings for durability. OPPO's Sponge Bionic Cushioning design improves drop protection, while a luminous multi-layer finish gives the phones a sleek appearance. Display features include glove-compatible, 120Hz LTPS AMOLED screens with up to 1.5K resolution and a screen-to-body ratio above 93 percent.

Long-term policy continuity, uniformity essential for auto industry growth: Stellantis India CEO

PARIS, July 6: European auto major Stellantis believes a long-term stable policy framework and its uniform roll-out across different states in India is critical for automakers to execute business plans on a long-term basis.

Stellantis, which has presence in India through brands like Jeep and Citroen, feels that policy framework should work informally across the nation so that the industry is able to execute long-term business strategies.

In an interaction with PTI here, Stellantis India CEO and MD Shailesh Hazela said that any investor who comes to India would like to see a little longer horizon in terms of policies. "So our wishlist for the government is that whatever they decide to put across, it should be for a longer period," Hazela stated when asked about government actions which could propel growth of Indian auto industry. It would be great if there could be uniformity in policies across the country in terms of EVs (electric vehicles) and taxation so that companies could plan nationally and not state wise, he noted.

"If the government could bring uniformity, which they can, it would really enable the industry to plan in a unified and concise way,"



Hazela said.

He cited the example of different states rolling out separate policies for electric vehicles. Hazela noted that in the past few years, the Stellantis group has created supporting infrastructure, and now it plans to scale up its presence especially for the Citroen brand.

Hazela said a plan is already underway to scale up the brand's presence in the country with bolstering of sales network and new product introductions.

The French automaker currently sells the C3 hatchback, the Aircross SUV, the Basalt coupe-SUV, and the electric e-C3 in the Indian market. He noted that Citroen will almost double its sales touchpoints in the next one year from around 80 to over 150, sharpening its focus on the smaller towns and semi-urban areas.

"We are not sticking to one kind of format (sales touchpoints). We

will have a mix of small and large ones," Hazela said.

The company plans to focus on Tier III and even Tier IV markets, strategically chosen for their proximity to Tier I and Tier II cities and their potential for substantial growth. On market share aspirations, Hazela said: "We aspire to at least double our share from the last year to this year or in next 12 months, and then take it to the next number."

Citroen launched its first model in India, the C5 Aircross SUV, in early 2021 and remains a small player in the over 40 lakh annual passenger vehicle market.

Hazela said the brand has capability to roll out products based on multiple energy platforms and would introduce such models basis market demand. "We will continue to explore for CNG, because that's the available fuel in a sustainable way, we have our EV which will continue to grow," he added.

Last year in January, Stellantis announced an additional investment of ₹ 2,000 crore under the Citroen brand in Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu.

This investment will be made over a period of the next 6 years and will take the total investment in the state to ₹ 3,250 crore. (PTI)

Investment of USD 75 bn needed for Indian farmers to adapt to climate change impact: IFAD President

NEW DELHI, July 6: Investments worth around USD 75 billion is required for small-scale farmers in India to adapt to the impact of climate change, and bringing finance to rural areas is a critical challenge ahead for rural communities across the world and in India, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Alvaro Lario said.

In an interview to PTI, Lario said for IFAD in India, the three big questions are, "how do we make agriculture more remunerative for farmers, how do we enhance productivity at the same time as we're tackling a lot of the climate shocks and how do we move from food security to nutrition security."

Founded in 1977 in response to a global food crisis, IFAD is a specialised United Nations agency and an international financial institution that tackles hunger and poverty in rural communities.

Asked about the impact of cli-



mate change on the rural sectors, especially on small and marginal farmers, Lario said it's a key focus.

"Small-scale farmers need approximately at least 75 billion US dollars to adapt to many of these climate shocks," Lario told PTI.

According to the 10th agriculture census of 2015-16, small and marginal farmers with less than two hectares of land account for 86.2 per cent of all farmers in India, but own just 47.3 per cent of the farming land.

"In case of India we're seeing seasonal water scarcity, rising temperatures, more frequent droughts, so there's a lot of investments that can actually support these small-scale farmers globally. In global climate finance, what we're seeing is that these small-scale producers, hundreds of millions of rural people, are only receiving less than one per cent of the overall global climate finance," he said.

Lario lauded schemes like 'soil health card', and said it gives farmers personalised recommendations on how they can improve their soil health, as well as incentives to adopt treat irrigation and other water-saving technologies.

"The challenges remain and we're seeing that many of the farmers are still struggling to adopt some of the climate smart prac-

tices. So still we need to continue investing, we are investing with the government at the central and state levels in India," he said.

"For example in Maharashtra, in Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, where we are bringing too many of these investments climate resilient practices that combine sustainability but also with income," he said.

He said it's important to focus on how these small-scale farmers can continue increasing their income through crop diversification, improved water management, or micro irrigation systems, and also creating community seed banks or using drought tolerant seeds.

"All of this is really gonna have a translation into better lives and better incomes," he said.

Lario said IFAD's priority is to mobilise financing, especially long-term financing for rural areas and deliver a long-lasting impact for those who need it most.

"We know that agriculture accounts for around 20 per cent of GDP in India and it employs around 42 per cent of the workforce. So even though there has been a lot of progress, we believe that continuing investing in pro-poor inclusive value chain and connecting small-scale producers to markets continues to be fundamental," he said.

NDFB peace pact laid foundation

Contd. from Page 1...

various socio-cultural organisations for their relentless support in maintaining harmony. Sarma underscored that sustaining peace in the region is a shared responsibility. He acknowledged the key role being played by the Bodo community and the 26 other tribal communities residing in the BTR in nurturing peace and unity.

He added that the people's collective commitment to peace has the potential to transform the BTR into a vibrant economic hub. "The 21st century is not about conflict. It is about artificial intelligence, quantum physics, robotics, and machine learning. The people of BTR must embrace this new era and work together to shape a prosperous future," the Chief Minister said.

Responding to a long-standing demand from the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), Sarma announced that the Assam government will now make it mandatory for all government notifications to be translated into the Bodo language in the 13 districts inhabited by Bodo communities. In addition to the main programme, two new initiatives were launched—Bodoland Engaged Ethnography Initiative and Bodoland Migrant Women Livelihood Support Programme. These initiatives aim to enhance community engagement and support sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable populations, particularly women migrants in the region.

Earlier in the day, Sarma paid floral tribute to Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma, the architect of modern Bodo identity and a symbol of peace and wisdom in the region. The event was attended by Minister for Welfare of Bodoland UG Brahma, BTC CEM Pramod Boro, MP Jayanta Basumatary, Speaker of the BTC Assembly Kati Ram Boro, President of Bodo Sahitya Sabha Surath Narzary, and other prominent dignitaries and community leaders. The programme reflected the Assam government's continued focus on inclusive development and cultural affirmation in the BTR and was seen as a reaffirmation of the region's resolve to build a future rooted in peace, identity, and progress.

Myanmar-sourced weapons

They said the foreign-made weapons were smuggled into India from Myanmar through its porous border, allegedly by some cadres of the banned UNLF-P and these arms were then sold across the country using a fabricated paper trail. The officials said that one such case has already been detected in Punjab, and investigations are ongoing to trace the sale of these foreign arms in other parts of the country. This constitutes a serious offence under the Arms Act.

Under Section 10 of the Arms Act, import of foreign weapons in India is prohibited except for in the case of sports persons and that too after getting prior approvals. During raids at the residence of Richard, police recovered four US-made revolvers and pistols, one Austrian-made revolver, one Indian pistol, several rounds of ammunition meant for foreign arms, a wireless set and high-end mobile phones.

Richard's criminal history, as highlighted by police, dates back two decades, and he was first arrested in 1995 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Subsequent arrests occurred in 2005 and 2006 for charges including extortion and UAPA violations. He was also arrested by Meghalaya police in Shillong in September 2006. In July 2003, Richard was allegedly involved in transporting cadres between Guwahati and Bangladesh, and in handling illicit financial transactions, including converting currency into taka and dollars.

After his arrest, officials said Richard allegedly attempted to leverage his affiliation with the UNLF-P and its ongoing ceasefire talks. However, police officials were unmoved as he is suspected of involvement in an arms running racket that could have national ramifications.

Led by Kh Pambai, the UNLF (P) made history in 2023 by becoming the first Meitei armed group in the Imphal Valley to engage in a ceasefire agreement with the government, pledging to renounce violence.

However, the security officials had warned at that time that this may be an attempt by the group to evade growing pressure from the police and other security agencies, as many of its cadres were allegedly involved in extortion and other activities.

The UNLF's demand for camp establishment near Kuki-populated areas was met with resistance from security agencies, fearing a potential escalation of ethnic conflicts that have already resulted in over 200 casualties. Despite the ceasefire agreement's intent to halt hostilities, some incidents in 2024 show UNLF (P) members carrying out violent activities with impunity, even looting arms from security forces. (PTI)

Interpretation of Constitution

that lately he has been "receiving a lot of complaints about the rude behaviour of some of the colleagues." "Being a judge is not a 10 to 5 job, it's an opportunity to serve the society. It is an opportunity to serve the nation," he stressed, and urged the judges to be "true to their oath and commitment."

"Please do not do anything which brings disrepute to this august institution, whose reputation has been so laboriously built by the devotion and dedication of generations of lawyers and generations of judges," he said. Speaking at another felicitation ceremony later on Saturday evening, the CJI said the Constitution works for every last citizen of the country, be it a judge, lawyer, an executive or a parliamentarian.

"Let us dedicate our lives to the eradication of all differences, let us give it ourselves to upholding constitutional values, let us give it ourselves towards the fulfilment of our constitutional promises," he added. (PTI)

Eminent historian Udayaditya

"His demise is an irreparable loss to Assam's educational and social life. In this moment of sorrow, I pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul and extend my deepest condolences to his bereaved family, relatives and loved ones. Om Shantii!" he added.

Rajior Dal president and MLA Akhil Gogoi, who was a student of Bharali, said he was a father figure. "He was my political guide. Visited his residence to pay my tribute to Sir. My deepest condolences to the family of Udayaditya Bharali Sir," he added. Assam Jatiya Parishad president Lurinjyoti Gogoi offering his deepest condolences termed Bharali as the pioneer of modern Assamese history.

"Although I was not fortunate enough to be a direct student of his, he was our eternally respected teacher. He has been speaking out on behalf of the Assamese people with his loud voice and pen, and has shown the way to the nation," he said. (PTI)

Deputy CM joins Dalai

Tibetans and well-wishers worldwide," he noted. The Deputy Chief Minister praised the resilience and cultural pride of the Tibetan community residing across India. "I deeply admire how the Tibetan community has preserved its language, attire, and spiritual traditions. Their strength in maintaining cultural identity is both moving and inspiring," he added, calling it a powerful reminder of the value of cultural heritage in the face of adversity.

Emphasising the importance of preserving indigenous languages and scripts, Mein said, "When a language dies, a culture is lost," urging all communities to draw inspiration from Tibetan efforts to safeguard their Bodhi script and ancient wisdom.

He also highlighted a recent initiative titled 'Freedom Trail', a trekking event retracing the path taken by His Holiness during his escape from Tibet to India. Organised by the Tawang District Administration, local monks, residents, and ITBP personnel, the trek took place from March 31 to April 5 this year. Mein announced that the government is developing this route into an adventure tourism circuit and plans are underway to transform it into a commemorative trekking route with an associated cultural festival to honour the Dalai Lama's extraordinary journey.

The deputy chief minister further underlined the role of technology in cultural preservation, citing the use of artificial intelligence to rediscover and protect indigenous texts, including versions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata in the Tai Khamti script.

The event was attended by Cabinet Ministers Wangki Lowang and Pasang Dorjee Sona, MLAs Dr Mohesh Chai, Chau Zingnu Namchoom, and Mutchu Mithi, along with Inspector General of Police (Eastern Range) P N Khrimy, deputy commissioners and superintendents of police from Lohit and Namsai districts, and other senior officials.

Ten former NDFB cadres

the released cadres. The individuals released were identified as Swmkwr Basumatary, Lankeswar Boro, Santosh Kherkatary, Binod Mushahary, Surjoy Goyary, Rahul Wary, Joleswar Basumatary, Nagen Boro, Anon Borgoyary, and Bikunash Narzary.

All ten had been incarcerated for over 10 years in connection with NIA-registered cases. The development marks a significant moment for the Ex-NDFB Welfare Association, which has been advocating for the reintegration and rehabilitation of its former members.

CEM Ronghang leads BJP

and ASDC. The survey, he said, would serve as a crucial final assessment to shape the party's electoral roadmap. The programme also commemorated the 124th birth anniversary of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, honouring the founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh for his contribution to Indian politics and nationalism. Prominent leaders present at the event included Lok Sabha MP Amarsing Tisso, MLAs Bidya Sing Englang (Diphu), Rupsing Teron (Baitthalangso), and Darsing Ronghang (Howraghat).

Several KAAC Executive Members, Members of Autonomous Council (MACs), Board Chairmen, BJP East Karbi Anglong District President Ronald Killing, and BJP West Karbi Anglong District President Radip Ronghang also participated, along with former MLAs, EMs, and senior BJP leaders. The event reaffirmed the party's focus on inclusive governance and transparent communication, setting the tone for coordinated developmental efforts and a consolidated electoral strategy in the hill districts.

Ball in Washington's court on India

US only when it is fully finalised, properly concluded and in the national interest. FTAs are possible only when both sides get benefited and it should be a win-win agreement, he has said. "National interest should always be supreme. Keeping that in mind, if a deal is made then India is always ready to deal with developed countries," Goyal had said on July 4.

The Indian team returned from Washington last week after holding talks with the US on an interim trade pact. Differences are also there on steel, aluminium (50 per cent) and auto (25 per cent) tariffs. India has hardened its position on giving duty concessions to the US on agriculture and dairy products as both are sensitive subjects. India has never opened the dairy sector in any of the previous trade pacts signed.

US President Donald Trump last week said his administration is sending letters to the first batch of 10-12 countries, sharing details of reciprocal tariff rates and the entire process could be completed by July 9. His comments came amid increasing suspense in India on whether New Delhi and Washington would be able to firm up a much-anticipated trade deal before the US president's tariff deadline ends. He has, however, not named the countries. The president has stated that the reciprocal tariffs would come into effect from August 1.

While the US is looking at duty concessions in sectors like certain industrial goods, automobiles (electric vehicles particularly), wines, petrochemical products, dairy, and agriculture items such as apples, tree nuts, and alfalfa hay; India may look at duty cuts for labour-intensive sectors like apparels, textiles, gems and jewellery, leather, plastics, chemicals, oil seeds, shrimp, and horticulture products.

The US is India's largest trading partner from 2021-22. During 2024-25, the bilateral trade in goods stood at USD 131.84 billion (USD 86.51 billion worth of exports, USD 45.33 billion of imports and USD 41.18 billion trade surplus). (PTI)

LOST

I have Lost my B A admit card Roll 06195 No 01161046 (Assam university silchar 2019 year) and H S admit card and marksheet Roll 0568. No 10562 (AHSEC 2015 year) Palobika Borah D/o Pabitra Borah Vill-jamuna gaon p/o pandit ghat P/s Howraghat Karbi Anglong Assam 7002987146(M)

Event highlights Dr Mookerjee's legacy of unity, nationalism, and constitutional integrity

Cachar district administration pays tribute to Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee on 125th birth anniversary

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 6: The Cachar District Administration observed the 125th birth anniversary of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee with a solemn programme at the Old Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Silchar on Sunday.

The occasion honoured the contributions of Dr Mookerjee to the nation, particularly his vision of Ek Desh, Ek Samvidhan (One Nation, One Constitution).

According to an official statement, the programme began with a floral tribute to Dr Mookerjee's portrait by District Development Commissioner Norsing Bey, ACS, along with noted writer and Chief Minister's Awardee Atin Das, and Dr Gangesh Bhattacharjee, Head of the History Department at Jagannath Singh College, Udharbond. Senior officials of the district administration and other



dignitaries also joined the ceremony.

Additional District Commissioner Hemanga Navis, ACS, welcomed the gathering and reflected on Dr Mookerjee's enduring contributions to national unity and integrity.

commitment to a united India.

Das called on the younger generation to draw inspiration from Mookerjee's life of courage and principle.

Dr Gangesh Bhattacharjee spoke about Dr Mookerjee's journey from being the youngest Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University to his rise as a nationalist leader.

He emphasized the scholar-politician's role in strengthening India's educational and industrial sectors and his ultimate sacrifice in the cause of national integration.

In his closing remarks, District Development Commissioner Norsing Bey commended the gathering for keeping alive the memory of a leader whose life continues to inspire those committed to national unity.

The event served as a tribute to Dr Mookerjee's enduring legacy and reaffirmed the district's commitment to the values he stood for.

Much bigger 'sheesh mahal': Gaurav Gogoi targets lavish building of CM's 'close friend'

GUWAHATI, July 6: Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi on Sunday alleged corruption in the construction of a lavish building in Assam's Diphu allegedly owned by a "close friend" of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and said it is much bigger "sheesh mahal" than that in Delhi which was occupied by a former CM.

Gogoi, president of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, also claimed that nobody in Assam is following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mantra of 'na khaaonga, na khane doonga' (will neither indulge in corruption, nor allow anyone to indulge in corruption).

He made the allegations through a video which was shot in-front of an under construction building in Diphu, the headquarters of the Karbi Anglong district.

The video was posted on Gogoi's Facebook and Instagram handles.

Gogoi said during the assembly elections in Delhi, the BJP allegedly indulged in politics over the bungalow of former chief min-



ister Arvind Kejriwal.

The BJP alleged corruption and claimed that it was a "sheesh mahal", he said.

"I have come to Diphu today and standing before this big bungalow. I heard that this bungalow belongs to a close friend of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. It looks like a bigger 'sheesh mahal' in Diphu than Delhi's 'sheesh mahal'," Gogoi said.

The Congress leader claimed that crores of rupees were spent on this "sheesh mahal" in Diphu and

wanted to know whether the Enforcement Directorate and Income Tax department would do something on this.

"I want to tell Prime Minister Narendra Modi that no one in Assam is following his Mantra of 'na khaaonga, na khane doonga'," he said.

Ever since his appointment as the APMC president, Gogoi has been travelling Assam extensively, meeting a section of people and party workers in a bid to prepare the Congress for the assembly elections slated for early next year. (PTI)

AJYCP to install bust of late singer Rajib Gogoi in Bokajan

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, July 6: The Assam Jatiyatbadi Yuva Chitra Parishad (AJYCP), Bokajan unit, has decided to install a bust of the late popular singer Rajib Gogoi—also known as Rajib Sadiya—at its office premises in Bokajan, Karbi Anglong, in recognition of his contribution to Assamese music and culture. The designated spot for the bust was formally marked on Saturday in the presence of AJYCP executive member Jitu Phukan, local social workers, and journalists. Social worker Jugal Chetia lit a ceremonial lamp and placed a few trowels of concrete at the spot to signify the beginning of the installation process. Rajib Gogoi, known for his soulful songs that highlighted the struggles of the common man, hailed from Tupsinga Gaon in Sadiya.

He had collaborated with notable Assamese singers such as Krishnamoibi Chutia, Neel Akash Das, and Rakesh Reeyan. His popular songs include Xandhu Kotha, Goree Gorokhia, and Anurag Tumi.

The singer tragically passed away on January 12 this year after collapsing during a performance in Tinsukia, Assam.

The AJYCP's initiative aims to honour his legacy and inspire future generations through his life and music.

Birth centenary of Sahityacharya Mohim Bora concludes at Nowgong College

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, July 6: The concluding ceremony of the birth centenary celebration of Sahityacharya Mohim Bora was held at Nowgong College (Autonomous) on Sunday. The event was jointly organised by Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha, the Assamese Department of Nowgong College, and Nagaon Shankardev Sahitya Chora.

The ceremony commenced with the lighting of lamps at the statue of Mohim Bora on the college campus by Dr Sarat Borkatoki, former principal of the college and president of Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha, along with its secretary Rajiv Hazarika. Dr Dhruvajyoti Baruah, in-charge principal of the college, delivered the welcome address, followed by the keynote speech from Professor Dipak Kumar Bora, former head of the Assamese Department, who described Mohim Bora as "not just a name, but an emotional entity."

Dr Borkatoki recalled his association with the Sahityacharya and highlighted his contributions to Sankardev research. Dhanada Devi, head of the Assamese Department, reflected on the ecological sensitivity in Bora's writings under the theme "Nature helps humans, and humans help nature."

The event featured recitations of Mohim Bora's poems by Professor Dr Achyut Kumar Saikia and his granddaughter Shreya Bora.

A tribute poem penned and recited by Priyanka Sarma, assistant secretary of Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha, was also part of the programme. Among those present were Dr Tosheswar Nath, geographer; faculty members Uma Ram Das and Navanita Bora; and other dignitaries representing Mohim Bora's family. Students and teachers from Nowgong College and Pioneer Arts College, Nagaon, also participated.

Free summer classes begin at Demow Higher Secondary School

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, July 6: Free summer classes for students of Class 9 and Class 10 have commenced at Demow Higher Secondary School from July 1, under the initiative of the Assam Jatiyatbadi Yuva Chitra Parishad (AJYCP), Demow Regional Committee. The programme began with an inaugural session anchored by Jadumoni Aditya Kalita, General Secretary of AJYCP, Demow Regional Committee.

The summer classes aim to support academic learning during the break and will continue until July 15. Present at the inaugural event were Bokul Dutta, Principal of Demow Higher Secondary School; retired teacher Mrinal Ranjan Gogoi; Umesh Chetia, President; Shekhar Jyoti Dowari, Secretary of Demow Press Club; Krishna Hazarika, Publicity Secretary of AJYCP Sivasagar District Committee; and Trolukya Gogoi, President of AJYCP, Demow Regional Committee.

Tripura CM announces new awards, renaming of Agartala Town Hall in Honour of Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, July 6: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday announced the institution of two new awards in honour of the iconic nationalist leader.

He also declared that the historic Agartala Town Hall will be renamed after Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, and a marble statue will be erected in his memory.

Addressing a commemorative event organised by the Information and Cultural Affairs (ICA) Department at Muktaghara Auditorium in Agartala, the chief minister said the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Award will be conferred on Teachers' Day to individuals who have made exceptional contributions in their respective fields. Additionally, starting next year, the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Excellence Award will be presented annually on his birth anniversary to individuals excelling in the social, political, national, or administrative arenas.

Saha underlined the enduring significance of Dr Mukherjee's ideology in contemporary India and called for younger generations to engage with his life and work.

"His principles and vision are still deeply relevant

today. We must continue to learn from his legacy and strive to realise his dream of a strong and united India," he said. Drawing parallels between Dr Mukherjee's vision and the developmental initiatives of the present government, Saha said the nation has undergone transformative changes under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership since 2014.

"Whether it is Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, or Sabka Prayas—these guiding philosophies reflect the values Dr Mukherjee stood for," he noted.

The chief minister also highlighted the abolition of triple talaq as a historic step toward gender justice, particularly for Muslim women, and credited the Prime Minister for ushering in bold social reforms while strengthening India's economic framework.

He emphasised that the state government is working in close alignment with the Centre to ensure good governance and last-mile delivery of services.

"Our government is committed to reaching every household. Inspired by Dr Mukherjee's idea of Akhand Bharat, we aim to build an inclusive and unified society through sustained social transformation," Saha added.

Air tank explosion in Sivasagar claims one life

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, July 6: A 62-year-old man lost his life in a tragic accident after an air tank exploded at a tyre repair and air filling shop in Singhaduwar under Jaysagar police station around noon on Saturday.

According to eyewitnesses, the victim, identified as Sunbaba Ali, was speaking with a customer when the air tank burst with a deafening sound. The explosion severely injured Ali, resulting in the loss of both legs.

He was immediately rushed to Jaysagar Civil Hospital and later referred to a hospital in Dibrugarh, but succumbed to his injuries en route near Moran. Another individual present at the scene sustained minor injuries.

Jaysagar police reached the spot shortly after the incident and have initiated an inquiry.

Tipra Motha weakening organisationally, losing support base: Tripura Congress Chief

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, July 6: Tripura Congress President Ashish Kumar Saha on Sunday claimed that the Tipra Motha Party is gradually losing its support base and facing internal divisions.

Saha's remarks came a day after Tipra Motha MLA Ranjit Debbarma warned that the party could withdraw support from the BJP-led state government if their key demands are not met.

However, party founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma distanced himself from the statement, suggesting it may have been made out of frustration.

Reacting to the developments, Saha alleged that Tipra Motha MLAs are attempting to bargain with the ruling coalition.

"Their statements clearly suggest a bargaining tactic. They made tall promises to the indigenous people during the elections, but are now losing ground. Organisationally, they are weakening. Just

yesterday, a number of indigenous people joined the Congress after leaving the IPFT, Tipra Motha, and BJP. This shift reflects growing public support for Congress," Saha said.

He also questioned the party's internal coherence, saying, "How can an MLA make such a serious statement without consulting the party supremo?"

Saha further asserted that regional parties based on "temporary agendas" struggle to sustain themselves in the long run.

"Many such parties have exploited indigenous sentiments but failed to deliver. What Tipra Motha is doing now is merely theatrical. The people see through it. Congress, on the other hand, has always worked for the welfare of all communities, including the indigenous. Our leaders are visiting different parts of the state, reaching out to the people, and exposing the reality of the present situation," he added.

Jagiroad power woes, APDCL office in unhygienic state

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, July 6: Residents of Jagiroad have expressed strong dissatisfaction over the erratic power supply in the area over the past few days, citing serious inconvenience and alleging poor response from the local office of the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL).

According to local complaints, repeated efforts to reach out to the consumer grievance cell at the APDCL office in Jagiroad have yielded little result, with staff reportedly adopting a casual approach and failing to resolve the ongoing power issues.

Adding to the frustration, the grievance cell itself is allegedly operating from a dilapidated Assam-type structure surrounded by overgrown vegetation and wa-

terlogging, creating highly unhygienic conditions.

Locals have claimed that stagnant water at the rear of the premises has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes, heightening the risk of malaria and other vector-borne diseases.

Nearby residents have also raised concerns about the unsanitary practices of some staff members, who reportedly relieve themselves in an abandoned toilet and in the open near the premises, further aggravating health risks.

Residents have urged the authorities to take immediate and effective action to address both the persistent power supply issues and the poor hygiene conditions around the APDCL grievance cell in Jagiroad.

Mera Yuva Bharat celebrates birth anniversary of Syama Prasad Mookerjee

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, July 6: The birth anniversary of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, noted freedom fighter, politician, and former Union Minister, was commemorated in Nagaon and Hojai districts by Mera Yuva Bharat under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.

The celebrations were held at Jajori Dhalpuria Ananta Primary School in Nagaon and the 2nd Kaki Srimanta Sankardev School in Hojai.

The events featured tributes through lamp lighting ceremonies, discussions on Mookerjee's life and ideology, and a student speech competition.

At Jajori, cultural expert and Education Department CRCC Naren Deka delivered a keynote address highlighting Mookerjee's contributions to Indian politics and national integration.

DPS Nagaon hosts cultural finale of Udaan 2025 summer camp

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 6: Delhi Public School, Nagaon, hosted the Cultural Program Finale of its five-day Funk Summer Camp, Udaan 2025, on July 5, showcasing an array of performances that highlighted student creativity, self-expression, and collaboration.

The event marked the culmination of activities aimed at fostering holistic development across all grade levels, from foundational to senior classes.

According to an official release, the programme began with a formal introduction, followed by a felicitation ceremony for special guests, including Arup Choudhury, Parikshit Gogoi, and Mr and Mrs Amit Kumar More.

In her address, Principal Rituu Rajnish delivered an inspiring message encouraging students to pursue their dreams with confi-

dence and determination.

The cultural segment opened with a charming skit and dance performance by students of Grades SKG-II.

This was followed by self-introductions and a skit by Grades III-IV. Middle-grade students from Grades V and VI also presented thoughtful skits and introductions that impressed the audience with their energy and depth.

A standout moment came with a unique self-introduction and skit presentation by students of Grades VII-VIII alongside their mothers, which added emotional resonance to the programme and was warmly received.

The finale included two dance performances: one by Grades III-VII, and another by Grades VII-VIII with mothers, earning enthusiastic applause from the audience.

Scheduled Caste youth body formed in West Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

HAMREN, July 6: The district unit of the Assam Anusuchit Jati Yuva Chhatra Sanstha (AAJYCS) for West Karbi Anglong was formally constituted during a general meeting of Scheduled Caste youths held at Nawadeep Higher Secondary School on Sunday.

The meeting was presided over by Jeetendra Harijan, Vice Principal of Kapili College.

Bishnu Ram was selected as President of the newly formed district body, while Tuntun Ram was appointed General Secretary.

The formation of the district committee was overseen by Nripen Das (President), Nitya Nandan Das (General Secretary), and Ajit Das (Treasurer) of the central AAJYCS, who attended as observers and men-

tors. The Sanstha aims to address issues affecting Scheduled Caste students, promote awareness of constitutional rights, and combat anti-social activities in society. As part of the programme, Ashish Kumar Ram, a NEET 2025 aspirant, was felicitated with a certificate and a traditional Gamosa for his dedication and academic effort.

A condolence ceremony was also held to pay tribute to Dr Ruplin Rongpipi, a Community Health Officer who died of electrocution on July 2. Prayers were offered for the peace of her soul.

The event was attended by dignitaries including Prem Chand Ram (President), Nayan Bharati (Secretary), and Chhatrapati Ram (Vice President) of the West Karbi Anglong Anusuchit Jati Parishad.

Sanchipat brings Jyotiprasad's timeless tragedy to life with stirring performances and stagecraft

Jyotiprasad Agarwala's 'Rupalim' staged in Morigaon

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, July 6: Rupalim, a celebrated play written by Rupkonwar Jyotiprasad Agarwala, was staged by the cultural group Sanchipat at the District Library auditorium in Morigaon on Saturday evening.

The performance captivated the audience with its emotive storytelling and compelling stagecraft.

The cast included Rishikesh Kaushik (Rukmi Raja), Jitmaton Bharadwaj (Moni Mugdha), Bhargab Pol Mahanta (Mayab), Lakhyajyoti Saikia (Reng Thiang), Jugpritam Saikia (Junafa), Luna Bora (Iibhen), and Ristina Priya Sarma (Rupalim).

Their performances drew enthusiastic appreciation from the audience.

The play was formally inaugurated by District Cultural Officer Anghuman Dutta, along with senior journalist Dalim Phukan and Debewar Goswami.

Guests Atanu Sarma and Birinchi Sarma



were felicitated by Sanchipat secretary Gyan Muhan Deka.

Acknowledgment was given to the backstage contributors whose efforts brought the production to life: Jutisha Mahanta (Assistant Director), Sankar Mahanta (Music), Gungun Kalita (Choreography), Raju Das (Scene Dec-

oration), Nitul Barkatoki (Lighting), Moni Mahanta (Sound), and Dipankar Nath (Photography).

Directed by Ajoy Deka, the seven-act ethnic tragedy explores themes of love, jealousy, sacrifice, and societal constraints within the fictional Rukmi tribe.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Laws are like sausages, it is better not to see them being made - Otto von Bismarck

Is Apana Dal heading for split?

NDA partner Apana Dal (S) headed by Union Minister Anupriya Patel and her husband Asheesh Patel is heading for a split two years before assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh scheduled in 2027. On the occasion of birth anniversary of the founder of Apana Dal Dr Sonelal Patel, the two factions of Apana Dal confronted openly blaming each other being responsible for the decline of the party. Speaking on the occasion of birth anniversary Dr Sonelal Patel, his son-in-law and minister in Yogi government Asheesh Patel hinted that certain leaders from alliance were involved in conspiracy to finish Apana Dal. Significantly Union Minister Anupriya Patel and her husband Asheesh Patel praised PM Narendra Modi and Union Minister Amit Shah but at same time very were critical of alliance leaders. It would be worth mentioning here that Apana Dal leader Asheesh Patel was targeted by his sister-in-law Pallavi Patel SP MLA stating that huge amount was taken by his ministry in the appointment of teachers. At that time Asheesh Patel had alleged that there was threat to his life from STF chief. On the other hand, Pallavi Patel wrote to Governor Ananandi Bai Patel and requested for high level probe against her brother-in-law and state minister Asheesh Patel of Apana Dal. Now a separate mocha has been formed by the leaders who had been with Apana Dal (S) and other smaller groups but left the party during last few years.

The convenor of Morcha Brijendra Pratap Singh said he was the main leader of Apana Dal (S) and claimed support of nine out of 13 MLAs of the group. He further claimed that he would show the MLAs strength if directed by the central leadership of NDA. Brijendra Pratap Singh said that his group would support NDA and show the real strength at an appropriate time. Apana Dal (S) joined NDA only after meeting between Anupriya Patel and Union Home minister Amit Shah. Apana Dal had good base in kurmi backward dominated assembly constituencies in UP. Significantly, small parties like Apana Dal and Nishad Party gained due alliance with BJP which resulted in one MP in Lok Sabha and 13 MLAs. Apana Dal (S) emerged as third largest group in UP Assembly and exhibited its strength in eastern, western and Bundelkhand regions of UP. During birth anniversary function of Dr Sonelal Patel, Apana Dal leader Asheesh Patel managed to show all the MLAs with him.

Meanwhile state president Jatav RP Gautam has written a letter to government to remove all the relatives of the rebels nominated to important positions in the state government. There are reports that a certain senior leader from BJP is patronising the rebels to reduce the bargaining power of caste based regional parties. But for the support from the important leader from NDA it would not have been possible for rebels to come out in open and weaken the alliance partner.

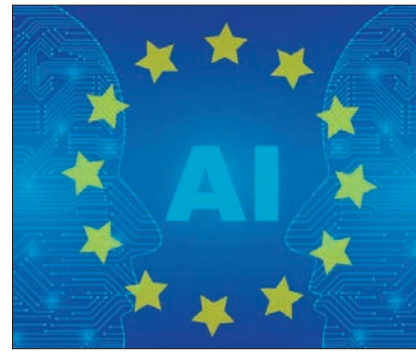
Europe's AI Act and the crisis of regulatory readiness

With just weeks remaining before the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act begins imposing obligations on general-purpose AI (GPAI) models, the continent stands at a regulatory crossroads. Slated to go into effect on 2 August 2025, the first enforceable tranche of the AI Act will mark a seminal moment in global AI governance. Yet, rather than being greeted with uniform readiness, this milestone is shrouded in controversy, confusion, and intensifying appeals for delay from both industry titans and national governments. What was intended as a carefully phased rollout of the world's first comprehensive AI law now risks becoming a cautionary tale about the friction between legislative ambition and bureaucratic preparedness.

The AI Act, which officially entered into force on 1 August 2024, was structured with a staggered, three-year implementation strategy to ensure smooth adaptation by both companies and member states. The earliest prohibitions—targeting unacceptable use cases such as social scoring and emotion recognition in workplaces—came into effect in February 2025. Now, with the second wave of obligations targeting GPAI models such as OpenAI's GPT-4o, Google's Gemini, Mistral's Mixtral, and other foundational platforms due next month, the European Commission is being besieged by calls for a "clockstop"—a two-year pause in enforcement. At the heart of the matter lies the tension between the EU's aspiration to become the global standard-setter for AI regulation and the systemic unpreparedness to realize that goal on the ground.

The GPAI obligations set to apply on 2 August 2025 are no minor regulatory hurdle. These include a host of mandates: technical documentation, transparency about data sources, adherence to copyright standards, energy efficiency reporting, robustness testing, and risk assessment protocols for bias, toxicity, and systemic risks. These requirements are designed to promote trustworthy AI, a core principle of the EU's digital agenda. However, major players in the tech ecosystem—Alphabet (Google), Meta Platforms, Mistral, ASML, and a coalition of 45 large European firms including Siemens, Philips, Airbus, Carrefour, BNP Paribas, and Lufthansa—have jointly issued an open letter urging the European Commission to suspend enforcement. They argue that the existing compliance infrastructure is incomplete, legally ambiguous, and threatens to undermine both innovation and industrial competitiveness.

At the core of their complaint is the delay in publishing the AI Code of Practice—a crucial non-binding guidance document designed to provide detailed



instructions on how to meet the GPAI obligations. Initially expected by 2 May 2025, the Code is now projected to be released only at the end of the year by the European AI Board. This six-month delay has left developers and deployers without concrete standards to orient compliance efforts, effectively forcing companies to fly blind in implementing technical and procedural requirements. Similarly, the harmonised standards being developed by European standards bodies CEN and CENELEC, which are expected to serve as proxies for regulatory conformity, have also been postponed until sometime in 2026.

The cumulative effect of these delays is growing uncertainty. Many companies report they are unclear about the documentation formats required, how to evaluate models for bias or systemic risk, or what constitutes sufficient transparency under the law. In the absence of official standards and guidance, each entity is left to interpret the law as best it can—risking fragmentation, inconsistent enforcement across member states, and increased legal exposure. Tech lobbying groups like CCIA Europe have amplified these concerns, warning that the current scenario is setting the stage for chaotic implementation.

These industry anxieties have found unlikely allies in political circles. Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson has called the AI rules "confusing" and openly advocated for a delay. Poland's Deputy Digital Minister has also supported aligning compliance deadlines with operational readiness. France, Germany, and Italy have indicated openness to self-regulation and a phased approach. Even Henna Virkkunen, one of the European Parliament's key digital policymakers, suggested that if key frameworks are not in place, delaying enforcement should be on the table. These statements reflect growing consensus that legislative ambition, if not matched by institutional readiness, can become counterproductive.

Despite mounting pressure, the European Commission remains firm. "There is

no stop-the-clock, no grace period, no pause," stated Thomas Regnier, a Commission official involved in the rollout. From the Commission's perspective, any softening of the timeline would jeopardize the EU's global credibility as a rule-maker and risk setting a precedent of regulatory retreat. Brussels is acutely aware that its AI Act is being watched globally—by regulators in Washington, Beijing, and beyond—as a potential blueprint for democratic digital governance. Having already led the way with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the EU is determined to extend its normative influence into the AI era.

However, this determination clashes starkly with the uneven readiness of the EU's member states. According to a May 2025 Euronews investigation, half of the EU's 27 countries have yet to designate national supervisory authorities and market surveillance bodies, a prerequisite for local enforcement. Nations such as Germany, Portugal, Romania, and Italy are still finalizing their administrative structures. The European AI Board, responsible for coordinating across national regulators, has picked up speed, but its harmonization efforts are running out of time. In the absence of functioning enforcement bodies, the 2 August obligations could become largely theoretical—legally applicable but practically unenforceable.

Equally worrying is the under-resourced state of the EU's central AI Office, responsible for overseeing GPAI compliance. Internal reports and forum discussions on Reddit suggest that the office currently employs only 30 dedicated staff members, with a total workforce of around 85—far fewer than the UK's AI Safety Institute, which is already better funded and staffed. This staffing deficit raises serious questions about the EU's ability to conduct meaningful audits, investigations, or enforcement actions against global AI giants with far more sophisticated legal and technical teams.

Given this confluence of legal ambiguity, administrative disarray, and enforcement incapacity, the calls for a delay are not mere lobbying tactics but a reflection of real structural deficits. The political calendar, however, adds urgency to the debate. For any formal delay to be enacted through the EU's fast-track legislative procedure, consensus would need to be achieved across the Commission, Council, and Parliament before the latter breaks for its final plenary week on 7 July 2025. This leaves less than a month to resolve a regulatory impasse of immense complexity. Precedents exist: the EU has

previously delayed implementation of the Deforestation Regulation and portions of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, suggesting that a clockstop remains a viable—if politically delicate—solution.

The broader stakes extend beyond compliance calendars. Europe is positioning itself as a global leader in ethical and human-centric AI. Its regulatory efforts are rooted in an attempt to assert digital sovereignty in a landscape otherwise dominated by American and Chinese tech giants. But regulatory sovereignty must be backed by operational realism. Without functioning institutions, coherent guidance, and cross-border alignment, the AI Act risks becoming an aspirational document rather than an enforceable law. Worse still, premature enforcement under fragmented conditions could drive innovation away from the continent, a concern repeatedly voiced by CEOs and AI researchers alike.

This regulatory tension also underscores a larger philosophical divide. The EU AI Act was drafted before the emergence of GPT-3.5, ChatGPT, and other generative AI breakthroughs that have transformed the technological landscape. Critics such as Google DeepMind's Dorothy Chou and Meta's policy lead Chris Yiu argue that the law's structure is increasingly mismatched to contemporary AI practices. They caution that over-regulating models that are still poorly understood even by their creators could lead to rigid frameworks that stifle experimentation, especially in open-source communities.

And yet, the need for accountability remains undeniable. With generative AI systems increasingly shaping information flows, employment decisions, healthcare diagnostics, and even democratic discourse, transparency, auditability, and fairness are not optional—they are essential. The EU's challenge, then, is not whether to regulate but how to do so wisely and effectively.

The coming weeks will reveal whether the European Commission can navigate this tightrope—balancing its pioneering regulatory agenda with practical implementation challenges. If it manages to retain the AI Act's spirit while accommodating the realities of preparedness and scalability, the EU may still emerge as the steward of responsible AI governance. But if enforcement begins amidst confusion, fragmentation, and institutional weakness, the risk is not just noncompliance—it is the erosion of public trust in the entire regulatory enterprise. In the race between regulation and readiness, time is no longer an ally. *(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com)*

'New Middle East' under Israel control is Netanyahu's real goal in the region

By Ramzy Baroud

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu persistently declares his ambition to "change the face of the Middle East." Yet, his repeated assertions seem to clash with the unfolding reality on the ground.

Netanyahu's opportunistic relationship with language is now proving detrimental to his country. The Israeli leader undoubtedly grasps fundamental marketing principles, particularly the power of strong branding and consistent messaging. However, for any product to succeed over time, clever branding alone is insufficient; the product itself must live up to at least a minimum degree of expectation.

Netanyahu's "product," however, has proven utterly defective, yet the 75-year-old Israeli Prime Minister stubbornly refuses to abandon his outdated marketing techniques. But what exactly is Netanyahu selling? Long before assuming Israel's leadership, Netanyahu mastered the art of repetition—a technique often employed by politicians to inundate public discourse with specific slogans. Over time, these slogans are intended to become "common sense."

As a member of the Knesset in 1992, Netanyahu delivered what appeared to be a bombshell: Iran was "within three to five years" from obtaining a nuclear bomb. In 1996, he urged the U.S. Congress to act, declaring that "time is running out."

While the U.S. pivoted its attention toward Iraq, following the September 2001 attacks, Netanyahu evidently hoped to eliminate two regional foes in one stroke. Following the fall of the Iraqi government in 2003, Netanyahu channelled all his energy into a new discourse: Iran as an existential threat.

Between then and now, Iran has remained his primary focus, even as regional alliances began to form around a discourse of stabilization and renewed diplomatic ties.



The Carnegie article sought to expand the definition of the Middle East beyond the traditional Middle East and North Africa, reaching as far as the Caucasus and Central Asia

However, the Obama administration, especially during its second term, was clearly uninterested in another regional war. As soon as Obama left office, Netanyahu reverted to his old marketing strategy.

It was during Trump's first term that Netanyahu brought all his marketing techniques to the forefront. He utilized what is known as comparative advertising, where his enemies "product" is denigrated with basic terms like "barbarism," "dark age," and so forth, while his own is promoted as representing "civilization," "enlightenment," and "progress."

He also invested heavily in the FUD (Fear, Uncertainty, Doubt) marketing technique. This entailed spreading negative or misleading information about others while promoting his own as a far superior alternative.

This brings us to "solution framing." For instance, the so-called "existential threats" faced by Israel can supposedly be resolved through the establishment of a "New Middle East." For this new reality to materialize, the

"We are changing the face of the Middle East. We are changing the face of the world," he triumphantly declared in June 2021.

Even following the events of October 7, 2023, and the Israeli war and genocide that ensued, Netanyahu never ceased using the term. This time, however, his emphasis on "change" rotated between a future possibility and an active reality. "I ask that you stand steadfast because we are going to change the Middle East," he stated on October 9 of that same year.

And again in September 2024, he proclaimed that Israel was "pursuing" a plan to "assassinate Hezbollah leaders" with the aim of "changing the strategic reality of the Middle East." And again, in October, December, and January of this year. In every single instance, he contextualized the "change of the Middle East" with bombs and rockets, and nothing else.

In May, coinciding with a major Israeli bombing of Yemen, he declared that Israel's "mission" exceeds that of "defeating Hamas," extending to "changing the face of the Middle East." And finally, on June 16, he assigned the same language to the war with Iran, this time remaining committed to the new tweak of adding the word "face" to his new, envisaged Middle East.

Of course, old branding tactics aside, Netanyahu's Middle East, much like the U.S.'s old "greater Middle East," remains a pipe dream aimed at dominating the resource-rich region, with Israel serving the role of regional hegemon. That said, the events of the last two years have demonstrated that, although the Middle East is indeed changing, this transformation is not happening because of Israel. Consequently, the outcome will most likely not be to its liking.

Therefore, Netanyahu may continue repeating, like a broken record, old colonial slogans, but genuine change will only happen because of the people of the region and their many capable political players. *(IPA Service)*

India off the track in several SDG goals, significant challenges persist

By Dr. Gyan Pathak

One decade has passed of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), yet India is off the track in several of them which require intensified and focused interventions to achieve the targets by 2030. While notable progress has been made in several sectors, significant challenges continue to persist other.

This conclusion has been drawn by the Sustainable Development Goals National Indicator Framework (NIF) Progress Report 2025 released by the National Statistics Office, on the basis of 284 national SDG indicators available in the NIF as on 29th June, 2025.

The first goal SDG 1 was to be achieved was "No Poverty" by 2030. This goal has 7 targets. A total of 13 indicators have been identified at the national level, and data are available for all of them. The document gives progress up to only 2019-21 for the level of poverty. In 2015-16, poverty in India was shown 24.85 per cent which declined to 14.96 per cent in 2019-21. In 2025, 64.3 per cent of the population were under social protection. Institutional assistance was being provided to 1.57 lakh senior citizens in 2023-24. It means, India is going to miss the target of "No Poverty" by 2030.

"Zero Hunger" was the second target (SDG 2). There has been considerable progress in this regard, but considerable challenges remain. The goal has 8 targets. Ratio of institutional credit to agriculture to the agriculture output was 1.56 per cent in 2023-24. GVA in agriculture was ₹ 94,110 per worker in 2024-25.

India seems to be on track on SDG 3 'good health and well-being', but challenges remain. Neonatal mortality rate per 1000 live births were still 19 in 2021.

In SDG 4 quality education to all is lagging behind, though free and compulsory education is provided upto class 8th. Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education was 29.5 per cent in 2022-23. The proportion of schools having access to in 2023-24: electricity was 91.8 per cent; computers for pedagogical purposes was 57.20 per cent; adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities/disabled friendly ramp 77.1 per cent and toilets 34.4 per cent; basic drinking water to 98.3 per cent; sanitation facilities to girls 97.2 per cent and to boys 95.7 per cent; basic hand washing to 94.7 per cent; and internet facilities to 78.5 per cent.

Under SDG 5 (Gender Equality) female to male labour force participation rate in 15-59 years age group was 0.54 in 2023. Bank linked Self Help Groups (SHGs) were 97.04 per cent in 2023-24.

Under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) improved drinking water is being supplied to 99.62 per cent of the people in 2024-25. Open defecation free target has been achieved 100 per cent by 2024-25, and the proportion of villages having water and sanitation committees was 0.9 in 2024-25.

Under SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) 100 per cent households were electrified by 2021-22. Renewable energy share in the total installed electricity generation was 22.13 per cent in 2024-25.

Under SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic

Growth) outstanding credit to MSME was ₹ 27.2 lakh crore in 2023-24. In that year LFPR was 64.3 per cent. There were 34,293 recognised start-ups in 2024. Per capita fossil fuel consumption was 169.5 kg in 2024-25.

As for Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure under SDG 9, the total carbon dioxide emission of power sector per unit of GDP (in tonne/ Rupee Crore) was 40.52 in 2022-23. Number of researchers per million was 262 in 2020-21. Mobile network coverage in 2024 was 99.06 per cent for 4G.

Under SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality) the data shows Gini coefficient of household expenditure in rural areas in 2023-24 at 0.237 and in urban areas 0.284.

Achievement under SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) shows that 80.7 per cent of wage was being processed in 2024-25.

Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns under SDG 12, the data shows 3,036 was recycling plants installed in 2024-25. Installed renewable energy generating capacity in watts per capita was



156.31 in 2024-25.

Under SDG 13 (Climate Action) the reduction in emission intensity of GDP in 2020 over 2005 level was 36 per cent. SDG 14 (Life Below Water) data shows India's sustainable yield in fishing was 5.3 million tonne per year in 2024-25.

Life on Land under SDG 15, India had 5.69 per cent of its geographical area in 2024 as protected. Forest cover has been almost stagnant which was 21.76 per cent in 2023, far below than India's target of achieving 33 per cent.

Under SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) the data shows 1.55 judges per lakh population in 2024, and number of courts 1.93.

The last, SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals) shows total number of internet subscription at 954.4 million in 2024. All 29 states have their monitoring framework in 2024-25.

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the landmark resolution titled "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", marking a global commitment to a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable future. At the heart of this agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, which came into effect on 1 January 2016. *(IPA Service)*

Everything you need to know about cirrhosis

By: Adam Felman

Cirrhosis is a progressive disease that develops over time. As scar tissue builds up, it can affect blood flow through the liver, leading to liver dysfunction. Various factors can lead to liver damage and cirrhosis, such as:

- viral infections
 - alcohol consumption
 - toxins, including medications
 - hereditary and genetic conditions
 - some autoimmune diseases
 - metabolic syndrome, including obesity, which leads to widespread inflammation
- This article examines why cirrhosis occurs, how to recognize it, and the treatments, complications, and outlook.

Symptoms of cirrhosis

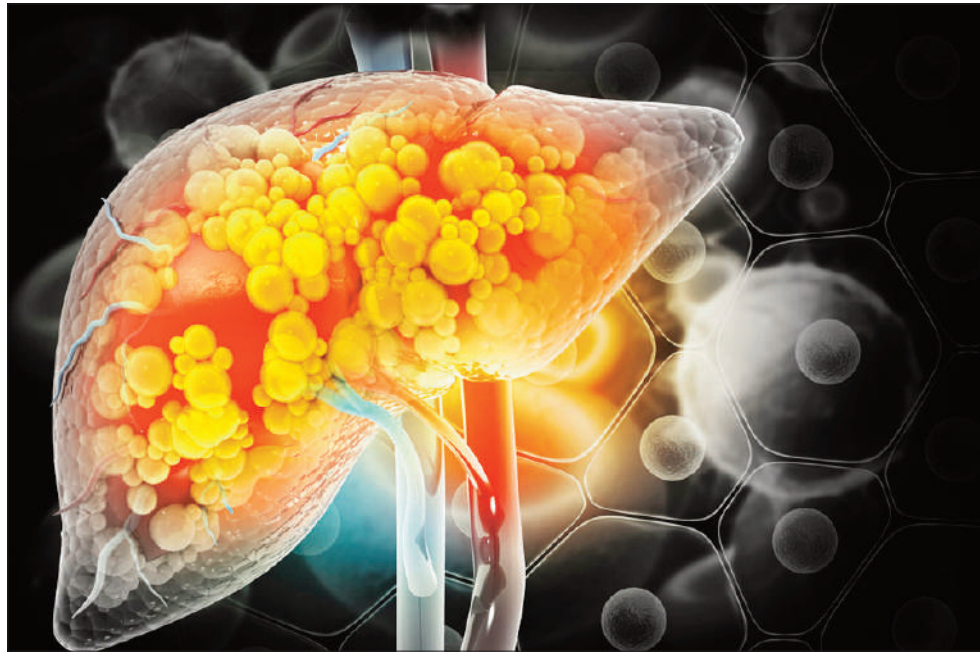
With early cirrhosis, there are often no symptoms. But, as scar tissue accumulates, it undermines the liver's ability to function properly.

A person may notice:

- fatigue
- nausea
- loss of appetite
- weight loss and loss of muscle mass
- patches of small, red blood vessels on the upper trunk and the palms of the hands

As the disease progresses, they may experience:

- swelling in the legs and abdomen due to a buildup of fluid



- an enlarged spleen
- infections
- confusion
- jaundice, where the whites of the eyes take on a yellow tinge
- dark-colored urine
- tarry stools
- itching
- internal bleeding
- low sex drive

In time, fibrous scar tissue replaces healthy liver tissue. Regenerative nodules may also form. These are lumps that appear as the liver tries to heal the damage.

Treatments for cirrhosis

There is no cure for cirrhosis, but diagnosis and treatment can help to limit progression and prevent liver decompensation. This is when cirrhosis progresses to a point where the liver can't carry out all of its basic processes.

Lifestyle changes

If a person has a diagnosis of cirrhosis, they will need to protect their liver, for example, by:

- avoiding raw or undercooked meat and shellfish, which increase the risk of an infection
- avoiding alcohol consumption
- limiting the intake of salt and fats
- using diet and exercise to manage body weight, if appropriate

It is important to check with a dietician and physician before making large diet changes. They will be able to assess an individual's circumstances and decide upon the best course of action.

Treating underlying causes

Some treatment options will depend on the underlying cause.

- For example:
 - Alcohol-related liver disease: A doctor will recommend taking no alcohol. In some cases, they may recommend a special treatment program for people with alcohol dependency.
 - Hepatitis B or C: For viral hepatitis, a doctor will prescribe antiviral medications.
 - Non-alcoholic-related fatty liver disease (NAFLD): Lifestyle changes, such as a change in diet, may help manage NAFLD.

Treatment for symptoms

The person may also need treatment for symptoms of cirrhosis, such as:

- Portal hypertension: Medication can reduce high blood pressure in the portal vein, which supplies the liver with blood.
- Esophageal varices: Swollen blood vessels can burst, causing bleeding to appear in vomit or stools. This needs urgent medical attention. Various strategies can help stem the bleeding.
- Infections: Antibiotics can treat bacterial infections.
- Hepatic encephalopathy: Medications can help manage high toxin levels in the blood.

Screening

A doctor may also recommend screening for liver cancer, as the risk is higher among people with cirrhosis. People living with cirrhosis may need regular blood tests and imaging scans.

Liver transplant

Widespread scarring may be irreversible. In these cases, the person may need a liver transplant. It can take time to find a suitable donor, and this procedure is often a last resort.

Stages of cirrhosis

Doctors grade cirrhosis in various ways, such as the Childs-Pugh score.

- Using scores from various tests, it puts the liver into one of three categories:
 - A: The liver is working well.
 - B: There is moderate damage.
 - C: Damage is advanced or severe.

The score helps give an idea of the person's outlook. Category C, or end-stage liver disease, is potentially fatal.

Cirrhosis can also be either compensated or decompensated.

With compensated cirrhosis, the liver can function effectively despite the damage. People with compensated cirrhosis often have no symptoms.

With decompensated cirrhosis, the liver cannot function effectively, and symptoms may be noticeable.

Causes of cirrhosis

Common causes of cirrhosis are:

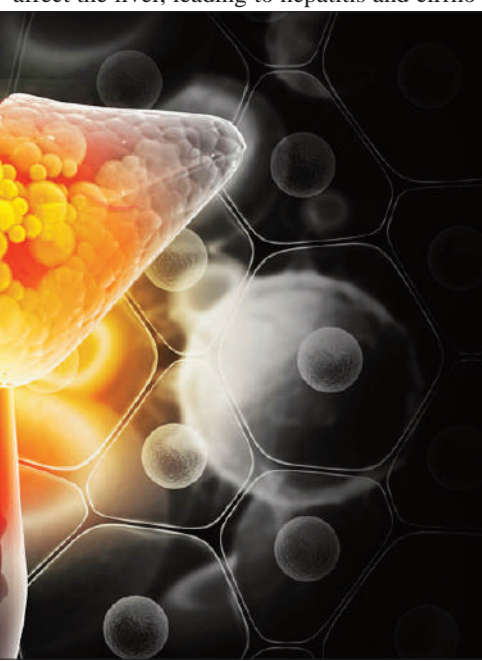
- hepatitis, a viral infection
- long-term high alcohol consumption
- non-alcohol-related steatosis, a type of fatty liver disease
- exposure to toxins
- genetic diseases

Hepatitis

Globally, hepatitis B and C are the leading causes of cirrhosis. People can get either type after exposure to blood that contains the virus, for example, through needlestick injuries or sharing needles.

Vaccines can protect against hepatitis B but not hepatitis C.

In autoimmune hepatitis, the person has an autoimmune disease. In this type of disease, the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy cells. Sometimes, an autoimmune disease can affect the liver, leading to hepatitis and cirrhosis.



sis.

Alcohol-related fatty liver disease

The liver breaks down toxins, including alcohol. But, if toxin levels are too high, the liver will be unable to process them effectively, and damage to liver cells will result.

There are three stages of alcohol-related liver disease:

- Alcohol-related fatty liver or steatosis: Small fat droplets accumulate in the liver.
- Alcohol-related hepatitis: There is inflammation in the liver cells, causing swelling. At this stage, stopping alcohol consumption may repair the liver.
- Cirrhosis: Irreversible damage can lead to potentially life-threatening complications.

People who consume 30–50 grams (g) of alcohol per day for 5 years have a risk of alcohol-related liver disease. Males who consume more than 21 units per week and females who consume more than 14 units per week are at risk of steatosis due to alcohol consumption. A medium glass of wine is typically 2.3 units, while a bottle of beer is typically 1.7 units.

Non-alcohol-related fatty liver disease

Doctors diagnose non-alcohol-related fatty liver disease (NAFLD) when fat accumulates in over 5% of liver cells, and there is no other explanation.

NAFLD included non-alcohol-related fatty liver (NAFL) and non-alcohol-related steatosis (NASH). In NAFL, there are fatty deposits. In NASH, inflammation and cell damage are also present.

NAFLD is more likely to affect people with:

- metabolic syndrome, including obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure
- polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- genetic conditions, such as Wilson's disease, when copper accumulates in the liver and other parts of the body
- conditions involving a nutritional imbalance, such as kwashiorkor

Other conditions

Other diseases and conditions that can contribute to cirrhosis include:

- cystic fibrosis
- primary sclerosing cholangitis, or hardening and scarring of the bile ducts
- galactosemia, or inability to process sugars in milk
- schistosomiasis, a parasitic disease
- biliary atresia, which affects the formation of bile ducts before birth
- glycogen storage disease, when the body has problems storing and releasing the energy release that is vital for cell function
- hemochromatosis, when iron accumulates in the liver and other parts of the body
- Budd-Chiari syndrome, when blood clots in the hepatic vein lead to liver enlargement and the development of new blood vessels
- cancer of the bile ducts or pancreas, which can lead to blockages in the bile ducts

Diagnosis of cirrhosis

Symptoms rarely appear in the early stages, so diagnosis often occurs when testing for another condition or disease.

If a doctor suspects cirrhosis, they will:

- carry out a physical examination, including checking for swelling in the upper abdomen
- ask the person about their personal and family medical history
- ask about their lifestyle, including dietary habits and alcohol consumption
- They may also recommend the following tests:
 - blood tests to check liver function
 - imaging tests such as an ultrasound, CT, or MRI scan to look for signs of enlargement, scarring, or nodules
 - a biopsy, which takes a tissue sample for testing in a laboratory

- blood tests to check liver function
- imaging tests such as an ultrasound, CT, or MRI scan to look for signs of enlargement, scarring, or nodules
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Complications of cirrhosis

Cirrhosis can affect a range of body organs, including the:

- gastrointestinal system
- blood and cardiovascular system
- kidneys
- lungs
- skin and nails
- hormones

It can lead to several other conditions, some of which are life threatening.

• Ascites or edema: Ascites is a buildup of fluid in the abdomen, and edema is a buildup of fluid in the legs.

• Varices and portal hypertension: Large, swollen veins develop in the esophagus and stomach, pressuring a blood vessel called the portal vein, leading to portal hypertension.

• Hepatic encephalopathy: This refers to high levels of toxins in the blood where the liver can no longer filter them effectively.

• Hepatocellular carcinoma: This is the most common type of liver cancer and can result from cirrhosis due to hepatitis B or C infection.

• Hepatopulmonary syndrome: Hepatopulmonary syndrome (HPS) refers to a combination of liver disease, blood vessel dilation in the lungs, and problems with gaseous exchanges in the lungs.

• Coagulation disorders: Cirrhosis can cause problems with blood clotting, leading to bleeds and clots that can sometimes be fatal.

Cirrhosis outlook

There is no cure for cirrhosis, and it can be life threatening.

How long a person will survive with cirrhosis depends on various factors, including:

- the cause
- the severity of the scarring
- their age and overall health
- how they treat the condition

As the disease progresses, the prognosis worsens. People with compensated cirrhosis, when the liver can still function, have a 47% chance of surviving another 10 years compared with people who do not have cirrhosis. Once the liver becomes decompensated—where cirrhosis affects liver function—the 10-year survival rate falls to around 16%.

People who consumed alcohol before their diagnosis and then quit have a better outlook, especially if they stopped in the earlier stages.

In the United States, 4.5 million people, or 1.8% of the adult population, have liver disease. Cirrhosis accounts for 16.4 deaths in every 100,000.

Cirrhosis prevention

Cirrhosis is not always avoidable, but some tips can help lower the risk:

- Follow a varied diet that is low in processed foods and added fats.
- Keep within the recommended guidelines for the consumption of alcohol.
- Use diet and exercise to maintain a suitable weight and avoid obesity.
- Use a condom during sex to lower the risk of hepatitis.
- Never share needles and take care when dealing with blood.
- Avoid alcohol if any stage of liver disease is present.
- Ask about vaccinations for hepatitis B if you are at risk.

Frequently asked questions

Here are some answers to questions people often ask about cirrhosis.

What are the stages of cirrhosis?

There are different ways to describe the progression of cirrhosis. The Child-Pugh system describes three stages, based on test results.

In this system:

- Stage A: The liver is working well.
- Stage B: There some impact on liver function.
- Stage C: Liver function is severely affected.

Doctors also refer to compensated cirrhosis, where damage is present, but the liver is functioning; and decompensated cirrhosis, where damage affects liver function.

Can a person survive cirrhosis?

The outlook will depend on various factors, including the cause of cirrhosis and the stage at diagnosis. A person who receives a diagnosis in the early stage can continue to live a healthy life, but they may need to take measures, such as avoiding alcohol and maintaining a suitable weight. Once cirrhosis starts to affect liver function, the impact on a person's outlook becomes more severe.

What are the early warning signs of cirrhosis?

Often, a person will not notice any symptoms until a later stage, when cirrhosis begins to affect liver function. As it progresses, cirrhosis can cause a wide range of symptoms, including fatigue, nausea, low appetite, jaundice, swelling, and itchy skin.

Summary

Cirrhosis results when tissue damage causes scarring in the liver. Possible causes include a hepatitis infection, high consumption of alcohol, some genetic conditions, and inflammation that occurs with obesity and metabolic disorder.

In the early stages, damage is present and scarring start to appear, but the liver continues to function. In time, scarring becomes widespread. Eventually, the liver is unable to function.

Some ways of reducing the risk include limiting alcohol consumption, maintaining a moderate body weight, and taking measures to prevent infection with hepatitis B and C.

For people with early-stage cirrhosis, lifestyle changes — such as avoiding alcohol consumption, protecting against infection, and managing body weight — can improve their outlook.

When cirrhosis starts to affect liver function, it can become life threatening. For this reason, it is best to take measures to prevent cirrhosis where possible. (Courtesy: *Medical News Today*)

Born with a heart problem: How early detection can save a child's life

By: Dr. Viresh Mahajan

Every year in India, over 2.5 lakh babies are born with congenital heart disease — a structural problem in the heart that is present from birth. Yet, despite the scale of the issue, only about 30,000 of these children receive the treatment they need. Many babies may show warning signs in the first few days of life, while others appear healthy for weeks or even months, making early detection a challenge.

Tragically, untreated heart defects can lead to poor growth, serious health complications, or even early death. What makes the problem worse is that nearly 70% of untreated children live in underserved regions, where lack of finances, awareness, and access to specialized care limits their chances of survival. However, with timely diagnosis and modern treatment, most of these children can go on to live healthy, active lives.

What is Congenital Heart Disease?

Congenital heart disease, or CHD, includes conditions like holes in the heart, narrow valves, or wrong connections in the blood vessels. Some are minor and may close on their own, while others are critical and need surgery or other treatment soon after birth. In many cases, parents may notice signs like fast breathing, poor feeding, excessive sweating, blue lips or fingers, or the baby not gaining weight properly.

These signs are often mistaken for general weakness or minor illness. That's why awareness among parents and regular follow-ups with a pediatrician are important in the early years.

How Doctors Detect the Problem Early

In most cases, a trained pediatrician may hear an unusual heart sound and recommend further tests. The most common and useful test is an Echocardiography — a painless outpatient procedure lasting 10 minutes. In high-risk pregnancies, heart defects can also be picked up before birth through fetal echocardiography, usually done around 18–20 weeks. In newborns, a simple bedside test called pulse oximetry, which checks oxygen levels in the baby's blood can help identify serious heart problems before symptoms appear.

Treatment Options That Save Lives

Thanks to modern advances, many children with CHD no longer need open-heart surgery. Doctors can now treat several types of heart defects through catheter-based procedures, a thin tube is inserted through a small hole in the leg or neck and guided into the heart. Through this, they can close holes, widen narrowed valves, or place devices inside the heart without any major cuts or stitches.

For more complex problems, open-heart surgery is still the best option, but outcomes are now far better than before,

especially if the child is diagnosed early and treated on time.

Life After Treatment

Most children who are treated for CHD go on to live normal, active lives. Some may need regular follow-ups or medicines, but they can attend school, play sports, and grow just like any other child. In fact, with early intervention, their physical and mental development improves significantly, and the risk of future complications reduces.

One of the biggest challenges in India is that many children, especially in rural or low-income areas, do not get diagnosed on time. Government schemes and health programs from private Hospitals now support free heart surgeries for children in underserved areas, but timely referral and awareness remain key.

Parents, pediatricians, and hospitals all have a role to play in ensuring that no child with a treatable heart defect is missed. Because when it comes to a baby's heart, every beat matters — and every day counts. (The writer is the *Chairman - Pediatric Cardiac Sciences, Yatharth Hospital, Greater Noida*)



Busting common myths about brain tumours

By: Dr Shailesh Jain

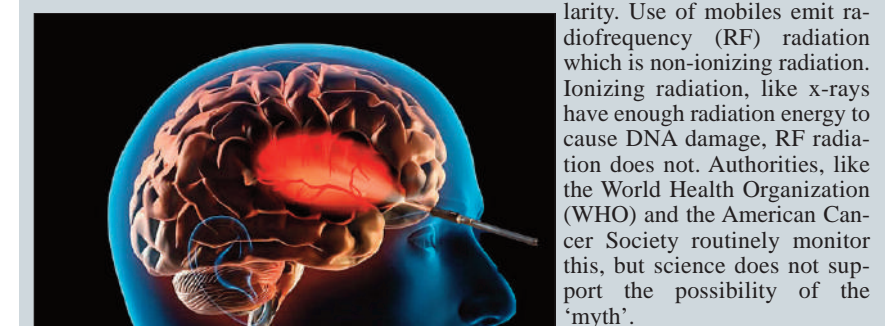
Brain tumours are considered unique as being one of the most poorly understood medical conditions. Because of the wide-spread misdiagnosis, and the never-ending misinformation that presents as articles on the internet and even hard copy publications, patients and their families are experiencing undue stress and confusion. Let's bust five common myths about brain tumours with facts.

Myth 1: All Brain Tumours Are Cancerous

Fact: Not all brain tumours are malignant. In fact, a lot of them are non-cancerous and grow slowly - benign. These tumours, while not spreading like cancer, can be problematic if they impact critical structures within the head that could lead to headaches, seizures, or even sight impairment. Diagnosis and treatment are critical whenever 'surgery' is mentioned.

Myth 2: Use of Mobiles cause brain tumours

Fact: After many years of research, there is no evidence that using a phone as per normal behaviour has a relationship with brain tumours; there are no links between normal usage unfounded research does exist that are based on alternate linking plans of granularity. Use of mobiles emit radiofrequency (RF) radiation which is non-ionizing radiation. Ionizing radiation, like x-rays have enough radiation energy to cause DNA damage, RF radiation does not. Authorities, like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Cancer Society routinely monitor this, but science does not support the possibility of the 'myth'.



Fact: Although headaches can indicate a brain tumour, headaches also frequently result from non life-threatening causes—migraines, tension headaches, or simple dehydration from not enough intake of fluids. When headaches are related to brain tumours, they tend to be non-varying, get worse every day, and can have neurological symptoms associated. Talk to your doctor, or health care provider if your headaches change or if you have any other unusual symptoms.

Myth 3: If you experience headaches, you certainly have a brain tumour

Fact: Although headaches can indicate a brain tumour, headaches also frequently result from non life-threatening causes—migraines, tension headaches, or simple dehydration from not enough intake of fluids. When headaches are related to brain tumours, they tend to be non-varying, get worse every day, and can have neurological symptoms associated. Talk to your doctor, or health care provider if your headaches change or if you have any other unusual symptoms.

Myth 4: Brain Tumours Are Always Fatal

Fact: This is simply not the case. A large percentage of people diagnosed with brain tumours, both benign and malignant, live long, meaningful lives. This is yet again attributable to advanced techniques in neurosurgery, radiation, chemotherapy, precision medicine, and many other emerging fields of medicine, along with the type, grade, location, and size of the tumour, as well as the patient's overall health.

Myth 5: Brain Tumours are Only Affecting the Elderly

Fact: Brain tumours can occur in people of any age, even in children and young adults. In fact, brain tumours are one of the more common solid tumours in children. Only age does not determine risk.

Myth 6: Brain Tumours Are Hereditary

Fact: Most brain tumours are not inherited. While some rare genetic conditions like neurofibromatosis or Li-Fraumeni syndrome may increase the risk, the vast majority of brain tumours occur sporadically, without a hereditary factor. Researchers hypothesize that an interaction between environmental and spontaneous genetic mutations, and causes unknown may be at fault.

Conclusion

Misinformation about brain tumours can lead to a delay in diagnosis, incite unnecessary panic, or cause individuals to make poor treatment decisions. Knowing the truth allows us to pursue timely medical care and reduce our anxiety. If you or someone you love is having any worrisome symptoms, see a neurologist or neurosurgeon. The earlier the evaluation, and, if indicated, advanced treatment could help considerably. (The writer is an Associate Director - Neurosurgery & Head - Neuro-intervention, Max Hospital, Shalimar Bagh)

Congress expresses concerns over World Bank report on poverty, inequality in India

NEW DELHI, July 6: The Congress expressed concerns on Sunday over a recent World Bank report that said poverty and inequality remain concerningly high in India, and requested the Centre to take steps, including bringing in GST reforms and ending corporate favouritism.

Citing the World Bank's poverty and equity brief for India in April 2025, Congress general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh said three months after its release, the Narendra Modi government's "drumbeaters and cheerleaders have begun spinning the World Bank's data to make the staggeringly out-of-touch claim that India is among the world's most equal societies".

He said in a statement issued on April 27, the Congress had highlighted some of the key concerns that the World Bank had raised in its report.

"These concerns continue to be relevant, and any attempt to engage with the report must grapple with them seriously," the Congress leader said.

He said the World Bank report highlights that wage disparity is high in India, with the median earnings of the top 10 per cent being 13 times higher than the bottom 10 per cent in 2023-24.

"Moreover, 'sampling and data limitations suggest that consumption inequality (as measured by government data) may be underestimated".

"More updated data (adoption of purchasing power parity conversion factor from 2021 as compared to that of 2017) would result in a higher rate of extreme poverty," Ramesh said in a statement, citing the report.

He said the report also stated that changes in the questionnaire design, survey implementation and sampling in the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23 "present challenges for making comparisons over time".

"As a lower middle-income country, the appropriate rate to measure poverty in India is that of USD 3.65/day. By this measure, the poverty rate for India in 2022 is significantly higher at 28.1 per cent," Ramesh said, citing the report. "The report is therefore rather



ANAND (GUJARAT), July 6: Union minister Amit Shah on Sunday urged cooperative sector leaders to make transparency, use of technology, and the interest of its members high up in their "work culture" to achieve success.

Shah made the remarks while addressing an event to mark the fourth foundation day of the Ministry of Cooperation on the campus of Amul Dairy here.

"Transparency, technology, and keeping the members (farmers and societies of the cooperative sector) is important," he said, adding, without technology, there is no prosperity for the cooperatives.

"Keeping people's interest at the centre of our work is also important," he said.

Shah exhorted the cooperatives to imbibe these three tenets in their work culture and propagate them from Jammu and Kashmir to 'Kamakhyā' (a temple in Assam), and every village of the country.

He said the ten initiatives, launched during the event, including the start of a salt cooperative in Gujarat, will lead to the creation of a strong brand, just as Amul is.

He said, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the cooperative sector has seen the registration of 2 lakh primary agricultural credit societies (PACs), the foundation of Tribhuvan, the first national cooperative university, and the creation

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Shah urged the sector to follow five 'P's - 'people', 'PACs', 'platforms' (such as digital), 'policy', and 'prosperity' - for it to thrive.

The minister said that four years ago, Modi laid the foundation of the Ministry of Cooperation with the mantra of 'Prosperity through Cooperation', giving a new life to the cooperative system.

He said in the cooperation ministry's four years, more than 60 initiatives have been taken by the Centre, based on these five 'P's.

"The first P is 'people,' which means the people of India will be the primary beneficiaries of these initiatives. The second 'P' is

Make tech and people's interest integral to 'work culture' of cooperative sector: Shah

ANAND (GUJARAT), July 6: Union minister Amit Shah on Sunday urged cooperative sector leaders to make transparency, use of technology, and the interest of its members high up in their "work culture" to achieve success.

Shah made the remarks while addressing an event to mark the fourth foundation day of the Ministry of Cooperation on the campus of Amul Dairy here.

"Transparency, technology, and keeping the members (farmers and societies of the cooperative sector) is important," he said, adding, without technology, there is no prosperity for the cooperatives.

"Keeping people's interest at the centre of our work is also important," he said.

Shah exhorted the cooperatives to imbibe these three tenets in their work culture and propagate them from Jammu and Kashmir to 'Kamakhyā' (a temple in Assam), and every village of the country.

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"The first P is 'people,' which means the people of India will be the primary beneficiaries of these initiatives. The second 'P' is

'PACs,' through which we are strengthening the primary cooperative circles.

"The third 'P' is 'Platform,' under which we have worked to initiate a range of cooperative activities. The fourth 'P' is for policy. The fifth 'P' is prosperity - prosperity for not just one person but of the entire society, prosperity not of a few rich people, but of the poor labourers and farmers," he said.

He said the annual turnover of the milk cooperative Amul will reach ₹ 1 lakh crore next year, up from ₹ 80,000 crore.

Shah also paid tributes to Syama Prasad Mookerjee on the occasion of his birth anniversary

Kashmir would never have become an integral part of India without Mookerjee, he asserted.

"Mookerjee sacrificed his life for Kashmir, raising the slogan 'Ek desh mein do Vidhan, do Pradhan, do Nishan nahi challenge' (There can't be two Constitutions, two flags and two leaders in the same country)," he said.

The Union Home Affairs Minister said the entire credit goes to Mookerjee and Swami Pranavananda for West Bengal becoming a part of India.

"Mookerjee (who was then Industry Minister) resigned from Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet in protest against the policy of appeasement. The party, Jan Sangha, which he started with 10 members, has today become the world's largest political party, as the BJP, with a membership of 12 crore people," he said.

Shah also inaugurated some new infrastructure expansion projects of Amul, such as a state-of-the-art mozzarella cheese manufacturing facility, a fully automated ultra-high processing (UHT) plant, an ultra-modern cheese warehouse in Khatrij, and the extension of the Amul chocolate plant at Mogar.

Amul or Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd procures over 320 lakh litres of milk daily from 36 lakh farmer members and 18 member unions. (PTI)

Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar progressing as per order: EC

PATNA, July 6: The Election Commission on Sunday said the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar was progressing as per its order and the draft list would contain the names of existing voters whose enumeration forms were received.

The EC statement comes amid social media posts about a "change" in the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, following an outcry from opposition parties. A social media post from the Bihar chief electoral officer (CEO) made it clear that the exercise was being under-

taken "exactly" as per the notification of the Election Commission of India (ECI). "Important Information - SIR in Bihar is progressing as per ECI's order dated 24 June 2025. As per that order, the draft electoral rolls that will be issued on August 1, 2025 will contain the names of the existing electors whose enumeration forms are received," the CEO said in a post on X and Facebook.

"All measures are being taken to facilitate the existing electors to complete the documentation. These existing voters will have time to submit the documents even after first

submitting their enumeration forms. All activities are exactly as per ECI's order dated 24.06.2025", the CEO added. The clarification comes close on the heels of an ECI advertisement in newspapers which stated that those who did not have the requisite documents at hand could "submit only their enumeration forms" to the officials concerned. This had led to a perception that the ECI had gone back on many of the contentious parts of the mammoth exercise which, according to parties in the opposition, had become a virtual test of citizenship. (PTI)

No change in instructions for SIR in Bihar, says EC

PATNA, July 6: The Election Commission on Sunday asserted that Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar was "being implemented smoothly at the ground level" and "there is no change in instructions".

The EC on June 24 issued instructions to carry out a SIR in Bihar, apparently to weed out ineligible names and ensure only eligible citizens are included in the electoral roll.

In a statement here, the EC made it clear that while voters were required to "submit their documents anytime before July 25, 2025", those who failed to do so would get an opportunity "during the Claims & Objections period also".

The EC also urged people to "beware of statements being made by a few persons, who without reading the SIR order dated 24 June 2025... are attempting to confuse the public with their incorrect and misleading statements".

The clarification comes in the wake of several social media posts, including one by AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, about an EC advertisement published in a newspaper claiming "now only forms are to be filled. There is no need to submit documents".

Alleging that the SIR was a "conspiracy by BJP-RSS to snatch away the voting rights of Dalits and other deprived sections", Kharge had said that the BJP, which ruled the Centre and shared power in Bihar, "is now getting trapped in its own master plan".

Echoing Kharge's post on X, Bihar Congress president Rajesh Kumar alleged at a press conference: "The ad exposes the incompetence of the EC and gives rise to doubts of unethical help extended to the ruling party". (PTI)

Thackeray cousins' united show has rattled Fadnavis, other Mahayuti leaders: Raut

MUMBAI, July 6: The coming together of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena president Raj Thackeray and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray has unnerved ruling Mahayuti leaders, including Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut said on Sunday.

Raut, who belongs to the Sena (UBT), told reporters here that leaders of the Mahayuti have been left clueless after the Thackeray cousins held their "victory" rally on Saturday to celebrate the rollback of the Hindi language GRs (Government Resolutions) by the BJP-led government.

The two Thackerays shared a political stage for the first time in two decades, with Uddhav also hinting that there could be a political alliance between the Sena (UBT) and MNS. "Mahayuti leaders and Devendra Fadnavis are rattled on the two Thackerays coming together," Raut said.

After the Sena (UBT)-MNS rally, Fadnavis had claimed that Uddhav Thackeray delivered a "rudali" (professional mourner) like speech. "Fadnavis and (Deputy CM Eknath) Shinde should start a weeping programme now (with the two Thackeray brothers com-

ing together)," Raut said.

The Rajya Sabha MP said Maharashtra has won the "battle against the imposition of Hindi". The two Thackeray brothers and the unity of allies won it, he said. After the rally, Raut said, leaders from several south Indian states, particularly Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, have asserted that they can fight the Centre and "overthrow the imposition of Hindi".

Uddhav and Raj on Saturday jointly hosted a victory gathering titled 'Awaj Marathicha' in Mumbai to celebrate the withdrawal of two GRs issued earlier by the Fadnavis government introducing Hindi as a third language from Class 1 in state schools.

"We have come together to stay together. We will together capture power in the Mumbai civic body and Maharashtra," Uddhav said during his speech, hinting at potential synergy between the parties beyond the issue of the Marathi language.

The elections to the high-profile civic body in Mumbai, which Sena considers its citadel and home ground, and other municipal corporations will likely be held in the coming months. (PTI)

Gujarat AAP MLA Chaitar Vasava arrested on attempt to murder charges; Kejriwal slams BJP

RAJPIPLA (GUJARAT), July 6: Gujarat AAP MLA Chaitar Vasava was arrested on charges of attempt to murder after he allegedly attacked a taluka panchayat functionary at Dediapada in Narmada district, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday during a meeting organised at the prant office in Vasava's constituency Dediapada. Vasava was arrested late Saturday night, the police said.

Vasava was produced in a local court this afternoon, which sent him in judicial custody and he is currently lodged in Vadodra central jail, Narmada district Superintendent of Police Prashant Sumbe said.

The court rejected a plea for five-day police remand, the SP added. As per the FIR registered at Dediapada police station, Vasava, during the meeting on Saturday, got agitated after raising objection over his nominee not being considered for appointment as a member of 'Aapno Taluko Vibrant Taluko' (ATVT), a local-level coordination committee.

Vasava allegedly started abusing a woman president of Sagbara taluka panchayat, which was objected to by Dediapada taluka panchayat president Sanjay Vasava, who was part of the meeting.



As per Sanjay Vasava's complaint, the MLA allegedly attacked him by hurling a mobile phone at him, causing injuries on his head.

The legislator also tried to attack the complainant with a glass but was prevented from doing so by police personnel present there, as per the FIR.

However, as the glass broke, the MLA picked up the glass shards and approached Sanjay Vasava and threatened to kill him though the latter somehow managed to escape, it said.

The MLA damaged a chair kept in the office, as per the complaint. An FIR was subsequently registered at Dediapada police station under sections 109 (attempt to murder), 79 (insulting the modesty of

a woman through words, gestures), 115 (2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 351 (3) (criminal intimidation), 352 (intentional insult) and 324 (3) (damage to property) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Meanwhile, as tension escalated in Dediapada following Chaitar Vasava's arrest, the local administration imposed restrictions on the gathering of more than four persons at one place in the area in order to maintain law and order.

Aam Aadmi Party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal claimed the MLA was arrested as the BJP was "furious" after losing to AAP in Visavadar, referring to the recent bypoll in which his party candidate Gopal Italia won.

"AAP MLA @Chaitar_Vasava has been arrested by BJP in Gujarat. BJP is furious after losing to AAP in the Visavadar by-election. If they think that AAP will be scared by such arrests, then this is their biggest mistake. People of Gujarat are now fed up with BJP's misrule, BJP's hooliganism and dictatorship, now the people of Gujarat will answer BJP," Kejriwal charged in a post on X.

AAP also claimed its newly elected MLA Gopal Italia, who is also a lawyer, was not allowed to enter the court premises to represent Vasava. (PTI)

Rain, debt, and uncounted bricks

Unseasonal showers drowns brick kiln workers' livelihoods

ALIGARH/BULANDSHAHR, July 6: "Just one spell of rain, and a week's work is gone," said Ramvati, sitting beside a half-formed row of soggy bricks outside her home in the western UP village of Nanau.

She and her husband had molded 1,600 bricks over two days - none of them counted, none paid for. The light drizzle lasted only a few hours, but it wiped out five days of their wages.

March to June are traditionally the most productive months for brick kiln workers in western Uttar Pradesh, as the clear, scorching days provide ideal conditions for drying molded bricks under the open sky. But in recent years, that critical window has been lost due to unseasonal rains and hailstorms.

"There were barely 15 to 20 days of proper sunshine in May and June combined," said Ramesh Singh, a kiln supervisor in Bulandshahr. The rest of the days were marked by cloudy skies, high humidity, or sudden rain - conditions that turned drying fields into slush and halted production repeatedly.

As a result, workers lost not only bricks but also their most

profitable working weeks of the season.

For thousands of interstate migrants from Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and eastern UP who power this labor-intensive industry, a single spell of untimely rain has now become more than an inconvenience - it's an economic disaster.

"We had worked three days straight, and then it rained," said Saroj, a 30-year-old brick-molder from Madhubani, Bihar.

"Everything got washed away. Now we're borrowing rice from the kiln owner. We'll repay with labor, but it means less money left to send home," he added.

Ramesh Shrivastav, general secretary of the Mazdoor Adhikar Manch, said the impact of that two-hour rain lasts for nearly a week. "You can't work on a wet field. It takes four dry days for the soil to be ready again," he said.

Most workers are paid by the piece - about ₹ 676 per 1,000 bricks, as per the 2024 rate. But in practice, many receive even less.

"They are often paid ₹ 500 or lower. And if the bricks are destroyed by rain and not counted,

they are not paid at all," said Nirmal Gorana, convener of the National Campaign Committee for the Eradication of Bonded Labour, who has extensively documented labour conditions in kilns.

In kiln-speak, the loss caused by rain is called phemaisa - work that is wasted. "It's not just the two days of brick-molding that's lost. The entire site becomes unusable for four to five days. That's nearly a week of lost wages. And these are people already living hand-to-mouth," said Gorana.

Each pair of Patheras, usually husband and wife, can mold up to 1,800 bricks a day. So, when it rains, the loss per pair is around ₹ 1,200 or more, not including the days it takes to resume work.

"In our kiln, a drizzle destroyed bricks worth ₹ 12,000 in a single night. But no worker was compensated," said Ramvati.

Traditionally, migrant brick kiln workers return to their villages during the monsoon months when production slows, and drying bricks becomes unfeasible.

They return in winters when operations resume and the weather is



reliably dry. This predictable migration pattern has long structured their lives, allowing them to plan agricultural work back home or enroll their children in school during the off-season. But unseasonal rain is breaking that rhythm. Some workers stay longer into the summer to maximize income, only to be caught off guard by unexpected pre-monsoon showers that destroy their work. Others return early but are called back mid-season when dry spells reappear. The climate's growing unpredictability is now reshaping even this deeply rooted cycle of movement.

Many workers are brought in by middlemen offering advances. Once at the site, they can't leave.

"If we try to leave mid-season, the kiln owners reduce our wages or delay our payment. Even in case of emergencies, we are told, 'Go if you want, but your payment will be halved,'" said Ram Kumar, a brick kiln worker in Kodiajanj, who could not return to his home in Gaya, Bihar, when his father passed away last year.

To add to this, unseasonal rain is deepening the crisis. Workers borrow rations and medicines from the kiln owners. These debts - lo-

cally called toot - roll over from one season to the next. "Sometimes, we return the following year just to clear last season's debt," said Kumar. While workers bear the immediate brunt of lost wages, kiln owners say they, too, face losses due to unseasonal rain, though of a different kind.

Delays in delivery schedules, rising fuel costs, and client penalties are some of the financial pressures they cite when explaining why they cannot compensate laborers for ruined bricks. "We don't want to see anyone's work go to waste, but this is outdoor work - we can't control the weather," said Rajveer Singh, who owns a medium-sized brick kiln called KKK Bricks in Bulandshahr.

"If it rains, we also suffer losses in coal, production delays, and delivery penalties. Still, it's hard to pay for bricks that are no longer usable," he said. The threat of sudden showers is not just seasonal - it is structural, and increasingly linked to climate change.

According to a 2024 analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), 55 per

cent of Indian sub-districts saw over a 10 per cent rise in southwest monsoon rainfall events from 2012-2022, largely due to short, intense rainfall typical of climate-change dynamics.

These changes have disrupted agricultural and informal labor cycles that once revolved around predictable weather. Experts argue the burden of climate-linked disruptions must not be passed onto the workers. "Once a brick is molded, the worker has done his job. If the brick is damaged due to rain, the employer should bear that loss - not the laborer," Shrivastav (general secretary of Mazdoor Adhikar Manch) said.

Under the Interstate Migrant Workers Act, workers are entitled to full wages from the point of recruitment until the end of service. But enforcement remains poor. "Most workers aren't even aware of their rights. Those who are, have no access to legal help or grievance systems, especially when far from home," said Gorana, convener of the National Campaign Committee for the Eradication of Bonded Labour. (PTI)

Dalai Lama's life a beacon of peace and compassion: Arunachal leaders

Arunachal leaders honour Dalai Lama's legacy of compassion, hail his role in preserving Tibetan spiritual and cultural identity

ITANAGAR, July 6: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik (Retd), Chief Minister Pema Khandu and DyCM Chowna Mein on Sunday extended greetings to Tibetan Spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on his 90th birthday.

Parnaik in a message described the Dalai Lama as a "living embodiment of compassion, peace, and timeless wisdom".

The governor said the Dalai Lama's teachings have inspired millions across the world, offering guidance on the path of righteousness, inner strength, and harmony.

"The people of Arunachal Pradesh hold His Holiness in deep reverence and remain forever grateful for his enduring love, spiritual presence, and inspiration," Parnaik added.

Khandu, who attended the official celebration at the main Tibetan temple in Dharamshala, called it a "truly humbling experience".

In a series of social media posts, Khandu offered collective prayers on behalf of the people of Arunachal Pradesh for the Dalai Lama's long life and continued guidance.

"His journey is an inspiration to humanity. Through every trial, he has remained a steady voice of wisdom, teaching us that true strength lies in forgiveness,"



Khandu wrote.

He emphasised that the Dalai Lama's message transcends borders and beliefs, continuing to illuminate the path for future generations.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein joined the local celebration at Dhargyeling Tibetan Settlement at Tezu in Lohit district, where he offered prayers along with Dzogchen Ganor Rinpoche and Tibetan monks.

Describing the Dalai Lama as "a

beacon of peace and compassion for the entire world", Mein hailed his recent decision to continue the institution of the Dalai Lama, calling it "a historic reaffirmation of Tibetan spiritual and cultural identity".

The DyCM also praised the Tibetan community for their resilience and cultural pride.

"I deeply admire how they have preserved their language, attire, and spiritual traditions. Their strength is both moving and in-

spiring," he said.

Reflecting on the importance of indigenous identity, Mein reiterated that when a language dies, a culture is lost, urging local communities to learn from Tibetan efforts in preserving ancient scripts and wisdom.

In a remarkable gesture of commemoration, Mein shared details of the 'Freedom Trail', a trekking expedition along the escape route taken by the Dalai Lama during his 1959 journey from Tibet to India.

Organised earlier this year by the Tawang district administration with support from monks, locals, and ITBP personnel, the trail is now being developed into an adventure and pilgrimage tourism circuit. Plans are also underway to organise a cultural festival along the route to honour this extraordinary journey.

Highlighting technological innovations in cultural preservation, Mein mentioned the use of artificial intelligence in rediscovering ancient indigenous texts, including the Ramayana and Mahabharata in the Tai Khamti script.

The celebration at Tezu was also attended by state ministers Wangki Lowang and Pasang Dorjee Sona, MLAs Mohesh Chai, Chau Zingnu Namchoom, Mutchu Mithi, senior police and civil officers, among others. (PTI)

Governor commemorates 125th birth anniversary of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, July 6: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt General K T Parnaik (Retd) on Sunday participated in the inaugural function marking the 125th birth anniversary of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee at the Golden Jubilee State Banquet Hall in Niti Vihar, Itanagar.

The event, organised by the Department of Art and Culture under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, launched a two-year nationwide commemoration of the late leader's life and legacy.

In an official statement, the Governor paid tribute to Dr Mookerjee, describing his life as a "shining example of unwavering commitment to India's integrity, cultural pride, and democratic values."

He urged the people, especially the youth of Arunachal Pradesh, to draw inspiration from Mookerjee's courage, conviction, and lifelong dedication to the nation.

"Youth are the torchbearers of Dr

Mookerjee's vision," the Governor said, calling on them to take pride in their heritage while striving for excellence in science, technology, sports, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

He expressed hope that the commemoration would spark a renewed sense of purpose among citizens to contribute meaningfully towards building a strong, united, and self-reliant India.

The Governor also highlighted Dr Mookerjee's opposition to Article 370, recalling his powerful call for "One Country, One Head, One Flag, One Constitution."

He noted that this vision was fulfilled with the abrogation of Article 370 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, leading to the full integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union.

Referring to Dr Mookerjee's contributions as an educationist, parliamentarian, and industrial

development leader, the Governor recalled his tenure as the country's Minister for Industries and Supply, during which he played a key role in establishing the Chittaranjan Locomotive Factory, Sindri Fertilizer Corporation, and Hindustan Aircraft Factory.

He also cited Mookerjee's firm opposition to the partition of Bengal and his advocacy for minority rights and regional languages in the Constituent Assembly.

Underscoring the need for good governance, the Governor stressed the empowerment of local institutions such as village councils and cultural groups through honesty and transparency.

He appealed for a collective and determined push towards the vision of a developed India by 2047.

The event also featured addresses by Law, Justice, Sports & Youth Affairs Minister Kento Jini, Chief Secretary Manish Gupta, and Secretary of Art and Culture Mamta Riba.

Professors Nabam Nakha Hina and Ashan Riddi from Rajiv Gandhi University delivered memorial lectures highlighting Dr Mookerjee's role in nation-building and his belief in "One Nation, One Constitution."

Deputy Speaker Kardo Nyigyor, local MLA Techi Kaso, and students from various educational institutions were among those in attendance.

The programme concluded with cultural performances by artists from the Directorate of Art and Culture, celebrating themes of national unity and cultural pride.

Six acquitted in 2017 Pasighat black magic case after court rules charges were fabricated

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, July 6: Eight years after being accused in a controversial case involving allegations of black magic and abuse, six individuals from Pasighat have been acquitted by the Tezu Court.

The verdict, delivered on May 19, 2025, cleared all charges under sections 348/354 of the Indian Penal Code read with the POCSO Act.

The court observed that the case appeared to have been filed on the basis of fabricated evidence and instigation by certain individuals.

According to an official statement issued by the six acquitted persons, the 2017 incident began as a case of alleged spirit possession involving two young girls from the Moyong family.

The girls, who were staying with a relative at the time, began displaying abnormal behaviour on the evening of February 14, 2017.

Believing them to be possessed, their parents called in three different traditional priests—actions rooted in Adi cultural practices.

The statement claims that the accused individuals—identified as Osor Moyong, Cintina Moyong, Aldo Moyong, Liza Perme Apang, Maksup Yomso, and Radum Codum Moyong—were present only as supportive relatives, partic-

ipating in the traditional practice known as Giimang.

It further states that the entire episode took place openly in the house of one of the accused and was witnessed by numerous relatives, neighbours, and even the then-MLA of Pasighat.

The family reportedly left for their native village in late February 2017, expressing gratitude to those who had assisted them.

However, in April 2017, the situation reportedly changed when "certain individuals" began visiting the girls' family and allegedly influenced them to file false accusations.

The First Information Report (FIR) that led to the arrest of the six accused was lodged not by the family but by third parties, according to the statement.

The Tezu Court took note of these developments in its ruling. In Para 31 of the judgment, the court observed that the case appeared to have been filed "after well thought on instigation of some interested persons."

Para 32 further acquitted all six accused of the charges under IPC and POCSO sections.

Prior to the court's ruling, eight local Adi kebangs had also heard the matter and unanimously declared the black magic allegations

false and baseless.

The Moyong family was fined over ₹16 lakh by the kebangs for bringing disrepute through false claims.

The statement from the acquitted individuals also claims that misleading videos and doctored voice messages were circulated to support the fabricated narrative.

It alleges that these efforts were intended to suppress video footage recorded during the week-long incident in which the girls and their mother purportedly named several influential individuals in Pasighat.

The individuals have now decided to speak publicly after remaining silent during the court proceedings, stating that the silence should not be interpreted as an admission of guilt.

They have questioned the motives behind what they describe as a systematic campaign to malign them and have called for public scrutiny of the instigators mentioned in the court's observations.

The case, which gained wide attention in 2017, is now being re-examined in light of the recent judgment, which underscores the need for careful handling of culturally sensitive incidents and the importance of protecting individuals from false and motivated allegations.

Dree Festival celebrated with traditional fervour in Daporijo



HT Bureau

NAMSAI, July 6: The Apatani community of Upper Subansiri district, particularly in Daporijo, celebrated the Dree Festival 2025 with traditional enthusiasm and cultural pride at the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow in Daporijo.

The festival, which signifies prayers for a pest-free season and a bumper harvest, was marked by vibrant performances and wide community participation.

According to an official statement, the celebration was graced by local MLA and Adviser to the Minister of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Er Taniya Soki, as chief guest, while superintendent of police Mridul (IPS) attended as guest of honour.

The event saw the presence of Apatani elders, heads of departments, panchayat leaders, and members of the general public.

The festivities were spearheaded by Deputy Com-

missioner Tasso Gambo, accompanied by his spouse Smti Tasso Gambo Sumpi, who served as Patron.

The organising team was led by Chairman Er Dani Tassang and General Secretary Gyati Nobin.

Prominent members of the Apatani community attended the event, including Er Nani Chailyang, SE, PWD, and his spouse Nani Chailyang Aja, ADC Kodako Myobia Tai, Circle Officer of Limeking & Taksing Tasso Duri, DSO Duyu Lampung, and T O Tasso Anda, along with various officials and community members posted in Upper Subansiri.

The celebration featured a range of cultural performances, from traditional folk dances to modern renditions, highlighting the rich cultural heritage of the Apatani people.

The event concluded with the customary exchange of Hempio Dree among participants, symbolising goodwill and community bonding.

One NSCN(K-YA) militant killed in Arunachal's Longding

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, July 6: In a successful counter-insurgency operation, troops of the Assam Rifles from Wakkha Company Operating Base (COB) under the Khonsa Battalion neutralised a suspected militant of the NSCN(K-YA) faction in Arunachal Pradesh's Longding district, close to the Indo-Myanmar border.

The encounter took place during a routine patrol between Khoaga and Lyangche when the troops came under sudden and heavy fire from a pre-planned ambush set up deep within the dense jungle terrain. The Assam Rifles personnel responded swiftly with a well-coordinated counter-assault, compelling the insurgents to flee and abandon their position.

A subsequent search of the area led to the recovery of a temporary insurgent hideout and the body of one militant.

A substantial cache of war-like stores, including arms, ammunition, and other military-grade equipment, was also recovered from the site.

The nature and quantity of the seized materials suggest that the group was preparing for hostile activity in the region.

DC East Siang calls for market-driven handloom, sericulture growth

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, July 6: East Siang Deputy Commissioner Sonalika Jiwani, IAS, on Sunday visited key rural development initiatives in Ruksin Sub-Division, where she interacted with weavers and sericulture farmers to assess ground-level progress and encourage sustainable, market-oriented growth in the handloom and sericulture sectors.

The visit was part of an ongoing effort to promote livelihood generation and self-reliance among rural communities in the district.

According to an official statement, the Deputy Commissioner first visited the M.G. Community Skill Development and Training Centre at Oyan village, where she held an interactive session with local weavers formed under the Small Cluster Development Programme.

She commended the quality of handloom designs and traditional motifs produced by the weavers and acknowledged the role of traditional textile craft in preserving indigenous culture while creating avenues for income generation.

Addressing the weavers, DC Jiwani emphasised the importance of market-driven product diversification, identifying new markets, and building strong branding strategies to increase the value and reach of their products.

She also called for more robust linkages with online platforms to enable wider access to consumers. Highlighting the role of collective strength, she encouraged the formation of additional cooperative societies to support both textile weavers and sericulture farmers in the region.



Following her visit to Oyan, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the Government

Sericulture Farm at Silte, also under Ruksin Sub-Division, where she inter-

acted with members of the Siang Sericulture Cooperative Society.

The trainees, currently undergoing capacity-building sessions on both pre-cocoon and post-cocoon processes, shared their experiences and challenges with the DC.

DC Jiwani underscored the potential of sericulture as a high-value rural livelihood and reaffirmed the administration's support for skill development and infrastructure enhancement in the sector.

She encouraged members of the cooperative to focus on quality production and explore direct-to-market approaches to improve profitability.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by a team of senior officials including Ruksin ADC Kiron Ningo, EAC Yamo Tamut, ZPM Bimol Lego, Circle Officer of Oyan Dubom Apang, ADI Onima Gammeng, ADTH Libang Perme, and AD Sericulture Talom Tadeng. Chief Manager of SBI, Mridul Hazarika, and local Gaon Burahs were also present during the visits.

The interactions were well-received by the weavers and farmers, who expressed appreciation for the administration's interest and guidance. Many shared that the visit and suggestions by the DC had boosted their motivation to explore broader opportunities and adopt innovative practices.

The district administration reiterated its commitment to supporting rural skill development, women's empowerment, and the promotion of indigenous industries through policy support and infrastructure facilitation.

Wild baby elephant rescued from muddy pit in Arunachal's Deomali



HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, July 6: A wild baby elephant trapped in a muddy pit for nearly two days was successfully rescued by officials of the Deomali Forest Division in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district, with active assistance from local villagers. The forest department was alerted about the incident on the evening of July 5.

A rescue team led by Range Forest Officer (RFO) Diwang Lowang and operating under the supervision of Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Deomali immediately responded to the site.

The team included foresters Kaling Libang, Leamkai Wangpan, Leki Ingo, forest guard O P Singh, and other staff members.

The rescue operation, which lasted nearly two hours, saw forest personnel and villagers work in tandem to pull the calf out of the pit.

The baby elephant was later guided safely back into the nearby forest. Acknowledging the vital role played by the local residents, RFO Lowang expressed his appreciation and awarded the villagers ₹10,000 as a token of gratitude for their timely and coordinated effort.

A forest official highlighted the need for caution in areas frequented by elephants.

"The Deomali area lies along a known elephant corridor. If someone digs a pit, it is their responsibility to close it properly. Incidents like these occur when elephants or their calves fall into unattended pits," the official said. The forest department has urged the public to report such incidents promptly to ensure the safety and well-being of wildlife in the region.

DEADLINE FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IS OCTOBER 1, 2025

India to bid for both 2029 and 2031 World Athletics C'ships

BENGALURU, July 6: India will mount a "strategic" bid for both the 2029 and 2031 World Athletics Championships when the process begins later this year, hoping to get the hosting right of one of the two editions of the showpiece, national federation spokesperson Adille Sumariwalla said on Sunday.

World Athletics, the sport's governing body, will announce the hosts of both the 2029 and 2031 editions in September 2026.

The deadline for expression of interest by the member countries is October 1, 2025.

"We are going to do strategic bidding for 2029 and 2031 (Championships). Both editions will be awarded together and whichever edition we get is fine," Sumariwalla, a vice-president of the World Athletics and former president of Athletics Federation of India (AFI), told PTI. "There is still some time (for the process to start). We are going to submit the bids," added Sumariwalla, who was here for the inaugural edition of the NC Classic international javelin event won by host and competitor Neeraj Chopra, the double Olympic medal-winning



javelin superstar, on Saturday.

The deadline for initial submission of application for the world championships is April 1, 2026.

The interested countries will have to then submit the final bid application by August 5, 2026, before the World Athletics Council announces

the host cities of the 2029 and 2031 editions of world championships.

The AFI had decided to bid for a slew of high-profile events in view of India's hopes to host the 2036 Olympics.

The Federation had earlier talked about bidding for the 2029 world

championships but the idea of the "strategic" bidding for 2031 edition also could be due to the reason that Asia is hosting both the 2025 and 2027 editions of the showpiece, and it could be difficult for India to get the next one. The 2025 world championships will be held in Tokyo in

September-October while the 2027 edition will be held in Beijing.

In this scenario, India has a better chance to get the 2031 edition.

Giving India the 2029 edition would mean that Asia would be hosting the showpiece three times in a row. The nearest event India has a chance of hosting is the junior world championships in 2028 for which the AFI has submitted expression of interest when WA chief Sebastian Coe visited the country towards the end of 2024.

"We have already submitted expression of interest for the 2028 Junior World Championship," said Sumariwalla.

World Athletics will announce the hosts of both the 2028 and 2030 editions of junior world championships in December 2025.

The deadline for initial submission of bid application is September 22, 2025. The interested countries will have to then submit the final bid application by November 7, 2025. "We are also bidding for World Athletics Relays after the next two editions. The hosts for the next two editions have already been announced," he added. (PTI)

AOA announces Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah National Sports Award

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, July 6: In a significant move to promote sporting excellence in India, the Assam Olympic Association (AOA) has instituted a national-level sports award in honour of legendary athlete Bhogeswar Baruah.

According to an official statement, the "Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah National Sports Award" will be conferred annually in three categories — 'Sportsperson of the Year', 'Lifetime Achievement in Sports', and 'Emerging Sports Talent of the Year'.

The announcement was made by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AOA President, Sarbananda Sonowal, on Sunday.

The award carries cash prizes of ₹5 lakh, ₹3 lakh and ₹2 lakh respectively for the three categories and is aimed at recognising the achievements, dedication, and emerging promise in Indian sports.

The inaugural award ceremony will be held on September 3 this year in Sivasagar, Assam.

To ensure fairness and transparency, a three-member selection committee has been constituted comprising Arjuna awardee and former table tennis champion Monalisa Baruah, Abhijit Bhat-tacharya of Brahmaputra Volleyball League, and the Secretary of Sports, Government of Assam.

The committee will recommend the names of deserving recipients to the AOA.

Speaking at the announcement, Sonowal said the award was a tribute to Bhogeswar Baruah's unparalleled contribution to Indian athletics and a step towards nurturing a stronger sporting culture in the region and beyond. "In honour of the legendary sporting icon from Assam — 'Arjun' Bhogeswar Baruah — this award aims to promote excellence, dedication, and integrity in the field of sports," Sonowal stated. He added that Baruah's legacy embodies the spirit of perseverance and pride that defines the Indian athlete, and

the award would serve to keep that spirit alive for future generations.

Highlighting the role of state-level recognition, the AOA president said that while national honours like the Arjuna Award exist, it is equally important to inspire local talent through regional platforms. "From the valleys to the hills, this initiative will show every aspiring child in Assam that their effort will be valued," he said.

Sonowal further stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sports have become a national movement and a pillar of youth empowerment. Referring to the recently introduced National Sports Policy 2025, he said the policy focuses on excellence and public participation in sports. "I hope the winners of the Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah National Sports Award will bring glory to India on the global stage," he added.

The Union Minister also reiterated his vision of making Assam the "Sports Capital of India", citing the state's rich talent pool and sporting tradition. "This is not just a slogan, but a mission," he said, while naming iconic Assamese sportspersons like Jayanta Talukdar, Shiva Thapa, Hima Das, and Lovlina Borgohain as examples of the state's potential.

Reflecting on his earlier tenure as Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Sonowal recalled the launch of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), which has enabled Indian athletes to prepare for international competitions without financial constraints. He described the new sports award as a "people's award" and welcomed feedback from athletes, coaches, and sports enthusiasts to further refine the initiative. "We do not claim perfection, only sincerity. Your suggestions will help us shape this into a true people's movement for sports," he concluded.



OCA announces inaugural Odisha Pro T20 League

CUTTACK, July 6: The Odisha Cricket Association on Sunday announced the launch of the Odisha Pro T20 League, a franchise-based T20 tournament that will debut in September featuring six teams. The OPTL is designed as a premier platform to nurture emerging talent, offering players high-intensity competition, wide exposure, and the opportunity to showcase their skills alongside some of the best in the sport, OCA stated. "We are confident this league will become a major force in Indian domestic cricket," OCA secretary Sanjay Behera stated in a release. As part of the league's rollout, the OCA invites organisations to come forward and participate in the franchise ownership process. (PTI)

Gill is a carbon copy of Kohli: Jonathan Trott

BIRMINGHAM, July 6: Former England batter Jonathan Trott feels privileged to have watched current India captain Shubman Gill's double hundred and the second innings century in the Edgbaston Test which had shades of another genius Virat Kohli. Gill scored 269 and 161 in both Indian innings and now has the second highest individual aggregate of runs in a single Test (430) behind former England skipper Graham Gooch. "Today, he showed how complete a batter he is. It reminded me of the previous Indian number four — almost a carbon copy of that genius. I don't think he could've dreamed of a better start to his first two Tests on this tour." (PTI)

Women's cricket team gets rousing welcome at India House in London

LONDON, July 6: The Indian women's cricket team, which is in England for T20I and ODI series, received a rousing welcome at a community gathering at the India House here.

The Indian team and the support staff led by head coach Amol Muzumdar gathered on the grounds of the High Commission of India on Saturday evening.

Indian High Commissioner to the UK Vikram Doraiswami welcomed the "genuine heroes" who inspire Indians around the world with their performance and also their passion and commitment to cricket. "What they have done is to revolutionise sport and to revolutionise the idea of participation in everything in India," said Doraiswami. "Today there is nothing



that young Indian women feel they cannot do because of you and an earlier generation of cricket players... You have magic with you and you share it with us everywhere you play on the field, for which we are very, very grateful," he said while addressing the squad. "When you look at our

cricket team, our hockey team or any of our sports teams, these represent India at its best.

"These are not just our best sports people, but these are girls who represent India from every corner of our country. These are girls who carry the message of an opportunity that sports gives to every corner of the country," he said. Shivani Uberoi, the Indian-origin Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Lead at the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), highlighted the influence of the cricketers across both nations.

"The skills that you have, the talent that you have just really makes every match so exciting... you are not just role models for girls in India, you are models for girls in England and everywhere.

So, thank you so much," said Uberoi. UK Immigration Minister Seema Malhotra highlighted how the achievements of the Indian team are celebrated with vigour among the diaspora communities in Britain. "What is so important in today's modern world is that we find time for physical wellbeing, which is important for our mental wellbeing and in building leadership and character. And, in all of those areas, you are a true inspiration," the British Indian minister said. Jemima Rodrigues went on to display her talent as a singer by crooning a few lines of the song 'Yeh Dosti' from 'Sholay' in a light-hearted conversation session with India's Deputy High Commissioner to the UK, Sujit Ghosh. (PTI)

'NO IPL PARTICIPATION'

Pak likely to be sidelined from next year's proposed World Club C'ship

KARACHI, July 6: Pakistan is likely to be sidelined from the World Clubs T20 Championship expected to be launched next year.

A source aware of the developments said that the winning team in the Pakistan Super League was unlikely to be invited for the event which is being fast tracked with the blessings of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and its chairman Jay Shah.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board was invited to send its CEO of the PSL for a meeting held on the sidelines of the cricket connect meeting in London last month but no one showed up," the source said.

He said CEOs of most of the leading T20 franchise-based leagues

gathered for the meeting held on the initiative of the English and Wales Cricket Board with the ICC's backing. "Discussions were held on the proposed World Clubs Championship, its window, format, schedule etc. (The) CEOs of the Emirates League, Big Bash League, The Hundred, SA20, MLC, Caribbean Premier League etc attended the meeting. Pakistan was also invited," he confirmed.

The source explained that initially the World Clubs event will be contested by five teams without any team from the Indian Premier League. "Though the planned event has the backing of the Indian board but for the inaugural championship there will be no IPL participation."

The source said that the World Clubs Championship was apparently being fast tracked in a bid to derail the planned Saudi Cricket League.

Private investors are planning to bankroll the Saudi League with an initial investment of \$400 million but they are facing resistance as they want to have their league on the lines of the Tennis Grand Slam events every year.

The source said the recent meeting was also important as CEOs had discussed fixed windows for their events, availability of NOCs for overseas players etc.

"The PCB didn't show up and strangely Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has also not regularly attended ICC meetings." (PTI)

Dibrugarh yoga exponent brings laurels

HT Bureau DIBRUGARH, July 6: Dipa Sen, a distinguished Yoga exponent from Dibrugarh, has clinched the gold medal at the 4th Asian Yogasana Sports Cup 2025, held in Bangkok, Thailand recently. Dipa bagged gold medal by participating in one event of women's category. Dipa is a yoga teacher at Sudham Yoga centre in Dibrugarh. On the other hand, Tushi Debnath and Sauradip Roy of Karimganj dis-

trict also bagged gold medal in their respective field in 4th Asian Yogasana Sports cup held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Tushi bagged one gold and one silver while Sauradip clinched two gold medals.

Three of them brought laurels for Assam by winning gold medals in their respective field. Three of them went to Thailand under coach Binay Bhattacharjee, international yoga judge.



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Wimbledon: All the early upsets could stem from a lack of experience on grass courts

LONDON, July 6: Successful as Novak Djokovic has been on the grass courts of Wimbledon — he's won 100 matches and seven of his 24 Grand Slam trophies there — it's not as if he grew up plying his talents on the surface. Indeed, he never competed or even practiced on it at all until 2005, when he entered the qualifying event held at the nearby Roehampton facility and won three matches there to earn the right to make his debut at the All England Club at age 18. "That was actually the first year I stepped out on the grass," said Djokovic, who will play 11th-seeded Alex de Minaur on Monday for a quarter-final berth at the Grand Slam tournament. "I must say that it felt very natural for me to adapt to it, even though I grew up on clay."

There will be a 9th different women's champion in the last 9 Wimbledon tournaments. That's a common refrain among today's pros, and the lack of familiarity with, and comfort on, grass could be one of the reasons for all of the upsets in the early going at Wimbledon. The



eight total top-10 seeds — four women, four men — who lost in the first round were the most at any major since they began seeding 32 in brackets in 2001.

"Grass," 2022 champion Elena Rybakina said after her third-round exit Saturday, "is very unpredictable."

With her departure, and defending champ Barbora Krejickova's loss to Emma Navarro a few hours later, there is guaranteed to be yet another first-time

women's title winner this year at the All England Club. Whoever takes home the trophy on July 12 will be the ninth woman to do so in the event's past nine editions. Why are the All England Club's grass courts so unpredictable? Plenty of top players learned to play tennis on hard courts, especially in North America, or clay courts, especially in Europe and Latin America. Grass? Not so much, except for those

from England or Australia. It's an acquired taste and skill, and it doesn't help anyone that the portion of the season spent on the turf is so abbreviated.

"Usually when I was on grass," joked Eva Lys, a 23-year-old German who reached the second round at Wimbledon, "it was when I was tanning."

There are more than 35 hard-court tournaments listed on the 2025 WTA calendar, 11 held on clay and seven on grass, which is used from June 9 through Wimbledon.

"It's not just that we only play on grass for about a month," said Lorenzo Musetti, a semifinalist at the All England Club a year ago and a first-round loser as the No. 7 seed this time. "It's a surface that requires a lot of adapting. You have to go by feeling."

The bounces and movement are different on Wimbledon's grass courts. There isn't much of a chance to get used to the slippery footing, needing to bend one's knees to reach shots that skid more than bounce, or dealing with the inconsistent ways balls move. (AP)