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Long-pending boundary issue with Assam remains a top priority: M'laya Dy CM M'laya talks tough on retransfer of Block I and II

SHILLONG, July 19: Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong has said the state government will press for the retransfer of block I and II from Assam's Karbi Anglong district, asserting that the long-pending boundary issue remains a top priority.

Tynsong, who also chairs the regional committee on the matter, said the government is awaiting a response from his Assam counterpart to schedule a joint inspection of the disputed areas. Before the creation of Meghalaya, both these blocks were part of the United Khasi Jaintia Hills district of Assam. In the 1950s, the then governor transferred the blocks to Karbi Anglong for ease of administration.

"I am yet to get the date from my counterpart because in Ri Bhoi district, we have more than one chairman from the Assam side, whereas from our side, I am the only chair-



man," he told PTI on Saturday.

"From our side, we are ready. In fact, we wanted the inspection to be held anytime. Of course, during the monsoon we will face some difficulty, but maybe towards the end of September, we hope Assam will also be ready," he said. Ri Bhoi district lies adjacent to Karbi Anglong

district on its eastern boundary.

With elections due in Assam next year, Tynsong acknowledged uncertainty over whether the state government would have the time to address the matter soon.

"I am still awaiting their reply," he said. He urged both sides to maintain status quo and create a

conducive atmosphere for resolving the boundary dispute, which has persisted for generations.

"This problem will continue until and unless the committees sit down and discuss all these issues," he said. Appealing to villages on both sides of the border to maintain peace and harmony, Tynsong said, "Let us create a conducive atmosphere so that the unnecessary differences happening now and then should be stopped."

Meanwhile, cabinet minister and government spokesperson Paul Lyngdoh said both state governments are likely to sign a second memorandum of understanding (MoU) ahead of Independence Day as part of efforts to resolve the remaining areas of difference.

He recalled that both Meghalaya and Assam had signed the first MoU in New Delhi in March 2022, which addressed six of the 12 disputed sectors. (PTI)

China begins construction of world's biggest dam over Brahmaputra in Tibet

BEIJING, July 19: China on Saturday formally started the construction of a USD 167.8 billion dam over the Brahmaputra River in Tibet, close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang announced the start of the construction of the dam at a groundbreaking ceremony in the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra River, locally known as Yarlung Zangbo, at Nyingchi City, official media reported.

The groundbreaking ceremony took place at the dam site of Nyingchi's Mainling hydropower station in Tibet Autonomous Region, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The hydropower project, regarded as the biggest infrastructure project in the world, raised concerns in the lower riparian countries, India and Bangladesh.

The project will consist of five cascade hydropower stations, with a total investment estimated at around 1.2 trillion Yuan (about USD 167.8 billion), the report said.

According to a 2023 report, the hydropower station is expected to generate more than 300 billion kWh of electricity each year — enough to meet the annual needs of over 300 million people.

It will primarily deliver electricity for external consumption while also addressing local demand in Tibet, which China officially refers to as Xizang.

Representatives from various organisations, including the National Development and Reform Commission and the Power Construction Corporation of China and locals attended the ceremony, the report said. The project was approved in December last year.

The dam is to be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches where the Brahmaputra River



makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh.

According to earlier reports, the size of the project would dwarf any other single infrastructure project on the planet, including China's own Three Gorges dam, regarded as the largest in the world.

China has already operationalised the USD 1.5 billion Zam Hydropower Station, the largest in Tibet, in 2015, which raised concerns in India.

Concerns arose in India as the dam besides empowering China to control the water flow, the size and scale of it could also enable Beijing to release large amounts of water flooding border areas in times of hostilities. India too is building a dam over Brahmaputra in Arunachal Pradesh.

India and China established the Expert Level Mechanism (ELM) in 2006 to discuss various issues related to trans-border rivers under which China provides India with hydrological information on the Brahmaputra river and Sutlej river during the flood seasons.

Data sharing of trans-border

rivers figured in the talks between India, China Special Representatives (SRs) for border question, NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, held here on December 18 last year.

The Brahmaputra Dam presents enormous engineering challenges as the project site is located along a tectonic plate boundary where earthquakes occur.

The Tibetan plateau, regarded as the roof of the world, frequently experiences earthquakes as it is located over the tectonic plates.

But an official statement in December last year sought to allay concerns about earthquakes, saying that the hydropower project is safe and prioritises ecological protection.

Through extensive geological explorations and technical advancements, a solid foundation has been laid for the science-based, secure, and high-quality development of the project, it said.

Brahmaputra flows across the Tibetan Plateau, carving out the deepest canyon on Earth. The dam will be built in one of the rainiest parts. (PTI)

Work on second Saraighat rail-cum-road bridge to begin soon

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 19: Work on the Second Rail-cum-Road Bridge across the Brahmaputra at Saraighat is set to begin soon, with tendering for construction expected to be finalised shortly.

According to an official statement, the project is being executed as part of the doubling of the Agthori-Kamakhya railway line under the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR). Sanctioned during the financial year 2023-24, the project has an estimated cost of ₹1,473.77 crore and is targeted for completion by December 2029. The Railway Board approved the detailed estimates. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Himanta, Mamata trade barbs over language, infiltration and identity politics

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 19: A political war of words has erupted between Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, as both leaders exchanged sharp remarks over issues of infiltration, language rights, and identity.

In a strongly worded post on X on Saturday, Sarma accused Banerjee of enabling demographic shifts in Bengal through what he called "unchecked Muslim infiltration" from across the international border for political gain.

He claimed that Assam, unlike Bengal, is not battling its own people but confronting a demographic crisis that threatens to turn Hindus



into minorities in several districts of the state.

Sarma cited a past Supreme Court observation, calling the influx

an act of "external aggression," and insisted that the issue is not a political narrative but a lived reality in Assam. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India, US teams conclude fifth round of talks on proposed trade pact: Official



NEW DELHI, July 19: India and the US teams have concluded the fifth round of talks for the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) in Washington on July 17, an official said. The negotiations were held for four days (July 14-17) in Washington.

"The Indian team is coming back," the official said. India's chief negotiator and special secretary in the Department of Commerce Rajesh Agrawal led the team for negotiations.

These deliberations are important as both sides are looking at finalising an interim trade deal before August 1, which marks the end of the suspension period of Trump tariffs imposed on dozens of countries, in-

cluding India (26 per cent). On April 2 this year, US President Donald Trump announced these high reciprocal tariffs. The implementation of high tariffs was immediately suspended for 90 days till July 9 and later until August 1, as America is negotiating trade deals with various countries.

Issues related to agriculture and automobiles are learnt to have figured during the fifth round of negotiations. Matters related to ways to deal with non-market economies, and SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment, and Technologies) also came up for discussion.

On the possibility for an interim trade agreement before August 1, an official has recently stated, "We are not differentiating between an interim or the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement. We are negotiating a complete deal. Whatever will be finished (agreed upon), we can package it as an interim deal and for the rest, talks will continue".

India has hardened its position on the US demand for duty concessions on agri and dairy products. New Delhi has, so far, not given any duty concessions to any of its trading partners in a free trade agreement in the dairy sector. Certain farmers' associations have urged the government not to include any issues related to agriculture in the trade pact. India is seeking the removal of this additional tariff (26 per cent). It is also seeking the easing of tariffs on steel and aluminium (50 per cent) and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Minorities enjoying absolute freedom in India due to Hindu majority: Rijiju

NEW DELHI, July 19: Union minister Kiren Rijiju has said that minorities are enjoying absolute freedom and protection in India because of the Hindu majority, and asserted that the country is safest for minorities.

In an interview with PTI Videos, the Minority Affairs Minister said he has not come across a single case where a member of the minority community is willing to migrate out of India because of being deprived of anything in the country.

He accused "the Left ecosystem backed by the Congress party" of running a relentless campaign that minorities are being "tortured, butchered, lynched and killed, and are not safe in India".

Rijiju said such narratives were not helping the country. Asked about his predecessor Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi's statement when he was the minister that India is heaven for minorities, Rijiju said India is a country where "people are law abiding, we are secular, we have a Constitution", and so, whether in majority or minority, everybody is the same. Whether one belongs to a minority or a majority community, everybody is equal before the law, he asserted.

"Now, having said that I can clearly make this statement that whatever the majority community gets, the minority communities also get but there are certain things which minorities get but the majority community do not get," Rijiju told PTI on Friday at the news agency's headquarters here.

"If you see the history in brief, there were some



problems in Tibet due to the Chinese occupation and the Tibetans came to India. There were some democratic movements and problems in Myanmar and the democratic activists came to India. There were some problems in Sri Lanka, the Lankan Tamils came to India. There was persecution of minorities in Bangladesh, they all came to India. From Pakistan, Afghanistan (many came to India)," the senior BJP leader said.

"Ultimately, they all desire to take shelter in India because they have the confidence in the Constitution of India and the people of India. That is why they come here," he said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

7 dead in two road accidents in Assam

GUWAHATI, July 19: Seven people, including two children, were killed and two others injured in two separate road accidents in Assam on Saturday, police said.

While one accident happened in Hojai district, the other was reported from Dhubri, they said.

A speeding vehicle hit the railing of a bridge in the Nilbagan area of Hojai in the early hours, leading to the death of three persons on the spot. The fourth passenger was taken to a local hospital in a critical condition, where he succumbed to injuries, police said.

In the Golakgunj area of Dhubri, a car skidded off the road and hit trees. A woman and a 10-month-old child were killed on the spot.

Police and locals rescued three others, including a 1.5-month-old child, from the car and rushed them to a local hospital. The infant succumbed in the hospital, police said. The two others injured in the accident are undergoing treatment, they said. (PTI)

2 girl students step in as Jorhat DC, ADC for a day

JORHAT, July 19: Two girl students in Assam's Jorhat district on Saturday served as the district commissioner (DC) and additional deputy commissioner for the day.

Both were winners of an essay competition on the topic 'One day as district commissioner', conducted as a part of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' programme. The contest was open for girls of 14-25 years, with winners to get a chance to serve as DC or ADC for a day, along with other prizes.

Jorhat DC Jay Shivani said the initiative was aimed at encouraging young girls to take an interest in governance.

While postgraduate student Geetashree Sharma served as the district commissioner (DC), class 9 student Sanshita Baruah worked as the additional district commissioner (ADC) for the day, with both gathering an experience of a lifetime.

"This initiative was meant to encourage young girls to develop an interest in governance and aim high. Geetashree and Sanshita proved to be very capable, showing active interest in the happenings and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

18 killed in UP, rain havoc in Rajasthan, alert in U'khand, Bengal, HP

NEW DELHI, July 19: Uttar Pradesh bore the brunt of monsoon fury as rain-related incidents claimed 18 lives, with the IMD on Saturday issuing alerts for heavy rain in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Kerala.

While torrential rain caused a flood-like situation in parts of Rajasthan; heavy rainfall and landslides in some areas of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim affected normal life and disrupted traffic movement.

In Uttar Pradesh, 18 people died in a period of over 24 hours ending at 8 pm on July 18. Of the total, eight died of drowning following excessive rain, while two were a result of snakebites.

In Chitrakoot, two deaths due to drowning were reported on July 17 and 18, three in Moradabad on July 17, and one drowned in Ghazipur on July 18, according to an official statement.

Rain-related incidents after downpour claimed three lives in Banda and two each in Mahoba and Chitrakoot, and one in Lalitpur



MONSOON MAYHEM

on July 18, the statement said.

In Rajasthan, heavy rainfall over the past 24 hours has resulted in flood-like conditions in several cities, including Ajmer, Pushkar, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur, and Pali.

Many villages have been cut off as rivers, drains, and dams overflowed due to the intense rain. On Friday night, 17 people got stranded in the Banas River near Golera village in the Todaraisingh

area of Tonk, but they were later rescued by the SDRF.

In Ajmer's Dargah area, several people were swept away by the strong water flow, prompting locals to intervene and rescue them.

Ajmer's Ana Sagar lake is overflowing as a result of the persistent rain, with locals using sandbags to try to control the flow.

The highest rainfall recorded was 234.0 mm in Nainwa of Bundi

district, followed by 230 mm in Merta City of Nagaur, 190 mm in Mangliawas of Ajmer, 180 mm in Nasirabad of Ajmer, and 160 mm in Pratapgarh.

Heavy to very heavy rain is expected in the Jodhpur division on Saturday, with moderate to heavy rain anticipated in some areas of the Ajmer and Udaipur divisions. The likelihood of reduced heavy rain activity in the Bharatpur, Jaipur, Kota, and Bikaner divisions from Saturday is also strong, Jaipur MeT department director Radhey Shyam Sharma said.

A rapid decline in rain activities across the state is likely from Sunday onward, he said, adding that a new wave of heavy rain could potentially return to eastern Rajasthan around July 27-28.

In Uttarakhand, a 'red alert' for heavy rainfall on Sunday in parts of the Kumaon region has been issued by the meteorological department. Nainital, Champawat and Udham Singh Nagar in the Kumaon region are likely to be pounded (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

SIT formed to detect illegal immigrants in West Tripura: Police

AGARTALA, July 19: The West Tripura district police has constituted a 15-member Special Task Force (STF) to detect, identify and deport immigrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Tripura Motha Party (TMP) supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma thanked the police for the move and asked the indigenous people to report any such illegal immigrant.

The 15-member SIT is headed by a senior deputy superintendent of police, while all the officers-in-charge (OCs) of police stations were also included in it.

"For deportation of illegal Bangladesh nationals/Rohingyas, a district-level Special Task Force (STF) has been constituted for West Tripura district police to detect, identify and deport immigrants from Bangladesh/Myanmar settled or apprehended in the district," Superintendent of Police (SP) Kiran Kumar said in an official order. "If a person is identified as an illegal Bangladesh national or a Rohingya after inquiry, the respective team

members shall immediately ensure the capture of their biometrics (fingerprint and facial photographs) and demographic details and upload those on the foreigners' identification portal," it said.

"After capturing biometrics and demographic details, the illegal immigrants shall be handed over to the officers of BSF for deportation to their native land. The dy SP, DIB (District Intelligence Bureau) will ensure collection and compilation of weekly, fortnightly and monthly basis data in this regard for ready reference," the recent order added.

Debbarma claimed that the SIT was formed as a result of persistent pressure created on the BJP-led government by TMP, a constituent of the ruling coalition, to address the illegal immigration issue.

"Thank you Tripura Police for taking up this crucial issue. If we all continue to speak up together, things will happen on the ground. The genuine people of Tripura should report such activity," he said in a social media post. (PTI)

Indian electronics exports hit USD 40 bn: Vaishnaw

HYDERABAD, July 19: India's electronics exports have soared past USD 40 billion, marking an eight-fold growth during the last 11 years, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday.

He also highlighted that the domestic electronics production has gone up by six times.

Addressing the 14th Convocation of IIT Hyderabad, near here, Vaishnaw also emphasised the rapid progress of India's first bullet train project, which is expected to become operational by August or September 2027.

Looking ahead, Vaishnaw said the first made in India semiconductor chip, on a commercial scale, will be manufactured this year. He expressed confidence that India is on track to become one of the top five semiconductor nations in the world in the coming years, citing its increasing focus on capital equipment and the materials required for semiconductors.

"In just 11 years, we have increased our electronics production



six times. That's a CAGR double digit which any corporate would be envious of. We have increased our exports eight times, crossed USD 40 billion exports in electronics manufacturing, which is a phenomenal pace of growth, something which very few countries of our size have ever seen," the Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, Elec-

tronics & Information Technology said.

He attributed this growth to the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and noted that in just about three and a half years, India could design a complete 4G telecom stack. Today, it is installed on almost 90,000 telecom towers, which is more than the network of many countries in the world.

As part of the telecom initiative, the government has set up 100 5G labs where the students can get hands-on experience of the 5G equipment, allowing them to work on real-world use cases and develop practical solutions, the IT Minister said.

He cited five examples of India's growth story and bases for the next generations—electronics production, AI, semiconductors, telecom sector and railways.

To cultivate talent in the semiconductor field, the Centre has given the latest EDA tools from Cadence, Synopsys, and Siemens to about 270 colleges and institutions and if the startups are added the number becomes 340, he said.

"Nowhere in the world has such a large talent development program ever taken up in the field of semiconductors," Vaishnaw said.

The Indian Railways already has version three of Vande Bharat at this point of time getting manufactured at the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai, he said. (PTI)

Trump's tariff threat pushes Lula's popularity, worsens legal troubles for Brazil's ex-leader

SAO PAULO, July 19: US President Donald Trump may have thought that pressuring Brazil with higher tariffs would help his ally, the country's former President Jair Bolsonaro, but the move apparently backfired.

Last week, Trump sent a letter to Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva threatening a 50 per cent import tax and directly linking the decision to Bolsonaro's trial, which he called a "witch hunt".

"This trial should end immediately!" Trump wrote Thursday evening in a second letter, this one addressed to Bolsonaro. He added that he had "strongly voiced" his disapproval through his tariff policy. Rather than backing down, Brazil's Supreme Court escalated the case, worsening Bolsonaro's legal troubles. On Friday morning, federal police raided Bolsonaro's home and political office. The former president was ordered to wear an ankle monitor, banned from using social media, and hit with other restrictions.

Meanwhile, President Lula — who was facing higher unpopularity, growing opposition in Congress and increasing risks to his likely reelection bid — seems to have gained politically from the situation.

Now the 79-year-old leftist Lula, in office for the third non-consecutive term of his long political career, is seeing renewed acceptance, congressional support against Trump and pleas to run one last time to defend Brazil's sovereignty.

Back in the game
Lula has appeared more energized in public since Trump's announcement. At a national students assembly Thursday, he wore a blue cap reading "Sovereign Brazil Unites Us" — a contrast to MAGA's red cap.

"A gringo will not give orders to this president," he told the crowd, and called the tariff hike "unacceptable blackmail." The impact on Lula is not a first. Trump's actions targeting other countries have boosted ideological rivals in Canada and Australia instead of strengthening his allies at a local level.

Private pollster Atlas said Tuesday that Lula's unpopularity had reversed course after his spat with Trump. Lula's job approval went from 47.3 per cent in June to 49.7 per cent since the tariffs battle began.

The poll of more than 2,800 people was conducted July 11-13, with a margin of error of 2 percentage points. The study also said 62.2 per cent of Brazilians think the higher tariffs are unjustified while 36.8 per cent agree with the measure. Even Bolsonaro's former vice president, Sen. Hamilton Mourao, criticised

Trump's move as undue interference in Brazil's politics, though he said he agreed the trial against the far-right leader is biased against him.

Social media analytics firm Palver analyzed 20,000 messages about Trump on WhatsApp, Brazil's most widely used communication platform, a day after Trump's announcement. Its analysis said right-wing users dominated viral content, but spontaneous conversations leaned left, mocking Bolsonaro as submissive and defending Brazil's sovereignty.

"Trump has put Lula back in the game," said Thomas Traumann, an independent political consultant and former spokesman for the Brazilian presidency who only weeks ago argued that Lula had lost his front-runner status in the presidential race as he struggled to deliver on his promises to the economy. "Trump handed it to Lula on a silver platter," Traumann said. Business leaders who until recently sided with Bolsonaro are having to court Lula to negotiate with Trump. Agribusiness, Brazil's largest economic sector and a traditional right-wing stronghold, united to criticise the US president's move. Industry groups were quick to denounce the tariffs as politically motivated and lacking any commercial justification.

National outrage
"In general, with the major exception of a more radical conservative wing, (Trump's move) generated national outrage for violating Brazil's sovereignty," lawmaker Arnaldo Jardim, a member of the congressional agricultural caucus, told The Associated Press. Jardim, who pushed for the approval of a reciprocity bill that could be used by Lula if there's no agreement until the Aug. 1 deadline, hardly sides with the president. "Even among sectors that initially thought this could benefit Bolsonaro, many had to reconsider their positions," he said.

Top congressional leaders who recently helped nix a Lula decree to raise a transactions tax were moving toward a head-on collision with him. After Trump's announcement, they signed a joint statement agreeing with Lula's promise to use the reciprocity law against the US.

In another change, Brazil's Congress decided to start moving on Lula's plan to give an income tax break to millions of poorer Brazilians. Many politicians said that such initiative was dead after Lula became the first president in three decades to have a decree annulled by lawmakers. (AP)

Former chief justice of India Chandrachud says Viceroy report on Vedanta Group lacks credibility

NEW DELHI, July 19: US short seller Viceroy Research's report on the Vedanta Group "lacks credibility" and the firm would be well-placed to seek legal remedies, former chief justice of India D Y Chandrachud has said.

Justice Chandrachud's remark came after Vedanta sought an independent legal opinion from the former chief justice in relation to the allegations made in the Viceroy Research report, the company said in a regulatory filing on Friday.

According to the filing, the former CJI has opined that "Viceroy has a track record of taking short positions in listed companies and then publishing misleading reports

to profit unlawfully from the resulting market impact".

The Viceroy Research's report on the company contains serious allegations, causing harm to the Vedanta Group's business and reputation, Justice Chandrachud said.

"The report contains serious imputations such as 'ponzi scheme' and 'parasite', which have caused harm to querist's (Vedanta's) business and reputation," he said, adding, "in these circumstances, the querist would be well-placed to seek legal remedies." The US short seller in its July 9 report had called billionaire Anil Agarwal-led British firm Vedanta Resources a "parasite" that is "systematically

draining" its Indian unit, an allegation which the group called as "selective misinformation and baseless" aimed at discrediting the firm.

Viceroy Research took a short position against the debt of Vedanta Resources, the UK-based parent of Indian miner Vedanta Ltd, alleging that the group "is a house of cards built on a foundation of unsustainable debt, looted assets, and accounting fiction".

Vedanta had responded, saying the report was "a malicious combination of selective misinformation and baseless allegations" and that its authors issued it without contacting the group. (PTI)

ICICI Bank Q1 net profit jumps 15.9 pc; sees margin contraction ahead

MUMBAI, July 19: ICICI Bank on Saturday posted a 15.9 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit for the June quarter to ₹ 13,558 crore compared to ₹ 11,696 crore in the year-ago period.

On a standalone basis, the country's second-largest private sector lender reported a net profit of ₹ 12,768 crore for the quarter, up 15.5 per cent from ₹ 11,059 crore a year ago.

Its core net interest income increased 10.6 per cent to ₹ 21,635 crore on the back of a 12 per cent domestic loan growth, but was restricted by a narrowing of the net interest margin to 4.34 per cent from 4.41 per cent in the quarter-ago period.

The bank's executive director Sandeep Batra pointed to some more pain in the office on the NIMs front, especially with the RBI's rate cut cycle still on.

"We do expect the NIMs to sort of compress a little more in the next quarter," he told reporters, adding that the future trajectory will be decided by the RBI's actions and the overall liquidity in the system.

The other income, excluding treasury operations, recorded a 13.7 per cent jump to ₹ 7,264 crore. From an asset growth perspective, the bank slowed down growth in the riskier credit



card and personal loans segment to over 1 per cent each after multiple quarters of maintaining it at over 20 per cent.

Batra said there is no specific reason for the slowdown, but pointed out that the number is influenced by the demand factor as well.

When asked about the slower growth in retail assets, he said the bank does recalibrations to its credit norms and added that there is an overall slowdown in the market as well.

The corporate loans grew more slowly than expected because of competitive pricing options available to borrowers.

From an asset quality perspective, the fresh slippages came at a slightly higher level of ₹ 6,245 crore, but the bank management made it

clear that it is comfortable with the quality of the portfolio.

The overall provisions, excluding the ones for taxes, stood at ₹ 1,815 crore compared to ₹ 1,332 crore in the year-ago period, the bank said. The gross non-performing assets ratio improved to 1.67 per cent as of June 30 from 2.15 per cent in the year-ago period.

Batra said the bank expects the economy to fare better in the second half of the fiscal year, and the banking system will be a beneficiary of this as credit demand increases.

The overall deposit growth came at 12.8 per cent for the reporting quarter, the bank said, adding that it added 83 branches to take its overall network to 7,066 branches as of June 30.

ICICI Bank's overall capital adequacy stood at 16.97 per cent, with the core buffer level at over 16 per cent. Batra said the bank does not foresee any immediate need for a capital raising exercise.

Among its subsidiaries, the life insurance arm delivered a PAT increase to ₹ 302 crore in Q1 against ₹ 225 crore in the year-ago period, the general insurance arm's PAT jumped by nearly 29 per cent to ₹ 747 crore, while ICICI Securities' net profit declined to ₹ 391 crore from ₹ 527 crore. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Work on second Saraighat

In February 2024, and the design, drawing and report received final approval from the competent authority in March 2025. Geotechnical investigations for the substructure and superstructure have been completed. An EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) tender has been floated for the construction of the bridge, including approach roads, rail viaducts, earthwork and ancillary works.

Construction will commence immediately after the tender is awarded. The project will cover a 7.062 km stretch from Agthori to Kamakhya and includes a 1.3 km steel composite girder bridge over the Brahmaputra.

The double-deck structure will feature a double-line railway track on the lower deck and a three-lane roadway with footpaths on the upper deck.

The north-end approach of 2.694 km will connect to Agthori station, while the 3.07 km south-end approach will link to Kamakhya station.

Once operational, the bridge will boost line capacity and connectivity in the region, which is poised for industrial development. The project is also expected to generate significant employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers in the surrounding areas.

Himanta, Mamata trade barbs

"When we rise to defend our land, culture, and identity, you choose to politicise it," he wrote in a direct message to Banerjee, alleging she had "compromised Bengal's future" for vote bank politics. Defending Assam's pluralistic ethos, Sarma stated that Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, and Hindi-speaking communities have long co-existed peacefully in the state.

However, he asserted that no civilization can sustain itself without protecting its borders and cultural foundations. "Assam will continue to fight to preserve its heritage and dignity with constitutional clarity," he said. The remarks came shortly after Mamata Banerjee launched her own attack on the BJP-led Assam government, accusing it of discrimination against Bengali-speaking citizens.

In a post earlier on Saturday, Banerjee said, "Bangla, the second most spoken language in India, is also the second most spoken in Assam. To threaten citizens for upholding their mother tongue is both discriminatory and unconstitutional." She condemned what she described as the BJP's "divisive agenda" in Assam, asserting that such politics had crossed all limits.

"I stand with every fearless citizen fighting for the dignity of their language, identity, and democratic rights," she added. The escalating exchange underscores deepening political tensions between the BJP in Assam and the Trinamool Congress in Bengal, with both states now at odds over sensitive issues ranging from linguistic rights and cultural identity to migration and national security.

India, US teams conclude fifth

the auto sector (25 per cent). These issues are an important part of the trade pact negotiations, the official said. Against these, India has reserved its right under the WTO (World Trade Organization) norms to impose retaliatory duties.

The country is also seeking duty concessions for labour-intensive sectors, such as textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, grapes, and bananas, in the proposed trade pact. On the other hand, the US wants duty concessions on certain industrial goods, automobiles, especially electric vehicles, wines, petrochemical products, agri goods, dairy items, apples, tree nuts, and genetically modified crops.

The two countries are looking to conclude talks for the first tranche of the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) by fall (September-October) this year. Before that, they are looking for an interim trade pact. India's merchandise exports to the US rose 22.8 per cent to USD 25.51 billion in the April-June quarter this fiscal year, while imports rose 11.68 per cent to USD 12.86 billion. (PTI)

Minorities enjoying absolute

He said barring isolated incidents and the riots when the Congress was in power, generally, "minorities are safest in India". Despite that, for the last 11 years, there has been a constant campaign that the minorities are not safe in India, Rijiju said and wondered how that is helping India.

What is India as a country gaining from this, he asked.

"I belong to a minority community. I must openly make this admission that the majority Hindus which are around 78 to 79 per cent as per the old census. If you see the new census later on when it comes out, this percentage may be reduced but I don't know right now. But because of the Hindu majority, all the minorities are enjoying the absolute freedom and protection in this country," Rijiju said.

"Imagine if I was in Pakistan. Imagine if we were made part of Bangladesh during the partition. We would have been refugees today. Today, every tribal community, every minority community is safe and secure in his or her own homeland because the majority Hindu community is secular by character and tolerant by nature," the minister asserted. That is why India is a preferred place for every minority community, he said and added that this must be appreciated. "If you don't appreciate the reality, then you are doing the greatest disservice to the country," he said.

On whether the Muslims also feel safe in India, Rijiju said, "I saw some of the Hindus are saying that they feel threatened by some Muslim majority pockets within the country. Maybe there are some individual incidents, maybe some Hindus are saying that there is a Muslim majority (in the area) so we feel threatened. But I feel that nobody should feel threatened and if anybody is threatening the other community then the state government must take action." He asserted that everybody is equal and everybody is safe in India.

Anybody who is saying that they are unsafe in India are doing the greatest disservice to India as a nation, the minister said. He pointed out that under the ministry of minority affairs, all the schemes of the government of India are applicable in every part of the country for everyone. "The ministry of minority affairs implements policies and skills only for minority communities. The minority communities are not deprived of any possibility of getting the benefits from anywhere. It's the same for everyone," he said. The minority affairs ministry provides enough support system as funding to all the six notified minority communities in India, he said.

Earlier this month, Rijiju was involved in a war of words with AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, who had slammed the BJP leader over his statement that India is the only country where the minorities get more benefits and protection than the majority community. The Hyderabad MP, in a post on X, had said, "You are a Minister of the Indian Republic, not a monarch. @KirenRijiju You hold a constitutional post, not a throne. Minority rights are fundamental rights, not charity." "India's minorities are not even second-class citizens anymore. We are hostages," Owaisi had alleged.

Replying to the AIMIM president, Rijiju in a post on X had said, "Ok... How come Minorities from our neighbouring countries prefer to come to India & our Minorities don't migrate? Prime Minister @narendramodiji's welfare schemes are for all. The schemes of the Ministry of Minority Affairs provide additional benefits to the Minorities." Hitting back, Owaisi had said, "If we don't migrate it means we are happy."

Actually, we are not in the habit of fleeing; we did not run away from the British, we did not run away during partition, and we did not run away because of Jammu, Nellie, Gujarat, Moradabad, Delhi etc massacres. Our history is proof that we neither collaborate with our oppressors nor do we hide from them." "We know how to fight for our democratic rights and we will inshallah. Stop comparing our great nation with failed states like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal & Sri Lanka. Jai Hind, Jai Samvidhan! Thank you for your attention in this matter!" Owaisi had said.

Rijiju had earlier also said at an event that there is no country in the world that gives as much facilities to minorities as India does and asserted that all citizens are treated equally here. (PTI)

18 killed in UP, rain havoc

by heavy rainfall on Sunday. The department has also issued an 'orange alert' for heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places in Dehradun, Tehri and Pauri districts in the Garhwal region as well as Bageshwar and Pithoragarh districts of Kumaon. In view of the rain alerts, the district administrations have been asked to take precautions, including controlling the movement of people. Disaster-related equipment and wireless sets should be kept ready at every police station and outposts, said a letter issued by Deputy Secretary, State Emergency Operation Centre, Shivshankar Mishra, to the district magistrates. Tourists in the upper reaches of the Himalayas should not be allowed to travel amid unusual weather or heavy rain, the letter said.

In Himachal Pradesh, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an 'orange alert' for downpour on Monday and Tuesday in nine districts in Una, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, Solan and Sirmour. Hamirpur received 13.5 mm of rain since Friday night, followed by Karsog 8.1 mm, Kasauli 5 mm, Jubbarhatti 4.8 mm, Kotli 4 mm, Slapper 3.9 mm and Shimla 3.6 mm. Ghaghas 3.4 and Kufri 3 mm.

A total of 141 roads are still closed in the state, while 58 water supply schemes and 28 power distribution transformers were affected as of Saturday evening, according to the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC). In the disaster-hit Mandi district, 94 roads were closed and 33 in Kullu district.

In Kerala, the IMD has issued a 'red alert' for downpour five northern districts — Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, and Kasaragod — where incessant rains lashed several towns and high-range areas, causing inundation and traffic snarls. Districts including Ernakulam, Idukki, Thiruvananthapuram, and Palakkad were placed under an 'orange alert' for heavy rainfall. In light of the rain alerts, the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) has also issued guidelines on precautions to be taken during emergencies. Both Wayanad and Kozhikode experienced intense rainfall throughout Friday night, although there was a slight respite on Saturday morning. District authorities in Kozhikode are closely monitoring the situation and are prepared to evacuate people living in high-altitude areas and those near water bodies to safer locations if necessary. In Arunachal Pradesh, surface communication at various places in Lower Siang district has been snapped due to continuous rains over the past couple of days.

Incessant rains have snapped the Aalo-Likabali road in several locations since Saturday morning. Likabali Additional Deputy Commissioner Mokar Riba said. The road, a lifeline for several districts including West Siang, Leparada, Shi-Yomi, and Upper Subansiri, has been blocked by landslide debris in Siji, Yate and near Garu village, he said, adding that the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) has been directed to clear the road. "Though the NHIDCL has engaged men and machinery, they are facing problems in clearing the road due to continuous downpour," Riba said.

Vehicular movement on a stretch of National Highway-10 connecting Sevoke in West Bengal and Sikkim's Rangpo has been temporarily halted due to landslides and rockfall, officials said on Saturday.

Clearance activities are underway on the stretch following landslides at Birik Dara in Kalimpong district of West Bengal, they said, adding that it is expected to reopen within 24 hours. Meanwhile, in Delhi, the IMD has forecast thunderstorms with showers during the day. The city recorded a minimum temperature of 25.2 degrees Celsius, two notches below the season's average. (PTI)

2 girl students step in as

posing questions whenever they were in doubt," Shivani said. The DC said they attended a video conference with the Chief Secretary and took an overview of the various responsibilities of the district commissioner's office. Geetashree, a student of CKB Commerce College in Jorhat, said it was a unique experience for her.

"It was a rare opportunity to observe the working of the highest office in the district from close quarters. We were explained how the policies work and decisions are implemented," she said. Student of Praggyotika Senior Secondary School, Titabor, Sanshita was also overwhelmed with the experience. "It was great to learn that our district is performing well in most developmental parameters," the young girl added. (PTI)

Chief Minister assures of a tripartite talk with the Prime Minister MP from Diphu Amar Sing Tisso completes one year in office

HT Bureau.

DIPHU, July 19: The BJP-East Karbi Anglong District Committee (BJP-EKADC) praised the party MP from Diphu Amar Sing Tisso on completion of one year in office.

In a press conference held at the office of Hills People's Cultural Forum one of the BJP EKADC Advisers Laichan Englang said that as per his (MP Amar Sing Tisso) promise, he has raised the Autonomous State issue in parliament.

The MP has pursued the matter for a stoppage of Rajdhani Express at Diphu Railway Station and succeeded.

On the initiative of the MP, 30,000 BPL families in Karbi Anglong have been granted housing under PMAGY scheme.

Apart from that considering the backwardness of the district the MP has given a proposal to the Central government to grant another 1 lakh BPL families housing under this scheme, Englang mentioned.

He further stated that the MP and Chief Executive Member of



Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Tuliram Ronghang met Central Power Minister Manohar Lal and sanctioned central funds for rural electrification in Karbi Anglong.

Under Dharti Aaba Tribal Village Utkarsh scheme for tribal development has received central funds for the district.

Englang pointed out that the previous MP Horensing Bey has taken up the Private Member Bill on Assam Reorganisation (Karbi Di-

manchal) bill, 2024.

Though it could not be materialised, the present MP Tisso again presented the same bill in Parliament for discussion.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat director Partha Goswami has communicated the orders of the President of India recommendation for introduction of the bill in Lok Sabha under Articles 117 (1) and 274 (1) and consideration of the bill under article 117 (3) of the constitution.

On Autonomous State, Englang said, during the talks with the Forum for Hills Autonomous State Movement (FHASM) on July 11 in Dispur, the Chief Minister has given assurance that within 2 to 3 months a tripartite talk with the Prime Minister will be arranged.

Englang also said taking keen interest in the development of the district, Karbi Anglong will get Rs 270 crore for construction of 50 bedded hostels for boys and girls.

Under National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) a road widening work with a cost of ₹ 627 crores has started from Dongkamukam, Kheroni to Dima Hasao.

The MP also urged the Central government for speedy implementation of MoS 1 and 2.

If each and every clause of the MoS 1 and 2 are implemented in letter and spirit by the government of India and State then more power will be conferred to the KAAC.

Advisers BJPEKADC, Selawor Bey and Chomang Kro were also present at the press conference.

Powai Tea Estate demand change, call for full fledged union committee amid rising tensions



HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, July 19: In the heart of Margherita Co-District, workers at Powai Tea Estate has univocally been demand for change as for over three years.

The Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS) Powai Primary Committee has operated under an ad-hoc structure, sparking growing frustration among the Tea estate dedicated labour force.

Powai Tea estate workers are now rallying for a fully constituted committee to ensure their rights, transparency, and a stronger voice in addressing their concerns.

Rupesh Tanti, a social worker from Powai Tea estate, has emerged as a beacon of hope for the community as in a bold address to the media, Rupesh Tanti raised

serious concerns about the prolonged delay in establishing a legitimate union committee.

Rupesh Tanti accused Harinanda Goh, secretary of Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha Margherita Branch, of allowing the ad-hoc committee to collect annual financial contributions from workers without transparency or accountability. "Where is the clarity? Where are the answers?" Tanti asked, echoing the sentiments of more than 4000 Tea Estate workers seeking justice and fairness.

Despite repeated appeals to key figures, including Paban Singh Ghatowar, president of ACMS Central Committee, Rupesh Gowala Secretary and also the MLA and Cabinet Minister of Doomsday Legislative Assem-

bly, ACMS Margherita branch President Gautam Dhanowar, Secretary Harinanda Goh Powai and the Manager of Powai Estate manager, the workers' pleas for a proper committee have gone unanswered said Tanti.

"Why has the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha Powai Primary Committee not been fully constituted despite years of demands?" Tanti questioned passionately.

Rupesh Tanti emphasised that the absence of a legitimate committee is stifling Powai Tea Estate workers' ability to address grievances, secure fair representation and ensure accountability in union activities.

The workers of Powai Tea Estate are now calling for urgent intervention from the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS) leadership to restore trust and establish a fully functional committee as their message is clear they deserve a system that uplifts their voices and protects their rights.

"As the workers of Powai Tea Estate stand as a testament to Assam's rich heritage, the workers' fight for a fair and transparent union reflects their resilience and determination to build a brighter future, the call for change is loud, and the time for action is now," said Rupesh Tanti.

Akhil desperate for opposition unity, Gaurav gives scant respect to his voice

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, July 19: Reacting to state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi's remark that Akhil Gogoi presents a multiversion personality, the later ruled that the new state Congress chief awfully lacks political acumen to gauge his thrust for opposition unity in the present critical juncture.

Addressing the media here on Friday in Sivasagar Akhil Gogoi said that however much we think about the opposition unity forum, comments made by Debabrata Shaikia and Gaurav Gogoi show that they are not at all interested in it. He further said that he called on Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge also to take a decision in this regard, but in vain.

"Since becoming president, Gaurav Gogoi has not said anything derogatory to Gaurav Gogoi," he added.

Akhil Gogoi retorted, "Despite many incising sarcasm at my expense, I have not said anything derogatory to Gaurav Gogoi."

"I am being patient with these things in order to defeat the BJP. The BJP benefited from not being united in the panchayat elections. If Gaurav Gogoi continues to say these things with such trivial ridicule, one day he will lose patience," Gogoi threatened.

Internal conflict rocks Dalgaoon Congress

HT Correspondent

MANGALDAI, July 19: Tensions within the Congress party in Dalgaoon LAC, Darrang escalated dramatically on Friday when a woman councillor and her husband were allegedly assaulted by senior party members.

The incident, stemming from internal rivalries, has sparked outrage and prompted a police investigation.

The conflict arose during a meeting to elect the chairman of the Besimari Development Block regional panchayat.

Of the 14 members present—11 from Congress, one from BJP, and two independents—two Congress leaders, Suleman Ali and Hamidur Rahman, contested for the chairman's post.

The vote resulted in a 7-7 tie, and the election officer declared Hamidur Rahman the winner through a coin toss.

The outcome infuriated supporters of Suleman Ali, including Besimari Zila Parishad member Mahibuddin Ahmed and former



Zila Parishad member Ainal Haque.

Suspecting cross-voting, they allegedly targeted Congress Zonal Member Jasmine Begum and her husband, Abdul Hakim.

The couple was reportedly forced into a car, taken to Mahibuddin Ahmed's residence, and physically assaulted.

Dalgaoon Police intervened promptly, rescuing the injured couple and ensuring they received medical treatment.

After recording their state-

ments, a case was registered at Dalgaoon Police Station against Mahibuddin Ahmed, Ainal Haque, and other Congress leaders and workers involved.

The police are investigating the incident, which has caused a stir in the region.

The assault on an elected representative has raised serious concerns about internal discord within the Congress party, with the incident drawing widespread attention and calls for accountability.

Govt of BTR distributes land entitlement certificates in Chirang

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, July 19: In a significant move to secure land rights and provide stability to landless families, the department of Land and Revenue, Government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), distributed 862 land pattas (land titles) to eligible beneficiaries on Saturday at a ceremonial programme held at Laimuthi playground under the 14-Chirang Duar constituency in Chirang district.

The land entitlement were distributed under the Mission Bwiswmuthi, a flagship programme of BTR government which is initiated for providing land entitlement certificates among the landless peoples.

The event witnessed the presence of key dignitaries including Lok Sabha MP Joyanta Basumatary, Rajya Sabha MP Rungwra Narzary, MLA Nirmal Kumar Brahma, and BTC Executive Members Ranjit Basumatary and Saikhong Basumatary. Other senior administrative officials were also present during the distribution ceremony.

BTR executive member, Ranjit Basumatary told that the land entitlement certificates have been distributed under the Mission Bwiswmuthi, a flagship programme of Bodoland Territorial Region government. He informed that nearly 3 lakh cases of land related issues are resolved so far under the Mission Bwiswmuthi.

He said that the government of BTR has initiated this bold initiative to provide land entitlement certificates among the landless peoples across the region.

Tragic road accident claims four in Hojai



A Correspondent

KHERONI, July 19: A devastating accident occurred early this morning at approximately 3:30 AM on National Highway 37 at Nilbagan, Hojai District, claiming the lives of four individuals.

The victims, identified as Hari Chauhan (45), son of Kashinath Chauhan from Laskarpathar, Hojai District; Mahesh Yadav alias Dukhi Yadav (46), son of Late Hari Kisun Yadav from Maj Basti, Forest Bazar, West Karbi Anglong; Nabi Singh (41) from Hojai and Rahul Dibragade (35), son of Bipul Dibragade, originally from Haf-long Town, Dima Hasao, but residing in Lanka's Bordolung, were traveling from Guwahati towards

Lanka in a Swift Dzire (AS-02-W-6439).

According to reports, the vehicle met with a fatal accident, resulting in the immediate death of two individuals at the scene.

The other two succumbed to their injuries during treatment at the District Civil Hospital, Jura-pukhuri, Hojai, and HAMM Hospital and Research Centre, Hojai.

As of the latest updates, the bodies have been sent for postmortem.

This tragic incident has left the local community in deep mourning, with residents expressing shock and grief over the sudden loss of lives. Authorities are investigating the cause of the accident, and further details are awaited.

Illegal teak wood worth of 10 lakh seized in Srirampur, 2 Arrested

HT Correspondent

GOSSAIGAON, July 19: In a significant crackdown on timber smuggling, a team of police personnel from Srirampur police outpost under the Gossaigaon subdivision seized a large consignment of illegal teak wood during a special operation based on a tip-off.

The seized timber, estimated to be valued at over 10 lakh, was being transported secretly in a six-wheeler truck. The truck, bearing registration number KA-50-A-3595, was heading towards West Bengal from Silchar. The illegal teak logs were cleverly hidden beneath household items to avoid detection.

Acting on specific intelligence, Srirampur police intercepted the vehicle along National Highway 27 and conducted a thorough search, uncovering the hidden timber consignment. During the operation, police arrested the truck driver and his assistant. The arrested individuals have been identified as Krishna Babu and Raju Bhai. According to officials, the timber consignment was being transported without any valid permits or documentation.

Police have launched a detailed investigation and are actively working to trace the broader network involved in the illegal timber trade.

Further arrests are expected as the probe continues.

AASU protest against irrigation woes of farmers

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, July 19: The Jorhat district unit of AASU on Saturday, as per the call given by the state committee, staged a protest programme in front of the office of the Superintendent Engineer, Irrigation department here against failure to provide relief to farmers suffering from drought like conditions in several districts of Assam.

Holding the student body's flag, the protestors shouted slogans against the government and the department for not being able to provide any relief when several districts were witnessing scarce rainfall in present times.

Seeking immediate steps by the department for providing assistance to the affected farmers, they alleged that the officials and employees of the department have not been able to provide relief despite several schemes being run by the department.

Electricity shutdown announced

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 19: The Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL), Diphu Electrical Sub-Division-II, on Saturday informed that there will be a planned electricity shutdown at the 33/11 KV Dillaji Sub-Station on 20 July 2025, from 5:00 AM to 7:45 AM.

The shutdown is reportedly necessary to carry out preventive maintenance and repair works on the electrical infrastructure to ensure better service delivery in the future.

The affected areas during this scheduled shutdown will include: Diphu Town, Dhanisiri, Matipung, Birla, and Taralango.

Following the announcement the APDCL has apologised for the inconvenience this may cause and has requested the public's cooperation and understanding.

One held in Nagaon murder case

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 19: In a recent follow up of the Nagaon murder case, the police have apprehended one Saddam Hussain from Morangal, Nagaon.

Namrata Engtupi (19), a resident of Dentaghat in Karbi Anglong district had been missing since June 18 and has been allegedly strangled by Saddam Hussain.

However the circumstances leading to the murder of the 19 year old still remains obscure at the time of reporting.

Family sources have stated that, they started searching for her on June 15 after which they filed a missing person report at the Samelangso police station.

Immediately the police forwarded all the necessary inputs to all police stations.

Finally on July 16, the police informed Namrata's parents about their missing daughter.

The victim was identified by her belongings at Nagaon Police station.

The body was found near Diphulo Shiv Temple. The death of the young woman has gained widespread attention across Karbi Anglong with social organisations demanding speedy investigation and punishment to the responsible culprit.

Questions remain on how the deceased met Saddam Hussain, how Namrata went to Nagaon instead of Diphu as she told her parents, was she abducted, what was she doing and where was she for nearly 20 days till her lifeless body was found near Diphulo Shiv Temple.

Another twist in the case emerged when a family from Nagaon claimed the body as that of their daughter Pinky Das and cremated her.

However, Pinky was later rescued from the Gatanga area in Nagaon district.

Tezpur MLA and proud alumnus Prithiraj Rabha will attend as chief guest Darrang College and Alumni Association to celebrate Foundation Day and Grand Alumni Reunion

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, July 19: Darrang College, Tezpur, one of the most prestigious institutions of higher education in North Assam—is set to celebrate a dual milestone with the 81st Foundation Day of the College and the 31st Foundation Day of its Alumni Association on July 26.

Both events will be marked with day-long celebrations on the college campus.

Founded on 26 July 1945 by a group of visionary educationists and social leaders, Darrang College has grown into a renowned centre of academic and intellectual excellence in Assam.

This year, the institution earned further distinction by receiving autonomous status recognition from the University Grants Commission (UGC), a moment of pride for the entire Darrang College fraternity as well as the residents of Tezpur and surrounding areas.

The Foundation Day program will begin with college flag hoisting at 9:30 AM and Alumni Association flag hoisting at 10:00 AM, followed by the main celebration at 10:30 AM.

Tezpur MLA and proud alumnus Prithiraj Rabha will attend as chief guest.

On this occasion, three illustrious alumni of the college, Pankaj Kumar Bora (Referee of International Arm Wrestling), Utpal Barua (recently appointed Assam Information Commissioner), and Dr Pratibha Sharma (Project Director, Satriya Centre, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Guwahati) will be specially felicitated.

During the programme educational endowment awards will also be presented to the concerned students and the day long programme will conclude with a cultural evening featuring performances by alumni.

Further, the Darrang College Alumni Association has also announced a Grand Alumni Reunion on October 26. A Steering Committee and nine subcommittees including Registration, Publicity, Communication, Volunteers, Finance, Food & Publications, Cultural, and Stage & Decoration have been formed to coordinate the event.

The reunion program will feature registration from 9:00 AM, flag hoisting, a trib-



ute ceremony, tree plantation, an open session, special honours for senior alumni, and a cultural extravaganza.

To mark the occasion, the Association will also release a special commemorative volume, and a minimum registration fee of ₹ 1,000 has been set for participants.

Alumni residing across India and abroad are urged to register early and connect with the organizing team consisted by Dr Hemanta Jyoti Nath (General Secretary): +91 86380 10346, Achyut Sharma (Joint Assistant Secretary): +91 98643 8923, Indrani Tamuli (Joint Assistant Secretary):

+91 92061 10105 and Manoranjan Nath (Convenor, Communication Subcommittee): +91 97069 80622.

The Alumni Association invites all former students to join these landmark events and strengthen their bond with their alma mater.

The meeting, presided over by President of Alumni Association Dhruvajyoti Das, began with a briefing of the purpose of the meeting by General Secretary Dr Hemanta Jyoti Nath.

During the session, various individuals delivered speeches, including the founding General Secretary of the association and retired Principal of the college, Dr Abani Kumar Sharma; Advisors Ashwini Sharma; Vice Presidents Nripen Kumar Bora, Diganta Goswami, and Dr Gahan Chandra Mahanta; senior members Manoranjan Nath and Sutham Das, former General Secretary of the Student Union Ratan Dutta, former Joint Secretary of Darrang College Alumni Association Pankaj Barua, Assistant Secretaries Achyut Sharma and Indrani Tamuli, among others.

S AND T ASSOCIATED WORK IN CONNECTION WITH CONSTRUCTION OF MULTIUTILITY HALL

Tender Notice No: 04 of 2025-26. Open E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: E-Tender No. N-2025-26-04-Dy.CSTE-NV. Name of work: S and T associated work in connection with construction of Multiutility Hall at Nambari, Maligaon.

Tender Value: ₹20,82,333/- Bid Security: ₹41,700/- E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 08-08-2025 and opened at 15:30 hrs on 08-08-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/Network, Maligaon

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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MECHANIZED CLEANING OF DIBRUGARH RAILWAY STATION AREA

GeM Bid Number: GEM/2025/B/6459420, Dated: 16-07-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. Item Category: Custom bid for Services- Mechanized cleaning of Dibrugarh railway station area for the period of three years. Estimated Bid Value: ₹5,80,45,868.76, EMD Amount: ₹4,40,229.00; Bid End Date/Time: 06-08-2025 at 19:00 hrs. Bid Opening Date/Time: 06-08-2025 at 19:30 hrs. Tender has been uploaded in website <http://www.GeM.gov.in>

DCM (IC), Tinukia

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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Teacher-Student Relationship

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The teacher-student relationship is a vital and comprehensive bond in the field of education, serving not only as a medium for knowledge transfer but also as a foundation for imparting human values, culture, morality, and a sense of responsibility toward society. This relationship is a dynamic process that plays a crucial role in shaping a student's personality, thought process, and future path. In the context of Assamese society, this relationship holds even deeper significance, as our culture and tradition have always revered teachers as equivalent to gurus, considered akin to divine figures. The roots of this relationship are deeply embedded in our historical traditions and have become an essential element of societal progress.

In ancient Indian education systems, such as the Gurukul, the teacher-student relationship was not limited to academic knowledge; it was a holistic process of life education. Students, living in close proximity to their gurus, not only acquired knowledge of the Vedas, Upanishads, or other scriptures but also learned values like morality, honesty, discipline, and social responsibility. In the context of Assam, this tradition was particularly evident through the educational systems of Namghars and Satras established under the leadership of Sankardev and Madhavdev. In these institutions, teachers provided students with religious education alongside knowledge of Assamese literature, music, dance, and social values. The foundation of this relationship was mutual respect, devotion, and trust. Teachers acted as guides, while students expressed gratitude through loyalty and dedication. In the Gurukul tradition, a comprehensive bond developed between teachers and students, encompassing daily activities and profound discussions on knowledge. Students lived in the guru's household, participating in tasks like farming, household chores, and other daily activities, fostering an emotional and human connection. In Assam's educational system, this close relationship is evident, where students not only gained knowledge but also developed a simple and ethical outlook on life. As a result, teachers have always held a high and respected position in Assamese society. A teacher is not merely a transmitter of knowledge but a guide who instills honesty, morality, and social responsibility in students. In schools, teachers become more than educators; they become integral partners in students' families. In rural areas, where many parents have limited education, teachers often serve as the primary guides

for students, addressing not only their academic needs but also being sensitive to their personal challenges. For example, in remote areas of Assam, teachers often assist with students' economic and social issues, such as arranging books for study or discussing the importance of education with their families. This close relationship makes the teacher-student bond more human and empathetic.

In the context of modern education, the nature of the teacher-student relationship has undergone significant changes. Due to the influence of globalization, the use of technology in edu-

cation, commercialization, and the rise of exam-oriented systems, the traditional depth of this relationship has somewhat diminished. The emotional connection that once existed between teachers and students has largely been replaced by a more professional and functional relationship. The teacher's role is now often limited to teaching the curriculum and preparing students for exams. Students, too, prioritize exam results and career prospects over life lessons from teachers. In a state like Assam, where education faces challenges like inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and limited resources, the teacher's role has become even more complex. They must teach the curriculum while also addressing students' mental, social, and economic needs. For instance, in rural Assam, teacher shortages often force one teacher to handle multiple classes, increasing their workload. Despite

this, they strive to connect with students on a personal level, reflecting their responsibility and dedication. Despite these changes, the core foundation of the teacher-student relationship—mutual respect and trust—remains unchanged. The outcome of the education a student receives depends on the quality of this relationship. A teacher who is empathetic and supports a student's needs fosters confidence and motivation. In rural Assam, where parental education levels may be low, this role is even more critical, as teachers often become the sole guides for stu-



dem, many teachers in Assam maintained connections with students through WhatsApp, Google Meet, and other digital tools, showcasing their creativity and commitment. However, online education can reduce the emotional depth of the teacher-student relationship due to the lack of direct interaction. In rural Assam, limited access to the internet and digital devices further complicates this issue. Nevertheless, teachers have adopted creative methods, such as distributing offline educational materials or organizing small learning groups in villages, to maintain connections with students. A crucial aspect of the teacher-student relationship is the teacher's personality and morality. A teacher's behavior, communication, and lifestyle deeply influence students. In Assamese society, teachers are always regarded as ideal figures. Students learn not only academic knowledge but also values like honesty and responsibility. A dedicated and empathetic teacher becomes a source of inspiration for students. This ideal role remains relevant even in modern times. Teachers in Assam educate students to respect local culture, traditions, and language, helping shape their cultural identity. A major challenge in modern society is the commercialization of education. The rise of private institutions and coaching centers has shifted the focus from the true purpose of education. Students are increasingly focused on exam results, and the teacher's role is often reduced to facilitating exam preparation. This has led to a lack of emotional connection in the teacher-student relationship. In Assam, where



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educational infrastructure is still developing, this challenge is more complex. Rural students heavily rely on teachers, but teacher shortages and economic issues impact this relationship. Many schools in Assam face vacant teacher positions, hindering students' access to proper guidance. Additionally, the commercialization of education has limited access to quality education in rural areas, as private institutions are often urban-centric.

Looking at the future prospects of the teacher-student relationship, teachers must be trained in modern teaching methods while remaining aware of local culture and traditions. They should be sensitive to students' mental and social needs. Similarly, an environment must be created to foster students' respect and trust toward teachers. While increasing the use of technology in education, the traditional values of the teacher-student relationship must also be preserved. Efforts should be made to enhance digital education access in rural areas, enabling students to benefit from modern education and strengthen their relationship with teachers.

In discussing the depth and importance of the teacher-student relationship, it can be described as an essential part of life. It is not merely a means of academic knowledge transfer but a powerful tool for shaping a society's future. In a culturally rich state like Assam, this relationship holds even greater significance. If built on mutual respect, trust, and empathy, this relationship can play a vital role in societal progress. In shaping the future generations of Assamese society, the depth and dynamism of the teacher-student relationship will have a lasting impact, contributing to the overall development of society.

Transfer policy stuck in files: Teachers are waiting with bated breath

'The characters change, the story remains the same: The Transfer Saga'

By: Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

Teachers in Haryana are once again caught in confusion, rumours and incomplete information. Every morning in schools begins with tea and a discussion in the staffroom – "When will the transfers take place?" No one has an answer to this question, but everyone has a guess. Some say in August, some say after the cabinet, some believe that now that the session is in the middle, the department will not do anything. Everything seems to be stagnant, blurred and hanging in the balance.

The results of the examination conducted for teacher deployment in Model Sanskriti Vidyalayas and schools selected under the Pradhan Mantri Shri Yojana are ready. But the announcement is not being made because the Common Transfer Policy 2025 has not yet received cabinet approval. Here the question becomes imperative that before conducting the examination, was it not ensured that the policy has been made or what will be the time limit for its approval? If the result of the examination depends on the policy, then why was it taken earlier? Is this an administrative lapse or political delay?

Another argument being given for not declaring the results is that they are kept in sealed envelopes which no one has seen, so that no interference is possible. This tradition of "sealed honesty" on one hand shows that the department is pretending to be transparent and on the other hand it also makes it clear that the department itself is afraid of some possible 'game' with the results.

What makes this situation even more ridiculous is the department's double standards – when it creates a structure like SMC (School Management Committee) and then dissolves it within a month. This is the same department that has been talking about transfers since December and did not take any concrete steps until July. Every week a new order comes and the next week some other officer cancels it. This makes it clear that there is a complete lack of coordination in the department. Everyone is ready to take a "decision" at their own level, but there is no one to give direction to the education system.

The teachers have become mentally exhausted due to this confusion and opacity. In every school, the discussion revolves around this one issue – someone is getting the transfer file prepared, someone is getting the CCL form filled, someone is waiting for the result, and someone is trying to gather information from his contacts. There is a kind of mental tension and instability which is affecting the work of the teachers. In such a situation, it is worth thinking that the system on which the future generation is dependent has itself become unstable and confusing.

The reason behind this is not only the indecisiveness of the administration but also the neglect of political priorities. Governments are busy with elections, announcements and showy schemes but there is no clarity on basic needs like the teacher transfer policy. When teachers are mentally unstable, how will the education of children remain stable? In many districts of Haryana, the same teacher is teaching in two schools, some schools do not have subject experts, and on the other hand, those who should be transferred are stuck at the same place for years.

There was talk of an online transfer system based on MIS (Management Information System). But due to the lack of a policy, this system is also not able to be updated. Claims were made to make the processes transparent in the name of technology, but



until the policy is made, everything is just a click away. This is a digital dream that has not yet come true.

Teachers were promoted, many positions became vacant. Now the question is whether transfers will happen after promotion? If yes, then how many more promotions are pending? There is no answer to these questions on the departmental website, there are only rumours in the WhatsApp groups of teachers' organizations. Not only this, according to an official of the department itself, the cabinet meeting is proposed in August. This means that the policy will come by the last week of August, by then the middle of the session will come. And then the same argument will be given that transfers should be postponed till the next session so that the studies of the children are not interrupted.

This cycle is repeated every year. The policy is not made, then it is said that the session is in between. Teachers are not able to plan themselves. Neither can they take CCL, nor can they prepare mentally whether they will get a transfer or not. The department is in a serious crisis – where files are moving but no decision is being taken.

Students suffer the most due to this confusion. When a teacher is waiting for a transfer for two years, his attention naturally shifts from teaching. There are many teachers who are working hundreds of kilometres away from home and are mentally disturbed due to family responsibilities. Will they be able to educate children with this mindset?

It is also true that politics has been going on in the name of transfers in Haryana for years. Sometimes there is nepotism in the transfer list, sometimes transfers are stopped before panchayat elections, sometimes names are added or removed at the behest of some leader. Transparency is talked about only in policy papers, there is no sign of it on the ground.

If the government and the department really want to take education reform seriously, they will have to take concrete steps to improve this situation. Firstly – a clear timeline should be given as to when the transfer policy will come. Second – confusion should not be spread about exam results until the policy comes. Third – departmental coordination should be increased so that after an order is issued, no other officer can cancel it. And most important – every process should be made trackable online.

Transfer is not a favour, it is the teacher's right. Presenting it as a "favour" is a derogatory attitude. Teachers are neither political workers nor part of any group. They are the foundation stones on which the future of society stands. And if the foundation itself is kept in uncertainty, how can the peak be strong?

This article is a request to the education department and the government to come out of this confusion, indecisiveness and administrative cowardice. Instead of keeping the transfer policy confined to files and lockers, it should be implemented on the ground. Because the teacher is tired now. And when the teacher is tired, the whole society becomes lethargic.

Dr Bharkhaa Versha Works for Upliftment of Children and Women

By: Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee

Dr Bharkhaa Versha is the key person of Abhigyan Foundation which works for the upliftment of children and women. It also organizes programmes for promoting global peace. Under Article 15(3), the Constitution of India allows for positive discrimination in favor of women. The article, under right to equality, states that: "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children." [1] In addition, the Directive Principles of State Policy 39(A) states that: "The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood. Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), Conditional Maternity Benefit (CMB) is a scheme sponsored by the national government for pregnant and lactating women age 19 and over for their first two live births. The programme, which began in October 2010, provides money to help ensure the good health and nutrition of the recipients. As of March 2013 the program is being offered in 53 districts around the country. [4] The Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) is an initiative launched on 1 April 2011 to offer benefits to adolescent girls in the age group of 10 to 19. It was offered initially as a pilot programme in 200 districts and offers a variety of services to help young women including nutritional supplementation and education, health education and services, and life skills and vocational training. [5] Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (National Credit Fund for Women) was established by Government of India in 1993. Its purpose is to deliver women from lower income group with access to loans to begin small businesses.

Both Government and Private organizations are setting many significant milestones for the welfare of women and children. Dr. Bharkhaa Versha is the Founder Director of Abhigyan Foundation. She is attached to United Nations Global Peace Council. was my dream since my adolescence that I would be a part of education system for underprivileged children, their health & education" – said Barkha Versha. Since then it was her dream to work on the uplifting and betterment of children's education. "FREEDOM THROUGH EDUCATION" Abhigyan Foundation has completed 27 years. Abhigyan Foundation organized & conducted a weekly campaign – WE IMPACT: CONNECTING THE YOUTH. This campaign is about inspiring the youths throughout the world to be more creative and to motivate them, and inspire them to achieve high level of success.

Cultural Exchange & Business Exchange programs among the countries are the tools for spreading its message of collective socio-economic development & growth. The aim is to provide a common platform to collaborate with like minded people, innovators to enhance ideas providing unique networking opportunities throughout the world. It also helps in building strong relationship around the globe. With her extensive experience in interfaith cooperation, she believes interfaith dialogue can contribute to global peace. By promoting a sense of commonality, interfaith harmony encourages a global consciousness that values every individual, regardless of their faith. It allows people to learn about different religions and cultures and to appreciate the similarities and differences between them. The strategies she employs to engage youth in leadership and social awareness programs are the Abhigyan Foundation organized & conducted a weekly campaign. This campaign is about inspiring the youths throughout the world to be more creative and to motivate them, and inspire them to achieve high

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All attached to the Abhigyan Foundation believe that every child is unique and has the capability to contribute uniquely to the world. They also believe that's every person has the right to access resources and opportunities in order to live with respect and dignity. They are an organization that aims at bonding and creating peace in all the neighboring countries and also other parts of the world. They know and enhance each other's cultures & help in building Peace & a better relationship between the countries. We are committed to organizational learning and adaptation, based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace. Empowering Women : Shaping Tomorrow – the International Women Conference with projects to experts in business, entrepreneurship, finance, science, engineering and technology, research, healthcare, consultancy, advocacy and entertainment has a bright future. The conference inspires an excellent venue for everyone to present individual ideas and receive quality feedback. This draws women from the public and private sector to be inspired on their personal and professional leadership journeys. Session topics that highlight practical tips and specific information that attendees can implement immediately to positively impact their personal and professional futures are more likely to be selected. Cultural Exchange & Business Exchange programs among the countries are fruitful attempts for spreading the mes-

sage of collective socio-economic development & growth. The aim is to provide a common platform to collaborate with like minded people, innovators to enhance ideas providing unique networking opportunities throughout the world. It also helps in building strong relationship around the globe. By promoting a sense of commonality, interfaith harmony encourages a global consciousness that values every individual, regardless of their faith. It allows people to learn about different religions and cultures and to appreciate the similarities and differences between them.

Dr. Bharkhaa Versha who is the leading figure of this Foundation has been honoured from the House of Lords and the House of Commons, Parliament of United Kingdom, London. She has received honour by the UAE Government in Dubai She has been honoured by the Rotary International Club in Istanbul, Turkey. Dr. Barkhaa has also received Leadership & Excellence Award by UNESCO centre of Peace. She has also been honoured with Appreciations from different Embassies in India like Uzbekistan, Thailand, Mauritius, Turkey, etc. What Dr. Bharkhaa Versha is doing as a woman is exemplary. India Government has many welfare schemes for empowering women. The Foundation like Abhigyan can connect the Government of India for doing more meaningful welfare works. (APJ Abdul Kalam Education Awardee Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee, a former Affiliate Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University is a multilingual columnist and writer. Email profatanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)

The Historic Nagshankar Temple and Conservation of Rare Turtles

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The Shri Shri Nagshankar Temple, located in Biswanath district, is an ancient Shiva pilgrimage site that has held a special place in the hearts of devotees and tourists for centuries. This temple is not only a sacred spiritual center but also gains a unique identity due to the presence of rare species of turtles residing in the large pond within its premises. Through the conservation of these turtles, the Nagshankar Temple has already played a pioneering role in both religious significance and biodiversity preservation. The temple is situated approximately 30 kilometers from Tezpur, the headquarters of Sonitpur district. Positioned almost midway between Tezpur and Biswanath Chariali, in the heart of the erstwhile undivided Sonitpur district, between Jamugurihat and Chatiya, the temple is located just one kilometer south of National Highway 15. The connectivity to this temple is highly convenient. Due to its accessible location, devotees and tourists visit the site every day of the year. The entire region has come to be known as Nagshankar, named after the temple.

The large pond within the temple premises adds a new dimension to the scenic beauty of this place. The tranquil waters of the pond and the surrounding lush greenery evoke a sense of peace in the minds of visitors. The long-lived, large turtles residing in this pond are an integral part of the temple's religious and touristic significance. According to local beliefs, these turtles are considered companions of Lord Shiva, referred to as 'Mohan.' It is believed that after the puja, these 'Mohan-like' turtles accept the offerings from devotees, signaling the success or failure of the worship. The rare species of "Bormuria turtles" in this pond attract numerous domestic and international tourists and researchers annually. Every day, the temple's prasad and offerings are dedicated to these turtles, a practice rooted in ancient tradition. Visitors also participate in this tradition by offering prasad to the turtles, reflecting a unique cultural aspect tied to the temple's religious identity. When called by the name 'Mohan,' the turtles come to the pond's edge, appearing before visitors and accepting prasad or food from their hands. The temple's spiritual significance, the pond's beauty, and the presence of the turtles have made Nagshankar Temple a distinguished tourist destination. The influx of tourists and researchers from across the country and abroad has increased its global recognition. The temple management committee, along with local MLA Padma Hazarika, has taken various steps to enhance the beauty of this place. These efforts have strengthened both the temple's spiritual importance and its tourism potential. The mythological stories associated with the origin of the Nagshankar Temple lend



it profound religious significance. According to legend, when Sati immolated herself in Daksha's yajna after Shiva's insult, a grief-stricken Shiva began the Tandava dance, carrying her body on his shoulder, threatening the destruction of the world. To prevent this catastrophe, Lord Vishnu used his Sudarshan Chakra to dismember Sati's body, and its parts fell at various places across India. It is believed that Sati's navel fell at this site, leading to the establishment of a Shiva Linga and the construction of the temple. This legend has established Nagshankar Temple as a significant Shakti Peeth. Another tale suggests that Bana Raja, a devoted follower of Lord Shiva, learned of the plan to establish a 'second Kashi' in Biswanath. Overjoyed, Lord Shiva came to visit 'Kashi.' However, due to Narada Muni hiding one of the required one crore Shiva Lingas, the establishment of Kashi in Biswanath could not be completed, and the region is still known as 'Gupta Kashi' (Hidden Kashi). In his sorrow, Lord Shiva lay down, with his head in Biswanath, navel in Nagshankar, and feet in Rudrapada. As Lord Shiva's navel touched this land, the place was named 'Navishankar' in the Yogini Tantra. The Gopini Kirtan mentions, "With his head in Biswanath, navel in Nagshankar, and feet in Rudrapada, he rests." Over time, Navishankar became Nagshankar. Later, the sage Dhaumya Muni worshipped Shiva at this site, marked by the navel, and it became known as Dhaumya's Ashram. However, when Dhaumya Muni had to leave as the royal priest of the Pandavas, the site turned into a forest. These legends and folklore have added a profound dimension to the temple's religious importance. Devotees firmly believe that worshipping at this temple fulfills their de-

sires, enhancing its spiritual allure and securing a special place in their hearts. The depth and significance of these mythological stories have given Nagshankar Temple a unique position among Assam's Shaiva Peeths.

It is also popularly believed that the Nagshankar Temple was built in the 4th century by a king named Nagshankar or Nagaksha from the Lohitya dynasty. Nagshankar ruled eastern Kamrup (ancient Assam) in 378 CE. He was a great king and sent emissaries to the contemporary Maurya emperor, Ashoka. King Nagshankar or Nagaksha ensured regular worship at the temple, and its name became associated with him. After his death, the temple's religious activities ceased for some time. Another belief attributes the temple's construction to King Arimatta. Later, during the reign of Ahom king Swargadeo Shivsagar Singha, Shalal Bargohain, appointed as the governor of the region from Biswanath to the Bharali River, learned of the dilapidated state of this Shaiva Peeth and informed Shivsagar Singha. In 1480 CE, Shivsagar Singha rebuilt the temple, appointed Ramanda Barua as the chief priest, and assigned 12 families as 'Paiks' to manage the worship. Since then, the worship of Lord Shiva has continued uninterrupted. Shivsagar Singha donated 833 bighas of land as 'Devottar' (temple land), a significant contribution at the time, strengthening the temple's economic foundation and reviving its religious activities. The sanctum sanctorum houses a Shiva Linga, a Vishnu idol, a Yoni Kunda, and a Shaligram idol. The presence of these idols reflects the temple's religious diversity, making it a confluence of Shaiva and Vaishnava traditions. This historical background



has given Nagshankar Temple a prominent place among Assam's ancient Shaiva Peeths, further clarifying its religious and cultural significance. This historical context provides a profound foundation for the temple's religious importance, establishing it as an integral part of Assam's heritage.

Every year, grand fairs are held at Nagshankar Temple during Shivaratri and Bohag Bihu, vibrant expressions of local culture and tradition. These festivals attract large gatherings of devotees, creating a festive atmosphere. Devotees strongly believe that worshipping at Nagshankar Temple grants their wishes, further enhancing its religious significance. The temple management committee has taken various steps to develop the site as a tourism hub, increasing its environmental beauty and appeal.

As mentioned earlier, one of the unique features of Nagshankar Temple is the rare species of turtles residing in its pond. The temple management committee has taken special measures for their conservation, enabling around 300 turtles to thrive in the pond. The Nagshankar Turtle Conservation Project currently nurtures 13 turtle species, including the Black Softshell (Nilssononia hurum), Narrow-headed Softshell (Chitra indica), Indian Flapshell (Lisemmys punctata), Spotted Pond (Geoclemys hamiltonii), Assam Roofed (Pangshura sylhetensis), Indian Tent (Pangshura tentoria), Indian Roofed (Pangshura tecta), Brown Roof (Pangshura smithii), Assam Leaf (Cyclemys gemeli), Tricarinate Hill (Melanochelys tricarinata), and Indian Black (Melanochelys trijuga). Of these, the Black Softshell and Common Softshell

are critically endangered, six species are endangered, two are vulnerable, and the rest are listed as threatened or least concern by the IUCN. The temple management committee, in collaboration with organizations like the Northeast TSA Foundation India, has been working on artificial breeding to increase the turtle population, providing a strong foundation for their long-term survival. The committee has also raised awareness about the turtles' diet. Previously, visitors offered biscuits and puffed rice, which were unsuitable for the turtles' health. Now, scientifically appropriate food, such as dried fish, is provided. These measures demonstrate the temple's commitment to the turtles' health. This initiative has established Nagshankar Temple as both a religious site and a model for environmental conservation. Assam's Chief Minister, Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, recently praised these efforts, noting that Nagshankar Temple is an exemplary symbol of biodiversity conservation within a religious site. This recognition has further highlighted the temple's environmental importance on a global stage, establishing its conservation efforts at an international level.

In conclusion, the beauty and significance of Nagshankar Temple are not limited to its religious and historical background. Through the conservation of the turtles in its pond, the temple has already gained recognition both nationally and globally. The synergy of religious faith and turtle conservation has made Nagshankar Temple a model center for preserving rare biodiversity. If the temple's heritage and environmental conservation efforts continue in the future, it will remain a shining symbol of Assam's heritage and pride.

'The Last Train'



By: Otteri Selva Kumar

Chennai's Central Railway Station was always a hub of activity, with people rushing to catch their trains and others waiting to welcome their loved ones. But amidst the chaos, there was a sense of melancholy that hung in the air, a feeling that was palpable to anyone who cared to notice.

For many, the platforms of Chennai Central were not just a place to catch a train, but a threshold to new beginnings, a gateway to opportunities, and a farewell to memories. It was a place where dreams were made and broken, where hearts were filled with joy and sorrow.

Ramesh, a young software engineer, stood on Platform 3, clutching his backpack and staring at the departures board. He was waiting for the last train to Bengaluru, a journey that would take him away from the city he loved, away from his family and friends, and into the unknown.

As he waited, he thought about the countless times he had stood on this very platform, watching as trains came and went, carrying people to their destinations. He remembered the excitement of his first train journey, the thrill of traveling to a new city, and the sense of adventure that came with it.

But today was different. Today, he was leaving behind everything he knew and loved. He was leaving behind the familiar streets of Chennai, the comforting smell of filter coffee, and the sound of the sea crashing against the shore.

As the train pulled into the platform, Ramesh felt a lump form in his throat. He took a deep breath, shouldered his backpack, and boarded the train. As he found his seat and settled in, he looked out the window, watching as the platform slipped away from view.

He thought about all the people he had left behind, the friends he would miss, and the family he would no longer see every day. He thought about the city he loved, the city that had given him so much, and the city he would never forget.

As the train picked up speed, Ramesh felt a sense of sadness wash over him. He knew that he would never be the same again, that he would never see the world in the same way. He knew that he was leaving behind a part of himself, a part that would always remain in Chennai, on the platforms of Central Railway Station.

The train rumbled on, carrying Ramesh away from the city he loved, away from the people he loved, and into the unknown. As he looked out the window, he saw the city give way to the countryside, the skyscrapers and buildings replaced by fields and villages.

He thought about the journey ahead, the challenges he would face, and the opportunities he would seize. He thought about the new life he would build, the new friends he would make, and the new memories he would create.

As the train disappeared into the night, Ramesh knew that he would always carry a piece of Chennai with him, a piece of the city that would remain in his heart forever. He knew that no matter where life took him, he would always be drawn back to the platforms of Central Railway Station, to the city that had given him so much, and to the people he loved.

The story of Ramesh is just one of many, a story of love, loss, and longing. It is a story that is repeated every day, on the platforms of Chennai Central, as people come and go, leaving behind a part of themselves, and taking away a piece of the city with them.

As the trains rumble in and out of the station, they carry with them the hopes and dreams of those who travel on them. They carry the stories of those who have left behind their loved ones, their homes, and their cities, in search of a new life, a new beginning, and a new destination.

And as the platforms empty and fill, as the trains come and go, the city remains, a constant presence, a reminder of the memories that have been made, and the memories that are yet to be made. The city remains, a testament to the power of love, loss, and longing, a reminder that no matter where life takes us, we will always be drawn back to the places, the people, and the memories that we love.

All ways we love the memories!!!

Where is your Root, Dear?

By: Bipul Chandra Kalita

If you lose your eyes, who will give you your sight
Just like facing situations of
Losing yourself in someone else,
Closing mind's doors to the glorious past of your heart?

Your parents' dreamline is pointed towards your smile,
Their tears and sweats can't be priced
In the bazaars of cheap relationship
At any level of the emotional brokers' understanding;
Listen to your conscience,
Decide if you can replace selfless love
With selfish minds' hypocritical gestures.

Winged ambitions have given you strange feathers,
Encouraging you to build castles for strangers,
Readying yourself
To send your parents to a strange place;
Old-age-home-culture can never be ours:
Snatches parents' eyeballs,
Shakes children's backbones,
Turing their lively life into robotic machines.

I've heard your parents' silent cry,
I've heard your motivators' loud laughter;
Both sides' landscapes disturb my insight!

Don't forget the root of the huge tree
Of which you're a small leafy branch;
No godly quality do I possess and preach:
A simple man I am
Whose earnest desire is
Not to make you a god or goddess
But to see you becoming a human being Who can bring a pure smile
To the drying lips of aging parents!



Utopia

By: Anirruddh Oghori

What if I wake up tomorrow
End up metamorphosing
Like Franz Kafka?

What if,
I open my eyes
And find myself
Bewildered by Tabula Rasa?

What if I put my feet
On the carpet,
And see my unborn child
Touching my toes.

What if I walk a few seconds
On the turf
And hear my unmarried wife
Calling me back to home.

What if I had my breakfast
With bread, butter and
Her beloved coffee?

Oh, I know, I know.
But what if?



Estranged

By: Jugnu Chekanidhara

If life were the same
I would not want to pretend
Trying to make myself whole again:
Reincarnation – in the name of the game
Life couldn't be the same;
Whilst my dear! Everything's estranged.
Well, all that was good and all that was bad
all the fights we chose and all the wars we waged
trying to find a little love
Drowns somewhere amidst our apocalypse.
There must have been a middle ground above
Where minds shattered and our hearts collapsed.
If I were ever out of hope,
What despair could you possibly be?
I look at you like a star from a telescope.
Is this love, feign agony, that feels like eternity?



Our Entropy

By: Himadri Chekanidhara

My feet stinks like a fish market
You smell like fresh lavenders.
Your skin is made of the purest ghee
My pits made of stinking corpse Lily.
Won't you hold me and make me pure
Hold my hand and be too sure,
Carry me from the Hades' curse
A piteous patient looks for his nurse.
Reverb my name in all hills and plains
While I search for you in the windy trains
Flying by you like pollen grains
You sneeze and you sneeze, and I'm to blame.

If I could, I swear I'd change
Like a new leaf, on an age old branch
Blossom like lotus in a mire of methane
A shattered mind waiting to be whole again
Rake me out from under your ceiling
The thoughts you keep without a feeling
I want to crawl back into your shade
Fall back down, like it's in my fate.

"Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water,
Jack fell down and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after"

But my Jill where have you been
Smiling and crying in your mood swing
Like a narcissist feels not the other
One of us turned empath, never bother.
Even though this world turns cold
I'd be a soul that's lost and old
The love in me is no more gold
It's the heart which in free is sold.
I would not whim to be forever young
Just another man with a bachelor's song
Balding myself, while I call home
Please don't take your leave when I'm in hope.

All the meals I make, I skip
A woman's heart that feels like ditch
Before I fall apart, I wish to be stitched
I beg for you, in these Gods that I please
Selfish heart, perhaps, is what I own
So you turned away, a child disowned
But none to blame, we reap all that's sown
Maybe one day you'll realize, your Ivy's grown.

I'm the Ivy shining in your moonlight
Therefore, perhaps, you made your strike
I know who I was, I wish no more
I fall like the crows egg, the cuckoo now soars
But ask me, if I have regrets, - Yes, I do
In parts of my hours that you never knew
Rejected, Rejected, rejection, rejection, not for you
I love you, but I guess, it was legendary: never true.

Cong doing negative politics: Shah

DEHRADUN/RUDRAPUR, July 19: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday accused the Congress of doing negative politics at a time when Uttarakhand is progressing on the path of development and advised the party to desist from the habit if it wished to survive.

Shah listed the achievements of the BJP-led governments at the centre and in the state as he slammed a social media post by a Congress leader earlier in the day asking the Union Minister not to return without telling the people what the BJP government had done for the state.

"Congress is always doing negative politics, especially when development is taking place in Uttarakhand. It is like somebody squeezing lemon into milk so that it goes sour," the Union Minister said addressing the Investment Festival event held at Rudrapur in Udhampur Singh Nagar district.

Investment MoUs worth ₹ 3.5 lakh crore had been signed at the global investors summit held in Dehradun in December 2023. The event on Saturday marked the start of the implementation of works worth more than ₹ one lakh crore from among these MoUs.

Replying to the remarks by the Congress leader whom he did not name, Shah said in ten years between 2004 and 2014, the Congress government gave ₹ 53,000 crore to Uttarakhand while the Narendra Modi government gave ₹ one lakh eighty six thousand



crore to the state in ten years from 2014-2024 which is 3.5 times more than the amount given by the Congress government.

Apart from that, the Modi government gave ₹ 31,000 crore to the state for roads, ₹ 40,000 crore for railway tracks and ₹ 100 crore for airports. If all of this is put together, the BJP government gave over 4.25 times more than what was given to the state by the Congress government.

"It is the collective responsibility of all political parties to rise above their differences and stand unitedly in support of development. But Congress continues to do negative politics," Shah said and advised the Congress to stop putting hurdles on the path of progress. "Havan mein haddiyon mat dalo (Do not sabotage the good work). If you don't stop, then even the few of you who remain in the picture will not be visible even

with the help of a telescope," Shah warned the Congress leaders in the state. He said India was all set to become the third-largest economy in the world by 2027 under the leadership of Narendra Modi. He said that when Atal Bihari Vajpayee demitted office, India was the 11th largest economy in the world.

"From that position, Narendra Modi has led the country to the fourth position and I assure you, it is all set to become the third largest economy in the world by 2027," he said. In ten years, there has been a 60 per cent increase in the length of national highways built across the country, the exports have gone up by 76 per cent, 88 new airports have been built and 25 crore poor have risen above the poverty line, he said.

However, a developed India is not possible without a developed Uttarakhand, he said and showered praise on Chief Minister Pushkar

Singh Dhami for starting the implementation process of MoUs worth more than ₹ 1 lakh crore.

"It is a big achievement as bringing investments to the hills is more difficult than bringing investments to the plains. The chief minister introduced 30 new policies, including on tourism, MSME, startups, film city and the service sector to make it easier for investors to invest in the state.

"He has also established a single window clearance system to simplify the process and build an atmosphere more conducive for investments," Shah said.

Ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy and organic farming will be the cornerstone of the development of Uttarakhand, he said.

Shah said the upcoming Chardham all-weather road and ropeway projects to Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib will boost tourism in the state in a big way, generating employment opportunities for locals. He said when Atal Bihari Vajpayee created three new states -- Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand -- doubts were expressed over the success of the experiment with small states.

"But today all three states created by him are standing on their feet and are making progress," he said. The Union minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of projects worth ₹ 1,271 crore before addressing the gathering at Manoj Sircar Sports Stadium - the venue for the Investment Festival. (PTI)

Cong demands Modi's statement in Parliament on Trump's claims: Rahul

NEW DELHI, July 19: After US President Donald Trump's remark that "five jets were shot down" during the conflict between India and Pakistan, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to clarify and asserted that the country has the right to know the truth.

Questioning the prime minister's "silence", the Congress also demanded that PM Modi give a "clear and categorical" statement in Parliament on the US leader's claims on the India-Pakistan conflict over the last 70 days.

The opposition party's assertion came after Trump said "five jets were shot down" during the conflict between India and Pakistan in May, while repeating his assertion that the fighting ended following his intervention.

The US president did not specify whether the jets were lost by either of the two countries or if he was referring to combined losses.

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "Modiji, what is the truth about the five jets? The country has a right to know."

Congress general secretary in-charge (Communications) Jairam Ramesh said just two days before the Monsoon Session of Parliament begins, "the Trump missile gets fired" for the 24th time with the same two messages.

He pointed out that Trump has again stated that the US stopped the war between India and Pakistan, two countries that have nuclear weapons. The US President also reiterated his remarks that there would be no trade deal if the war continued, he said.

Trump said that if India and Pakistan want a trade agreement with the US, they have to agree to an immediate ceasefire, Ramesh pointed out.

"The sensational new revelation by President Trump this time around is that five jets may have been downed," Ramesh said.

"The prime minister, who has had years of friendship and huglomo with President Trump going back to 'Howdy Modi' in September 2019 and 'Namaste Trump' in February 2020, has to now himself make a clear and categorical statement in Parliament on what President Trump has been claiming over



the past 70 days," the Congress leader said. The Congress' whip in the Lok Sabha, Manicakam Tagore, also attacked the government over Trump's remarks.

"Trump boasts about preventing a nuclear conflict using 'trade pressure'. Pakistan applauds him. They've even proposed a Nobel Prize. So what really happened? And why is Modi in Maun Viraat mode?" he said on X.

"If 5 fighter jets were really shot down, as Trump says, the nation deserves to know: Who authorised retaliation? What role did the U.S. play? Did India cave to foreign pressure?" the Congress leader said. Silence cannot be the official response, he said.

Speaking at the White House during a dinner he hosted for Republican senators on Friday, Trump said: "You had India, Pakistan, that was going in fact, planes were being shot out of the air... four or five. But I think five jets were shot down, actually, that was getting worse and worse, wasn't it?"

"That was looking like it was going to go, these are two serious nuclear countries, and they were hitting each other," he said.

"But India and Pakistan were going at it, and they were back and forth, and it was getting bigger and bigger. And we got it solved through trade. 'We said, 'You guys want to make a trade deal. We're not making a trade deal if you're going to be throwing around weapons and maybe nuclear weapons'. Both very powerful nuclear states," Trump said.

He said his administration achieved more in six months than almost any other administration

could accomplish in eight years. "Something I'm very proud of, we stopped a lot of wars, a lot of wars. And these were serious wars," Trump said.

The Congress has been demanding that Modi answer Trump's India-Pakistan "ceasefire" claims in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha during the forthcoming Monsoon Session.

Since May 10, when Trump announced on social media that India and Pakistan had agreed to a full and immediate ceasefire after a long night of talks mediated by Washington, he has repeated his claim on several occasions that he helped settle the tensions between the two countries.

However, India has been consistently maintaining that the understanding on cessation of hostilities was reached following direct talks between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two militaries on a request from Pakistan.

In a nearly 35-minute phone call with Trump last month, Modi firmly said that India does not and will "never accept" mediation and that the discussions between Indian and Pakistani militaries on cessation of military actions were initiated at Islamabad's request.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation against the Pahalgam attack that killed 26 civilians.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes. (PTI)

Patna hospital murder

5 held in Bengal, prime suspects manage to flee, say police

KOLKATA, July 19: At least five people have been arrested from New Town near Kolkata in connection with the murder of gangster Chandan Mishra in a Patna hospital, police said on Saturday.

However, the prime suspects, who were allegedly hiding in the city managed to flee, prompting police to launch a renewed search operation, a senior officer claimed.

The five arrested, who were apprehended from a housing complex in the satellite township of the metropolis following raids conducted jointly by the Bihar Police and the West Bengal Special Task Force (STF) in the early hours of Saturday, were "providing logistics" to the five main accused who killed Mishra, an officer said.

According to CCTV camera footage, the prime suspects escaped the city in a white vehicle, which was spotted passing through Basanti Highway near here, the officer said.

The vehicle was later seen moving through the jurisdictions of three police stations - Anandapur, Kolkata Leather Complex, and Bhangar, he added.

Police have begun questioning the five arrested accused, who were living in two separate flats in the housing complex in New Town area, the officer said, adding that their mobile phones and other documents have been seized.

During Saturday's raid conducted around 5.38 am, one person was arrested from a place outside the housing complex, and after questioning him, four others were held from inside two flats, he said.

"These people supposedly helped the criminals in hiding and also in their transportation. We are checking their call lists, their WhatsApp messenger chats in connection with our probe into the matter," the officer said.

Mishra, a resident of Buxar district of Bihar, was shot dead by gunmen inside a private hospital in Patna on Thursday morning. He was a murder convict out on parole. "Their mobile phone tower location helped us track them. Bihar Police will produce them before a local court, seeking transit remand," he said. (PTI)

Rahul using his constitutional position to protect family crimes: BJP

NEW DELHI, July 19: The BJP on Saturday accused Rahul Gandhi of misusing his constitutional position of the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha to "protect" his family's crimes.

The party made the allegations as part of its continued targeting of the Congress leader's defence of his brother-in-law, Robert Vadra, who has been charged by the ED with money laundering.

Speaking to reporters, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi claimed that the opposition INDIA bloc is beset with internal conflict and faces disintegration ahead of Parliament's Monsoon Session beginning Monday.

Citing a Hindi song, Trivedi took a swipe at the opposition alliance, wondering how worse its future is going to be when its present is in such dire straits.

The Aam Aadmi Party has already announced that

it is no longer in the alliance, while the CPI(M) took a "naive" dig at Gandhi following his attack on the Kerala government.

Noting that Gandhi addressed Vadra as his "brother-in-law" in an X post, accusing the government of a "witch hunt" against him, the BJP MP said it is clearly a family, and not a political issue, for the Congress leader. Gandhi has come out to protect Vadra's properties collected through corruption, he alleged, noting that the Congress leader is himself on bail in a corruption case. Trivedi wondered if Gandhi posted the message in his personal capacity or as the Leader of Opposition, and said, "He has misused his constitutional position to protect his family crimes."

He accused the Congress's "first family" of seeking power and money even if it means dividing society in the name of region or language. (PTI)

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge accuses PM Modi of 'murdering' Constitution

MYSURU, July 19: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "murdering" the Constitution, asserting that people of the country would not allow the BJP and RSS to alter it.

He was addressing a mega convention organised by the Karnataka government, where development works worth over ₹ 2,500 crore for Mysuru were inaugurated and foundation stones laid.

"BJP and RSS are talking about amending or rewriting the Constitution. You may try how much ever you want, the people of this country will not allow you to change the Constitution. If you (people) allow them to change the Constitution, you will not have any rights," Kharge warned the gathering.

"Modi, you became the Chief Minister and Prime Minister because of the Constitution, you bowed to the Constitution before entering the Parliament, but Modi is today murdering the same Constitution." "BJP and RSS are every day making attempts to remove this Constitution," he added.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM D K Shivakumar and several ministers of the state government were present at the event.

During his address, Kharge also hit out at the PM for visiting 42 countries, but not conflict-hit Manipur. "What is the reason? Are you (Modi) afraid of going there? Rahul Gandhi (Congress leader) has visited twice... when people of the country are dying, Modi travels abroad," he alleged.

Lauding the Siddaramaiah-led gov-



ernment for its development works in Karnataka, the veteran party leader said the BJP only criticises and accused the party of "indulging in corruption".

"Modi often asks what has the Congress done in the past 55 years. What we have done is before the people, tell us what you have done," he said.

Alleging that big public sector companies established by the Maharajas and Jawaharlal Nehru were being sold to business tycoons like Adani and Ambani, the AICC chief said they are our assets, built using our tax money, and many people work there.

"Whether it is airport, port, roads, airlines, everything is being sold to the people he (Modi) wants," he said.

Noting that the Congress has always aimed to empower people financially and socially, Kharge said the grand old party is working continuously without compromising with its ideology.

"We may have lost in a few states, but there are scores of people who still want us to come to power to save democracy and the constitution," he said. Mocking Modi's "Congress mukt Bharat" slogan, he said the PM even said "Abki Bar Charso Par" but (BJP) secured only 240 seats. "Arrogance

will make people fall," he said.

Praising the Congress government's five guarantee schemes in Karnataka, he said they are popular across the country. The Congress chief lauded CM Siddaramaiah, Ministers, legislators and party workers for their "collective leadership" in implementing the schemes. "In my Congress party there are people who perform, while in Modi's BJP, people only speak or criticise," he said.

Kharge refuted claims that the Karnataka government was "bankrupt" and asked, "If the government was bankrupt would it have given Rs 50 crore to each MLA for developmental work in their constituencies?"

Urging the Modi government at the Centre to release Karnataka's share of funds under various schemes, Kharge said, "Give us our money, it is not your money, it is my money paid by us in the form of taxes/GST."

Pointing to Modi's recent claim that India is now counted among the top countries where equality is the highest, he said Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has said that slowly the number of poor people in the country is increasing and the wealth is getting concentrated in the hands of few rich people, this should not happen.

"Who is correct, Modi or Gadkari? Who is to be believed?" Kharge asked, adding that Modi's only guarantee is "lying". What has happened in "Amrit Kaal" of Modi is that one per cent super rich have 40 per cent wealth, while 50 per cent poor have only 6.4 per cent of wealth. "Tell me where is development?" the Congress chief asked. (PTI)

Siddaramaiah challenges BJP-JD(S) for debate on development in Karnataka

MYSURU, July 19: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said the opposition parties have lost the popularity, love and goodwill of the people, as he challenged the BJP and JD(S) to come to one stage for a debate about who has contributed how much towards the development of the state.

He was addressing a mega convention organised by the Karnataka government, where development works worth over ₹ 2,500 crore for Mysuru were inaugurated and foundation stones laid.

"The BJP and JD(S) make false allegations. I have said several times that for you to know the truth and to stop lying or misleading people, all of you should come to one stage. If the BJP and JD(S) leaders come to one stage, I'm ready to come. Let's debate what we have done and what you have done," Siddaramaiah said.

The BJP claims that the state's treasury is empty and the government has become bankrupt. There is no money for development because it has been spent on guarantee schemes. "If the government was bankrupt, could inauguration and foundation laying today for projects worth ₹ 2,578 crore be possible?", he asked.

"The BJP and JD(S) are saying this programme is Siddara-

maiah's show of strength. It is not a show of strength. This is to showcase the strength of development before you (people)," he said, as he accused the opposition of lying and misleading the people.

The BJP on Friday termed the event as Siddaramaiah's "show of strength" to "blackmail or threaten" the Congress high command, using his AHINDA vote bank, against any move to replace him from the CM post.

AHINDA is a Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes, and Dalits.

Targeting both the opposition parties, the CM said the BJP has always come to power in the state through "back door", "Operation Kamala", and not with the blessings of the people; while the JD(S)'s strength is weakening election after election, and it can never come to power in Karnataka on its own strength.

"When I was JD(S) president, the party had won 59 seats. How many is it now -- Deve Gowda (JDS national President), Kumaraswamy (former CM and Union Minister)? You have won 18 seats. You cannot come to power in the state on your own strength. When JD(S) began to weaken and MLAs and people started abandoning them, they joined hands with BJP," he said.

"Operation Kamala" (Oper-

ation Lotus) refers to an alleged attempt of the BJP to engineer defection of opposition legislators to install its own government and to ensure its stability.

Claiming that the BJP and JD(S) have lost the popularity, love and goodwill of the people, Siddaramaiah accused them of not being pro-Karnataka, pro-poor, Dalit, backward classes and minorities.

"They are opposed to social justice, development of Karnataka and secularism," he alleged.

Noting that Karnataka's tax contribution is over ₹ 4.5 lakh crore to the Centre, while it gets back only ₹ 65,000 crore tax share, the CM, who also handles finance portfolio said, if we pay ₹ 100 in the form of tax, what we get back is only ₹ 15 from the union government.

Has the BJP or JD(S) MPs or union ministers ever questioned this injustice to Karnataka, he asked, and said, "None of them have the courage to stand before PM Narendra Modi, they tremble. Isn't this injustice and betrayal to Karnataka and Kannadigas?"

Asserting that the implementation of the five guarantee schemes in the state is for the poor spending about ₹ 55,000 crore, without any discrimination, the CM hit out at the BJP and JD(S) asking if they are not ashamed to criticise it. (PTI)

India's path to becoming developed nation by 2047 will be led by women, says Union minister

PATNA, July 19: Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Saturday said India's journey toward becoming a fully developed nation by 2047 will be led by empowered women and youth, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of women-led development.

The Union minister of state (independent charge) for science and technology, earth sciences, and MoS in the PMO made the remark while addressing a conference titled 'Viksit Bihar: Envisioning a Developed Bihar through Women's Participation.' He said around 76,000 startups in India are currently women-led, many of which are based in tier-2 and tier-3 towns.

The conference was jointly organised by Bihar's department of rural development and the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), of which Singh is co-chairperson.



"In the last 11 years, the Modi government has focused its governance architecture around four pillars -- the poor, farmers, youth, and women. Women-centric governance has not only empowered people, but reshaped society. What began as targeted welfare has now evolved into institutional leadership," he said.

The minister launched the Jeevika E-Learning Management System app, aimed

at providing accessible learning for women, and unveiled the publication titled 'Shashakt Mahila, Samridhith Bihar', which celebrates women's contributions to the state's progress.

The Union minister elaborated on the Modi government's comprehensive approach to women empowerment, built across four key pillars.

"The first phase -- access and inclusion in institutions -- marked a historic shift in India's educational and military landscape. Girls were admitted for the first time into sainik schools and the prestigious National Defence Academy (NDA), breaking age-old barriers. Combat roles in the armed forces were opened to women, with the country now anticipating its first woman army chief, an unprecedented milestone in gender-inclusive leadership," he said. (PTI)

No.A/CRD/Tender/MMDRRF/2025-26/1797

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Date 17/07/2025

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

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimate Amount	Earnest Money (in Rs)	Cost of Tender Paper
1	Improvement of Patrolling path from Gwbwr Bazar to Norsing Bagan	Rs. 19,95,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-
2	Improvement of Patrolling path from Norsing Bagan to Daojeng Koro	Rs. 19,95,000.00	2% for GEN, 1% for OBC/ST/SC of the estimated cost	500/-

The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2 PM on 01.08.2025 and will be opened on the same date and place at 3.30 PM in the office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Chirang Forest Division, Kajalgaon. In the event of any unusual occurrence due to strike, bandh, holiday etc, the same will be received and opened on the next working day at same place and same time.

Details N.I.T may be seen in all workings days in the office of the undersign. The Tender paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent from 10.00 Hrs to 4.00 Hrs on all working days from 20/07/2025 to 01.08.2025 on payment of Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five Hundred) only in the form of DD/Bankers Cheque in Favour of **Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar payable at SBI, Kokrajhar.**

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/1808

Sd/-
Divisional Forest Officer,
Chirang Forest Division, Kajalgaon

GILL'S REAL TEST STARTS NOW WITH INDIA TRAILING 1-2, SAYS CHAPPELL

NEW DELHI, July 19: Former Australia captain Greg Chappell believes Shubman Gill has displayed greatness with the bat and shown glimpses of his potential as a young captain, but said his real test begins now with India trailing 1-2 in the five-match Test series against England.

India lost the third Test against England at Lord's by 22 runs to go 1-2 down in the series.

The two teams will face off in the fourth Test of the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy at Manchester starting July 23.

"As India prepare for the final two Tests of their series in England, the spotlight now shines firmly on their 25-year-old captain Shubman Gill. A bright young talent, he has shown greatness with the bat and glimpses of leadership potential, but this moment will define his trajectory as a Test captain.

"It's not an easy environment in which to grow, but it's the one he's in - and the stakes couldn't be higher," Chappell wrote in his column in ESPNcricinfo.com.

Chappell wants Gill to set the tone for the side with his actions.

"Gill must define what sort of team he wants India to be. The captain sets the tone - not just with words, but with actions, clarity of purpose, and visible standards.

"That means demanding discipline in the field. India cannot af-



ford to slip back into being a poor fielding side. The best teams are superb in the field. They don't give easy runs. They don't drop chances," he wrote.

Chappell wants Gill to be firm in picking the side he feels can win a match for him.

"The selectors and Gill must pick and stick. He must identify the core group of players he trusts, lay out a clear game plan, and commu-

nicate individual roles within it. Every player should know what is expected of them and where they fit in. "Too often, in teams that struggle, players are left to work it out for themselves. That can't be left to chance at this level," the Australian great wrote.

Chappell said a captain should be a good communicator and its high time Gill should adopt that quality. "Great captains are great

communicators. Gill must become one - and quickly. Whether it's at training, in the middle or in the dressing room during a break - clear, calm communication is essential.

"His bat can't always do the talking. He must learn to speak in a way that aligns the group, encourages belief, and creates trust," he said. "He also needs to enunciate the right approach. Batters must be

told to play positively and bat in partnerships. If a batter gets a start, it is critical to go on and get a big score. Collapses come when players who are set decide that they don't want to keep working that hard."

Chappell said creating pressure through consistent bowling is as important as taking wickets.

"Bowlers must know that it's not just about taking wickets but about building pressure: bowling good balls, good overs, and good spells. Pressure creates mistakes. It's not magic, it's method," he wrote.

Chappell said it is time for Gill to stamp his authority as a leader and not just as a batter, as India look to bounce back in the series with two matches remaining.

"If Gill wants to become a great Test captain, this is his moment to stamp his authority. Not just with the bat, but with his leadership. Set the standard. Demand it of others. Pick your team. Back them. And make sure every man knows what is expected and hold them to it," he wrote. "Because in the end, cricket isn't about heroes. It's about partnerships. It's about teams. And it's about captains who bring the best out of those around them.

"If Gill can lead with clarity of thought and strength of purpose, he won't just shape this series, he'll shape the future of Indian cricket," Chappell added. (PTI)

National Sports Governance Bill historic, will usher in new era for India: Rijiju



NEW DELHI, July 19: Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju feels that the National Sports Governance Bill, which is set to be tabled in the monsoon session beginning on Monday, will usher in a "new era" for sports in India.

Rijiju was the union sports minister for two years between 2019 and 2021. He was among the predecessors of incumbent Mansukh Mandaviya who played a part in building consensus for the bill by talking to the country's sports administrators and other stakeholders.

In an interview to PTI, the 53-year-old Lok Sabha MP from Arunachal West said he is looking forward to the bill becoming an act soon.

"It's a historic bill coming for the sporting community. I must thank Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi for having such a visionary idea about transforming the sports sector," he said.

The bill seeks to create a framework for good governance in the National Sports Federations (NSFs) and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

It mandates the setting up of a regulatory board which would have the power to grant recognition and decide funding to NSFs based on their adherence to provisions related to good governance.

The regulatory board will also be responsible for ensuring compliance with the highest governance, financial, and ethical standards. The NSFs have been brought on board after extensive discussions over several years that intensified after Mandaviya took charge last year.

The bill also proposes the establishment of Ethics Commissions and Dispute Resolution Commissions to ensure transparency in governance and cut down litigation, which sometimes leads to embarrassing showdowns between athletes and administrators over issues ranging from selection to elections.

It has been opposed by the IOA, which feels that a regulatory board

would undermine its standing as the nodal body for all NSFs.

Current IOA President P T Usha has even gone to the extent of suggesting that India would run the risk of being suspended by the International Olympic Committee for government interference.

However, Mandaviya has asserted that the IOA has been consulted while drafting the proposed legislation. Having the IOA on board is crucial as India is bidding to become an Olympic host in 2036.

Rijiju, who batted for autonomy of sports administrators but with greater accountability during his tenure in the sports ministry, said he is confident of its smooth passage in the Parliament.

"There are two (other) things -- the Khelo Bharat Niti and the anti-doping amendment bill. These two bills (anti-doping and sports governance) are to be combined and we will discuss in the Parliament and I am sure the members will take part," he said.

"Once the new sports bill is passed, it will usher in a new sporting culture in the country. Khelo India has already promoted sports culture in the country," he added.

The anti-doping act was originally passed in 2022 but its implementation had to be put on hold due to objections raised by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

The world body objected to the institution of a National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports, which was empowered to make recommendations to the government on anti-doping regulations.

The Board, which was to comprise a Chairperson and two members appointed by the central government, was also authorised to oversee the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) and even issue directions to it.

WADA rejected this provision as government interference in an autonomous body. The amended bill has therefore deleted this provision to be WADA-compliant. (PTI)

Mohammed Shami named in Bengal's 50-member probables, eyes domestic return

KOLKATA, July 19: Veteran India pacer Mohammed Shami, who has been out of action since IPL 2025 and is not part of India's ongoing Test tour of England, was on Saturday named in Bengal's 50-member list of probables for the upcoming domestic season.

The list, released by the Cricket Association of Bengal, also includes pacer Akash Deep and top-order batter Abhimanyu Easwaran, who are both currently touring England with the Indian team.

It also includes right-arm seamer Mukesh Kumar and senior batter Anustup Majumdar, who is likely to lead Bengal again.

Spin bowling all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed, who is currently recovering from an injury sustained in the Bengal Pro

League T20, and wicketkeeper-batter Abishek Porel are also among the probables who will attend a preseason camp, the date and venue of which is yet to be announced.

Shami could also feature for East Zone in the season-opening Duleep Trophy, which returns to its traditional inter-zonal format this year and begins on August 28.

The tournament may mark Shami's return to competitive cricket.

The 33-year-old Shami, who has played 64 Tests, 108 ODIs and 25 T20Is, last turned out for India in their triumphant campaign in the Champions Trophy early this year after recovering from an ankle injury.

He picked up nine wickets in five matches -- joint-highest for India alongside Varun



Chakravarthy, who took his nine in just three games -- as India defeated New Zealand in the final.

But Shami was below par in the IPL where he turned out for his new franchise Sunrisers Hyderabad and managed just six wickets in nine innings at an economy rate of 11.23.

He had earlier returned to international cricket in the T20I series at home against England in January this year, having last played in the ODI World Cup final in November 2023.

Shami had made domestic comeback with Bengal in the last season where he played across all formats, but was not picked for the tour of Australia.

Bengal's probables

Mohammed Shami, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Anustup Majumdar, Sudip Chatterjee, Sudip Kumar Gharami, Abishek Porel

(wk), Shakir Habib Gandhi (wk), Kazi Junaid Saifi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Pradipta Pramanik, Writick Chatterjee, Karan Lal, Akash Deep, Mukesh Kumar, Sindhu Jaiswal, Ishan Porel, Mohammed Kaif, Subham Chatterjee, Sumanta Gupta, Chinmoy Jain, Ranjot Singh Khaira, Ankur Paul, Rahul Kundu, Aditya Purohit, Gaurav Singh Chauhan, Saurabh Kumar Singh, Aishik Patel, Priyanshu Srivastava, Ankit Chatterjee, Saksham Chaudhary, Aamir Gani, Vikash Singh (Junior), Rishabh Chaudhary, Raju Halder, Shreyan Chakraborty, Sourav Halder, Rahul Prasad, Ankit Mishra, Subham Sarkar, Vishal Bhati, Rohit, Rohit Kumar, Rishabh Vivek, Sumit Mohanta, Kanishk Seth, Sandipan Das (Junior), Sayan Ghosh, Nuruddin Mondal, Soumyadip Mandal and Yudhajit Guha. (PTI)

Will IPL money via The Hundred route rescue financially struggling county cricket clubs?

MANCHESTER, July 19: Will the investment by IPL owners in The Hundred competition ease the financial struggles of the majority of 18 county clubs in England? It is a "make or break" question facing the struggling clubs in the county circuit right now.

According to the recently-released Leonard Curtis Cricket Finance Report, the gap between the top clubs and the smaller ones is widening with the big three -- Surrey, Lancashire and Warwickshire -- generating 44 per cent of the total revenue of all 18 first-class counties in 2023. The smaller clubs like Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire are hugely reliant on the funding from the parent body -- the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

The sale of equity in the eight franchises of The Hundred is expected to raise approximately 520 million pounds, a part of which would be shared with the county clubs. The ECB decided to sell stakes of the eight franchises ahead of The Hundred's fifth season that begins on August 5, day after the conclusion of the Test series between India and England.

Four out of the eight teams have attracted investments from IPL franchise owners connected to Mumbai Indians (49 per cent of Oval Invincibles), Sunrisers Hyderabad (100 per cent of Northern Superchargers), Delhi Capitals (49 per cent of Southern Brave) and Lucknow Super Giants (70 per cent of Manchester Originals). The other four teams -- Welsh Fire, Birmingham Phoenix, London Spirit, Trent Rockets -- have drawn huge sums from American investors.

The eight counties hosting The Hundred teams, including the hosts of Test matches in the summer, are sitting pretty but the majority of the remaining 12 face an existential threat.

"The Hundred money allows the 18

first-class counties to look to the future rather than simply survive from one summer to the next," said former England captain Michael Vaughan in the report.

"I would like to see counties being transparent with each other and sharing knowledge about what works for them. Sometimes petty rivalries prevent that from happening and divisions between the Test host counties and the others develop."

In a separate interaction with PTI, Vaughan said the fresh investments into The Hundred would help England produce better cricketers.

"There is an expectation that it's (Hundred investments) going to help County cricket. What it does do is help England produce better players because some of our players go to the IPL and mix with some of the legends of the game and coaches and they come back better players. "The IPL is not going to move and it's not going to get any smaller, so the game is going to accelerate," he said, referring to the money pumped in by the IPL teams.

Stuart Cain, CEO of Warwickshire County Cricket Club, believes the fresh influx of cash in English cricket will help all 18 counties but in the long run they need to develop multiple revenue streams.

"In its most simplest form, that money will help red-ball cricket and T20 cricket thrive in all the counties, not just the eight franchises where there are teams.

"So, if you're a Worcestershire or Northamptonshire or Leicestershire where you don't have a Hundred team, but you have that money, you can build better stadiums, which will attract more fans, give them a better experience. So, they want to come back again," Cain told PTI.

"It allows you then to create more money, which you can invest in the squad, which means that you can employ better red-ball players. If we can make it even more attractive through the investment

from The Hundred money, then I think that the 18 counties will all benefit and the game in general will benefit."

Cain said there is also plenty to learn on the operation front from the IPL biggies besides stressing on the important of creating different revenue streams for clubs that don't have teams in The Hundred.

"What's great with The Hundred is four of the teams have got IPL investment and four have got predominantly American US investment. So there's a nice mix here. We can learn a lot from the IPL.

"So, the investors are operating in those global franchise environments can help us build The Hundred competition. We've got a strong T20 tournament already in the Blast. So what we need to do is make sure that it stays really strong and healthy and that The Hundred stays different," Cain said. "Being straight, county cricket doesn't make money. So what we have to make sure is that through The Hundred money, the venues that aren't playing Hundred cricket can take the Hundred money and invest it in their stadiums."

For example, Cain is building a new on-site hotel at Edgbaston for an additional revenue stream through the year.

"All those things will then drive more money into the pockets of the county to then invest back into county cricket and to the Blast," said Cain.

Because of the financial crunch, the quality of cricket in county circuit has been impacted. With more cash in hand, the clubs would be able to attract better players and improve the standard of red ball game, said former India stumper and Lancashire great Farokh Engineer.

"It'll help the counties hugely. So, IPL have actually come to the rescue of certain dwindling counties. The county cricket's standard has fallen down. In my time, there was myself and Clive Lloyd playing for Lancashire." (PTI)

HI names 40-member core group for senior women's national camp

BENGALURU, July 19: Hockey India on Saturday announced a 40-member core probable group for the upcoming senior women's national coaching camp, which will be held at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centre here from July 21 to August 29. The camp holds significance as the Indian women's hockey team gears up for the women's Asia Cup, set to begin on September 5 in Hangzhou, China. The tournament will serve as a direct qualification pathway for the 2026 FIH Women's World Cup, with only the champion earning a guaranteed spot.

All players from the previous camp have been retained, reflecting a continued emphasis on stability and long-term development under the current coaching setup. "This camp comes at a very critical juncture for us. The Asia Cup is not just a prestigious continental tournament, but also a direct route to the 2026 World Cup. We are treating this camp with utmost in-

tensity and focus to ensure we arrive in Hangzhou as a mentally and physically prepared unit," Indian women's hockey team chief coach Harendra Singh said in a release.

"We have retained the core from the last camp to maintain consistency in our approach, while also allowing the younger players more time to integrate into the senior structure. After a tough Pro League campaign in Europe, where we couldn't produce the results we wanted, this camp also gives us a chance to reset, refocus, and bounce back stronger. Moreover, we have identified critical angles in penalty corner defence, which was a key area of concern during the Pro League."

The goalkeeping unit features experienced stalwarts Savita, Bichu Devi Khariabam, Bansari Solanki, and Madhuri Kindo, along with rising talent Samiksha Saxena from Assam Hockey, who impressed selectors with her performances

at the National Championships earlier this year. The defence line-up comprises seasoned names such as Nikki Pradhan, Sushila Chanu Pukhrambam, Uditia, and Mahima Chaudhary, bolstered by emerging players like Ishika Chaudhary, Jyoti Chhattri, Anjna Ddungdung, Akshata Abaso Dhekal, and Suman Devi Thoudam. In midfield, the group continues to rely on the experience of Neha, Salima Tete, Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Manisha Chauhan, and Sharmila Devi, while also nurturing young talents like Sujata Kujur, Mahima Tete, Albelia Rani Toppo, and Pooja Yadav.

The forward line features a strong mix of agility and finishing ability, with players like Navneet Kaur, Deepika Soreng, Sangita Kumari, Rutuja Dadaso Pisal, Mumtaz Khan, Beauty Ddungdung, Annu, Hritika Singh, Dipimonia Toppo, Chandana Jagadish, and Kajal Sadashiv Atpadkar all named in the squad. (PTI)

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