

Reliance Industries Q1 profit jumps 78 pc to ₹ 26,994 cr on better show by consumer businesses

NEW DELHI, July 18: India's most valuable company Reliance Industries on Friday reported its highest-ever quarterly profit of ₹ 26,994 crore for the April-June quarter, reflecting a growth of 78.3 per cent over the year-ago period, driven by consumer businesses and investment sales.

The oil-to-retail-to-telecom conglomerate's consolidated net profit attributable to owners of the company stood at ₹ 26,994 crore, or ₹ 19.95 per share, in April-June 2025 compared to ₹ 15,138 crore earnings in the year-ago period, according to an exchange filing.

The net profit was also 39 per cent higher quarter-on-quarter when compared to ₹ 19,407 crore earnings in the preceding three months ended on March 31.

Revenue from operations was up by 5.26 per cent to ₹ 2.48 lakh crore in the first quarter of 2025-26 compared to ₹ 2.36 lakh crore in the year-ago period.

Other income includes ₹ 8,924 crore, being proceeds of profit from the sale of listed investments, the company stated in the filing.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led company continued to post an



uptick in its consumer businesses - retail and telecom.

While Jio was helped by a rise in consumer base, the retail business delivered steady performance due to an increase in footfalls at its expanded store network.

The mainstay oil refining and petrochemicals business, called O2C, posted a 1.5 per cent decline Y-o-Y due to a fall in crude oil prices and lower volumes on account of the planned shutdown.

Segment revenues were supported by increased domestic placement of transportation fuels through Jio-bp, a company state-

ment said.

RIL Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani said that Reliance has begun FY26 with a robust all-around operational and financial performance.

"Consolidated EBITDA for the first quarter of FY26 improved strongly from the year-ago period, despite significant volatility in global macros. During the quarter, energy markets encountered heightened uncertainty, with sharp fluctuations in crude prices. Our O2C business delivered strong growth, with thrust on domestic demand fulfillment and offering

value-added solutions through the Jio-bp network. Performance was supported by improvement in fuel and downstream product margins," Ambani said.

Jio Platforms, the digital services business, posted a 25 per cent rise in net profit to ₹ 7,110 crore in the first quarter. Its consumer base rose to 498.1 million at June end from 488.2 million at March end, and average per user revenue (ARPU) increased to ₹ 208.8 from ₹ 206.2.

Jio Platforms' gross revenue climbed 19 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to ₹ 41,054 crore in Q1 FY26, according to the earnings statement released by parent Reliance Industries. Reliance Industries noted that Jio has scaled newer heights during the quarter, including crossing 200 million 5G subscribers and 20 million home connections.

"Jio AirFiber is now the largest FWA (Fixed Wireless Access) service provider in the world, with a base of 7.4 million subscribers. Our Digital Services business consolidated its market position with a robust financial and operational performance," Ambani said. (PTI)

Sensex tanks 501 pts, Nifty closes below 25k on selling in bank stocks, foreign fund outflows

MUMBAI, July 18: Benchmark Sensex tanked 501 points while Nifty closed below the 25,000 mark on Friday due to selling in banking shares after muted quarterly earnings and foreign fund outflows.

Falling for the second straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 501.51 points or 0.61 per cent to settle at 81,757.73. During the day, it shed 651.11 points or 0.79 per cent to hit a low of 81,608.13.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 143.05 points or 0.57 per cent to close at a month's low of 24,968.40.

Analysts said investors turned cautious over banking stocks in response to Axis Bank's latest financial results, which fell short of market expectations.

Among Sensex firms, Axis Bank tumbled the most by 5.24 per cent after it reported a 3 per cent dip in its June quarter consolidated net profit at ₹ 6,243.72 crore, impacted by the implementation of changes in non-performing assets and loan upgrade policy.

Devarsh Vakil, Head of Prime Research, HDFC Securities, said Axis Bank's latest financial results fell short of market expectations.

"Notably, Axis Bank's GDR tumbled 4.8 per cent to USD 64.30 on Thursday, following a deterioration in the bank's asset quality during the June quarter," he said.

Among blue-chip bank stocks, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and State Bank of India ended lower.

Following the decline in bank stocks, the BSE Bankex ended 1.33 per cent lower at 62,741.65.

Bharat Electronics, Bharti Airtel, HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Titan and Eternal were also among the laggards from the Sensex pack.

However, Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel, ICICI Bank, HCL Tech and Infosys were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) of-

flooded equities worth ₹ 3,694.31 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

"A broad-based sell-off was observed amidst a disappointing initial set of earnings from the finance and IT sectors. Elevated valuations in large-cap stocks, coupled with significant net short positions held by FIIs, have contributed to a cautious sentiment among investors," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

"Additional tariff threats are also casting a shadow on India over its trade relationship with Russia. Despite these pressures, the medium-to-long-term outlook for India remains optimistic, supported by low inflation levels and proactive monetary authority committed to sustaining economic growth," Nair added.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.64 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.62 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, capital goods dropped 1.50 per cent, followed by bankex (1.33 per cent), industrials (1.08 per cent), telecommunication (0.99 per cent), power (0.90 per cent) and consumer durables (0.90 per cent).

Metal, services and BSE Focused IT ended higher.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark tumbled 742.74 points or 0.90 per cent, and the Nifty declined by 181.45 points or 0.72 per cent.

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

European markets were trading with gains. The US markets ended higher on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.92 per cent to USD 70.16 a barrel.

On Thursday, the Sensex dropped 375.24 points or 0.45 per cent to settle at 82,259.24. The Nifty ended lower by 100.60 points or 0.40 per cent to 25,111.45. (PTI)

Ashok Leyland unveils new light commercial vehicle dealership

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 18: Ashok Leyland announced the grand opening of its new State of the Art, Light Commercial Vehicle Dealership - AxleEdge Motors in Guwahati. The event was graced by Head of LCV Business, Vipul Shah as the Chief Guest.

Owned and operated by Gaurav Jain, Sanjay Agarwal, and Sunit Bajaj, AxleEdge Motors is committed to delivering high-performance light commercial vehicles to meet the region's growing transportation and logistics needs in the Small Commercial and Pick-up Cargo Segment.

The dealership will offer Ashok Leyland's trusted LCV range including Saathi, Dost XL, Dost XL Plus, Bada Dost, and Partner - vehicles known for their durability, fuel efficiency, and low maintenance. Speaking at the launch, the partners emphasised their commitment to service excellence and customer satisfaction.

With this new dealership, AxleEdge Motors aims to become a reliable mobility partner for small and medium businesses in Assam and the Northeast.

Rupee settles 4 paise lower at 86.16 against US dollar

MUMBAI, July 18: The rupee stayed weak for the third straight session and settled 4 paise lower at 86.16 against the US dollar on Friday, amid rising global crude oil prices and a steep decline in domestic equity markets. However, a weak greenback against major currencies prevented a sharp depreciation in the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened higher against the US dollar at 85.99 and moved in the range of 85.97-86.23 before closing at 86.16, down 4 paise from its previous close.

The rupee declined 20 paise to settle at 86.12 against the US dollar on Thursday, a day after registering a loss of 16 paise. "...dollar buyers bought heavily to take rupee lower before we saw the Reserve Bank of India stepping in to control the pace of the fall," said Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP. (PTI)

Sunil Bharti Mittal conferred doctorate in business administration (Honoris Causa) by the University of Bath

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 18: Founder and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises, Sunil Bharti Mittal has been awarded Honorary Doctorate in Business Administration by the University of Bath, United Kingdom (UK). The honour was conferred at the University's summer graduation ceremony at the historic Bath Abbey, in recognition of Mittal's contribution to global business, entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

Mittal is a pioneer of the Indian telecommunications revolution and has played a pivotal role in shaping the global communications landscape through Bharti Airtel, one of the world's leading telecom companies. His leadership across diverse industries, from telecom and digital infrastructure to financial services and space communications, as also his enduring dedication to ensuring equity in access to



education articulate purpose, innovation and global ambition.

Speaking on the occasion, Professor Phil Taylor, Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Bath said, "We are very proud to honour Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal's considerable achievements in enterprise, leadership and service to society. Not only has he built a world-leading global enterprise but his humanitarian work has impacted the lives of over 3.7 million children through education and rural development. He sends our graduating students a powerful message of the importance of giving back to society, which we hope will inspire them in their future careers. We are delighted to welcome Mr. Mittal to our alumni community, joining his son and daughter who previously graduated from our School of Management and Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences."

The University of Bath is one of

the UK's leading academic institutions, known for high-impact research, teaching excellence, and an outstanding student experience.

On conferment of the Doctorate, Mittal said, "I'm honoured to receive this recognition from the University of Bath, an institution renowned for its intellectual rigour, spirit of enterprise, and engagement with the world beyond the classroom. This moment is made especially meaningful by the personal connection my family shares with the University. That education holds the power to open doors of opportunity, uplift communities, and shape nations has always been an article of faith for me. I remain deeply committed to my contributions to the rapidly advancing India-UK collaboration across both industry and academia, given the extraordinary reservoir of talents and skills that the countries have to offer."

The honour from the University

of Bath marks Mittal's ninth honorary doctorate and his third from a UK institution. He was earlier conferred the Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa) by the University of Leeds in 2009 and the Doctor of Civil Law (Honoris Causa) by Newcastle University in 2012.

Over the years, Mr. Mittal has actively engaged with leading academic institutions in both countries, demonstrating his belief in the role of education to shape equitable global progress.

He has previously served on the Governing Body of the London Business School and was a member of the Cambridge India Partnership Advisory Board at the University of Cambridge. Mittal continues to support academic collaboration through his role on the Vice-Chancellor's Circle of Advisors at the University of Cambridge and as a member of the India Advisory Group at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

In India, he has served on the Boards of Governors of IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Lucknow, and IIT Bombay. He currently serves as Chair of the Chancellor's Advisory Board at Plaksha University and as a member of the Governing Board at the Indian School of Business.

This recognition from the University of Bath also underscores the growing convergence between India and the UK across enterprise, innovation, and higher education. Bharti Enterprises remains committed to enabling global partnerships that are anchored in trust, talent, and transformative impact.

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Cabinet clears AMCH revamp

premium payments digitally. In recognition of the 200th year of Assam Tea, the Cabinet sanctioned ₹342 crore under the 'Mukhya Mantri Eti Koli Duti Paat' scheme. This flagship initiative aims to support approximately seven lakh permanent and temporary tea garden workers, excluding management staff, by providing one-time financial assistance of ₹5,000 per eligible individual.

The assistance will be disbursed in a single instalment into Aadhaar-linked bank accounts to promote financial inclusion.

The Cabinet also approved the inclusion of willing employees and dependents of the Assam Power Distribution Corporation Ltd (APDCL), Assam Electricity Grid Corporation Ltd (AEGCL), Assam Power Generation Corporation Ltd (APGCL) and Adarsh Vidyalayas under the Ayushman Assom-Mukhya Mantri Lok Sevak Argya Yojana (AA-MMLSA) on a voluntary basis.

Registered employees who pay the monthly subscription will be eligible to claim medical reimbursements from the month of registration, with inclusion under the scheme's cashless module after one year.

Further, the Cabinet sanctioned long-term leases of government land for various healthcare and hospitality projects under the Advantage Assam 2.0 initiative. Global Health Ltd (Medanta) will receive 3.5 acres for an advanced healthcare facility, Lineage Healthcare Ltd will receive 1 acre to develop women and child healthcare infrastructure, and RJ Corp Ltd will be allotted 1.75 acres for setting up a hotel.

The projects are also eligible for incentives under the state's Investment and Industrial Policy, 2019. In view of the severe drought-like conditions prevailing in parts of Assam, the Cabinet has identified the situation as a state-specific disaster. It has accorded in-principle approval to extend compensation benefits to affected beneficiaries in selected districts as per norms under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

10 held for attack on security

been completed," Sarma said, addressing a press conference here. One alleged encroacher was killed and more than 20 others, including policemen, were injured in a clash between evicted people and security personnel in Paikan Reserve Forest in Goalpara district on Thursday. The eviction drive carried out on July 12 to clear encroachment on around 135 hectares in the Reserve Forest under Krishnai Range had affected 1,080 families, and the evicted people were mostly Bengali-speaking Muslims.

The chief minister said Paikan is 'empty now' and added, "They won't come there again. After a point, they don't return, I know from experience."

He said 40-50 families were staying in temporary shelters even after the eviction drive, with the authorities also not pushing him out immediately as they had assured him of leaving the area soon.

Reiterating his accusation against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of emboldening the encroachers through his speech during his Assam visit on Wednesday, Sarma said, "People from Goalpara had come for Gandhi's meeting, later, they went to Paikan at night and instigated the people, who attacked the forest guards and police the next day." "Police are looking into whether there was any impact of Kharge and Gandhi's provocative speeches. After all, one person died," he added. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge had accompanied Gandhi during the day-long visit. (PTI)

Rajdhani Express resumes

schedule, train No. 12423 (Down Rajdhani) will halt at Diphu at 11:21 PM, while train No 12424 (Up Rajdhani) will halt at 2:24 AM, with a two-minute stop each. The flag-off event was also attended by KAAC Chairman Raju Tisso, MLA Darsing Ronghang, KAAC Executive Members, MACs, and Deputy Commissioner Nirola Phangchopi.

Sarma alleges 'designed

Showing a video of the cultivations, Sarma said, "The Myanmar 'supari' (dried betel nut) comes up to Uri-amghat. Here it is mixed with some local supari and then passed off as local produce." Asked on action against officials who allowed such encroachment, he said, "I am told three forest rangers were there and they were the same as these people. I will take action, that's why I am the chief minister."

He added that not just officials, but also local politicians, don't do anything about the illegal settlements once the population reaches 5,000-10,000 as it becomes a vote bank. The chief minister had said on Tuesday that 1,19,548 bighas (160 sq km) of land have been cleared of encroachment since his government took over in May 2021, affecting about 50,000 people. He added that another 63 lakh bighas, including 29 lakh bighas of forest land, are still under encroachment in the state.

He had claimed that the alleged encroachers are people of 'one religion' and said the indigenous communities of the state are facing 'invasion' from these people. Though Sarma did not specify, most of the evicted people are Bengali-speaking Muslims. (PTI)

US designation of TRF 'timely

Global Terrorist (SDGT). It claimed responsibility for the April 22 Pahalgam attack," he said. The MEA said India welcomes the decision of the US State Department to designate TRF as an FTO and SDGT. The TRF, a "proxy" of the Pakistan-based terrorist organisation LeT, has been involved in numerous terror-related activities, including the heinous attack on civilians in Pahalgam for which it twice claimed responsibility, it said.

"India has consistently emphasised the need for global cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the dismantling of terror infrastructure," the MEA said in a statement. It said the designation of TRF is a "timely and important step reflecting the deep cooperation between India and the United States on counter-terrorism." "India remains committed to a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism and will continue to work closely with its international partners to ensure that terrorist organisations and their proxies are held accountable," the statement added. (PTI)

Cong duo 'encouraged'

injured. Referring to Kharge's statement that Congress will rehabilitate the evicted people in the state, Sarma said, "Because of these kinds of speeches, people get encouraged and those evicted people started throwing stones and beating police with sticks and various other weapons (at Paikan)."

He said police have registered a case already, and they will see whether these statements were directly or indirectly responsible for the incident.

"Police will go through the speeches made by Gandhi and Kharge. And if we see that there are elements which invite penal action, police will not hesitate to take action against them," Sarma, who also holds the Home department, asserted.

On Gandhi claiming that Sarma will be put in jail for corruption by the people, the BJP leader said, "The big question is whether Rahul Gandhi will be in jail and when. ED has seized many property of Robert Vadra today (Thursday). There are many jails in India waiting for the Gandhis."

"You see, he is just an MP today. How can he arrest a chief minister?" Sarma said, adding that even Congress members do not give importance to what Gandhi says.

"Congress will contest the 2026 Assam election on only one agenda that Himanta Biswa Sarma will be put behind bars. Who will vote for a party whose manifesto will be of only that one line?" Sarma claimed.

"But we have bigger tasks. There are two cases against Gandhi in Assam, I can bring him in. But my election cannot be Gandhi-centric, it will be on our work for the state. I am not allowing my mind to be diverted, else I would have retorted in ample measure to the threats given to me," he said. (PTI)

Monsoon rains 9 pc above

Floods and heavy rain have claimed 105 lives in the state so far. In May, the IMD had forecast that India is likely to receive 106 per cent of the long-period average rainfall of 87 cm during the June-September monsoon season. Rainfall between 96 and 104 per cent of this 50-year average is considered 'normal'.

Above-normal rainfall is expected in most parts of the country, except Ladakh, adjoining areas of Himachal Pradesh, the northeast and some parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha. Some isolated areas in Punjab, Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu may record below-normal rainfall. The monsoon is crucial for India's agriculture sector, which supports the livelihood of around 42 per cent of the population and contributes 18.2 per cent to the GDP. It also plays a key role in replenishing reservoirs essential for drinking water and power generation. (PTI)

Academic standards must be

cultivate a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. With India on track to become the world's third-largest economy, Sarma emphasised that employment opportunities in the state would expand considerably. In this context, he highlighted the need to foster start-ups, incubation centres and innovation, and underscored the importance of equipping the youth with knowledge of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and 3D printing.

He urged the newly appointed faculty in engineering colleges and polytechnics to foster a spirit of fresh thinking. These institutions should function not only as centres for skill development but also as incubators for start-ups and innovation, Sarma added. (PTI)

Drought-like situation in 5 western

than 4,000 government departments, educational institutions and clubs, which had been in possession of the land for several years. "There are about 17,000 more such applications pending at the district-level and those will be cleared by July 31. From August, we will start distribution of the land 'pattas'," the chief minister said.

He said the cabinet also cleared land allotment for 12 families, which were affected in an eviction drive on government land in Lakhimpur district, and they will be exempted from paying any premium. For oil exploration projects undertaken by companies such as OIL, ONGC and similar entities, it was decided that the state government shall not initiate acquisition of land by default.

Oil exploration companies, central/state-owned or private sector agencies duly authorised by the central government have been permitted to purchase or lease the required land directly from landowners through negotiated settlement, as per prevailing market rates and applicable guidelines. An online portal shall be developed and hosted by the revenue department for facilitating hydrocarbon companies to apply for auto-reclassification of land and for making payment of premium at rates as applicable, Sarma said.

The cabinet has also approved notifying exemption of hydrocarbon exploration and production activities from the purview of 'The Assam Regulation of Reclassification and Reclassification cum Transfer of Lands Act, 2015', subject to the payment of the applicable premium.

This will streamline the process of land availability for hydrocarbon exploration and production activities in the state, and also expedite strategic hydrocarbon projects, generate premium revenue for the state, strengthen national energy security while promoting ease-of-doing-business, he said.

Sarma said the cabinet gave the nod for allotment of land in Sarusajai area of the city for a ₹ 800-crore hospital, the MoU for which was signed in Advantage Assam 2.0. Along with the hospital on the front side of the plot, a five-star hotel will also be built in the other part, a move that will promote medical tourism and create 2,700 jobs, the CM said. (PTI)

NAME CORRECTION

I, Aakash Chhetry son of Mitra Bahadur Chhetry, have declared through an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Bokajan on 15th July, 2025 that my actual name is Aakash Chhetry, but my name is wrongly printed in some documents as Akash Chhetry. Henceforth, I shall be known as Aakash Chhetry for all purposes.

High-level talks focus on agriculture, healthcare, trade and development cooperation

Minister Pabitra Margherita strengthens bilateral ties during official visit to Eswatini

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 18: Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles, Pabitra Margherita, recently visited the Kingdom of Eswatini as part of India's ongoing diplomatic outreach to strengthen relations with African nations.

During the visit, he held high-level discussions with the top leadership of Eswatini, reaffirming India's commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors.

According to an official statement, the Minister called on His Majesty King Mswati III and met with key government officials, including His Excellency Prime Minister, Russell Mmisso Dlamini; minister of foreign affairs senator, Pholele Shakantu; minister of health, Mduduzi Matsebula; minister of agriculture, Mandla Tshavuka and minister of economic planning and development,



Tambo Gina.

The meetings covered a wide range of subjects relating to India-Eswatini relations.

Discussions were held on furthering cooperation in critical sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, foreign affairs, and economic development.

commitment to elevate the partnership to new heights.

It also provided an opportunity to explore new areas of collaboration in line with India's broader engagement with the African continent.

Minister Margherita's engagements with Eswatini's top leadership are seen as part of India's diplomatic push to strengthen South-South cooperation and build resilient development partnerships.

The visit is expected to lay the groundwork for future bilateral agreements and collaborative initiatives, particularly in sectors where India's developmental experience can contribute meaningfully to Eswatini's national priorities.

The official statement underscored that the visit significantly contributed to taking India-Eswatini bilateral relations to a new level of understanding and cooperation.

19-year-old found dead; foul play suspected

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 18: A 19-year-old girl from Karbi Anglong, who had been missing for a month, was found dead under suspicious circumstances in Nagaon district, raising concerns of possible foul play.

The deceased has been identified as Namrata Engtipi, a resident of Dentahtag in Karbi Anglong.

According to sources, she went missing on June 18 and her parents lodged a missing person complaint at Dokmoka Police Station on June 21.

On July 17, a partially burnt body was discovered under Morikolung Police Station in Nagaon.

The body was identified as Namrata's based on a ring and half-burnt clothes recovered from the spot.

The girl's parents have filed a formal case at Morikolung Police Station. Further investigation is underway.

Diphu station upgrade raised in Parliament: CPI(ML), KSA

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 18: The CPI (ML) Hills Party Committee and the Karbi Students Association (KSA), Sumit Timung faction, in a joint press statement, said that Karakat MP Raja Ram Singh raised the issue of upgrading Diphu Railway Station during his speech in Parliament.

According to the statement, the MP demanded online ticket booking facilities and a stoppage of the Rajdhani Express at Diphu.

In response, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed that the upgradation of Diphu Railway Station has been taken up by the Ministry of Railways under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

The organisations also said that a similar request was submitted earlier by Lok Sabha MP Sudama Prasad through a letter to the Railway Minister.

ADC Kabita Deka visits NTPC Bongaigaon's Girl Empowerment Mission programme

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, July 18: As part of its continued efforts to promote holistic development through the Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM), NTPC Bongaigaon, Salakati hosted Kabita Deka, ACS, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Kokrajhar, at its GEM facility.

Her visit served as a major source of encouragement for the young girls enrolled in the programme.

Deka was warmly welcomed by members of the Bardwi Shikla Ladies Club and senior NTPC officials. During her visit, she interacted with the participants of the GEM programme, sharing insights from her personal journey into civil services and offering practical guidance and motivational advice.

Her address focused on self-belief, ambition, and perseverance, drawing from her own experiences in public service.

The session left a strong impact on the girls, instilling

in them a renewed sense of purpose and confidence.

Deka also toured the GEM facility and was briefed on the infrastructure and curriculum designed to support the all-round development of the participants.

She appreciated the thoughtful planning and execution of the programme, commending NTPC Bongaigaon's commitment to nurturing an empowering environment for girls.

Emphasising the importance of personal safety, education, and self-reliance, the ADC encouraged the girls to aim high and make use of every opportunity to grow. The visit concluded with a commemorative group photograph, symbolising a shared commitment to girl empowerment.

NTPC Bongaigaon described the visit as a memorable milestone in the journey of the GEM initiative, reiterating its belief that empowering girls lays the foundation for a stronger and more equitable future.

CPI protests eviction drives by BJP

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, July 18: The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Thursday staged a two-hour sit-in demonstration in front of the Sivasagar Labour Office, protesting against the eviction drives carried out by the state government and demanding the fulfilment of a 17-point charter of demands.

A memorandum in this regard was submitted to the Government of Assam through the Deputy Commissioner.

Leading the protest, CPI state secretary Kanak Gogoi alleged that chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma was conducting eviction drives to hand over thousands of bighas of land to corporate entities including Gautam Adani, Mukesh Ambani, Baba Ramdev, and the Tata Group.

Gogoi claimed the evictions were aimed at raising election funds and were being first carried out in minority-dominated areas, before targeting tribal regions, particularly those inhabited by Ahom settlers.

He said around 55,000 bighas of land were planned to be transferred to corporate groups and demanded that evicted land should instead be allocated to landless people.

He also urged the Chief Minister to follow Supreme Court guide-



lines and treat people humanely during eviction operations.

The party further demanded that if any Bangladeshi citizens were among the evicted, they should be handed over to the Government of Bangladesh.

The CPI's memorandum highlighted the issue of unemployment, stating that over 36 lakh educated youth remain jobless in Assam and accused the state government of lacking any concrete employment policy.

The party accused the BJP of building its organisational strength from the grassroots level by raising corporate funds, influencing constitutional institutions like the Election Commission, CBI, and ED, and using administrative and propaganda machinery to its advantage.

It called upon opposition parties to unite and mount a street-level

struggle against the alleged anti-people policies of the BJP-led government.

The CPI also criticised the government for allegedly obstructing dialogue with ULFA (I) by attacking its camps in Myanmar and demanded that the insurgency issue be treated as a political problem rather than a law and order issue.

Among other demands, the CPI called for granting tribal status under Article 371(A) to six ethnic groups, improving the state's irrigation infrastructure to enable multi-crop farming, and conducting a high-level probe into the alleged cattle theft and sale scam at Garukhuti.

CPI district secretary Mani Buragohain, youth leaders Ajay Bora and Riku Bargohain, Mahila Sangha district president Mallika Bingham, and several party workers participated in the protest.

BPF bolsters grassroots support in Srirampur with induction of 32 new members

HT Correspondent

GOSSAIGAON, July 18: In a key development ahead of the upcoming Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections, the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) has strengthened its grassroots presence in the Srirampur constituency with the induction of 32 new members from Serlanguri village.

The formal joining ceremony was held at the BPF Block Office in Telipara and was organised by the Srirampur Block unit of the party.

The event was presided over by Muklesur Rahman, President of the Srirampur Block Committee, BPF, who reaffirmed the party's vision of inclusive development across all communities.

In his address, Rahman emphasised the party's guiding principle of "Peace and Progress without

Discrimination" and called upon the people to support the BPF's mission of equitable growth.

"The hopes and aspirations of every resident in this region are my responsibility," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Dhruva Kumar Brahma Narzary, Treasurer of the BPF Central Committee and former Chairperson of the Gossaigaon Town Committee, sharply criticised the BJP-UPPL coalition government.

He asserted that the BPF remains the only party committed to inclusive development, free from caste or religious bias, and urged the public to repose trust in the party's leadership and vision.

The induction of the 32 new members was seen as a significant boost to the party's local campaign efforts.

BPF leaders and grassroots

workers extended a warm welcome to the new entrants, whose participation is expected to energise the party's organisational activities in the run-up to the polls.

The event was also attended by senior party leaders, including Central Working Committee (CWC) member Shahana Begum, Minority Cell President Mojahid Ahmed, and Block Secretary Mujibur Rahman, underscoring the strategic importance of the induction.

With this latest addition to its ranks, the BPF has signalled a renewed push to expand its influence in Srirampur, reinforcing its electoral preparations ahead of the BTC elections.

The party's leadership views the development as a step toward consolidating support at the grassroots level and enhancing its prospects at the polls.

New pig-cum-poultry farm office inaugurated in Diphu

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 18: In a move to strengthen the livestock and poultry development sector in Karbi Anglong, Executive Member (EM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) for Veterinary and Animal Husbandry, D Upping Maslai, inaugurated the new office building of the Manager, Government Pig-cum-Poultry Farm, Diphu, under the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department recently.

The modern office building is expected to serve as an improved administrative centre to support farmers, offer technical guidance, and ensure the effective implementation of various animal husbandry schemes. Addressing the gathering, EM Maslai underlined the significance of livestock and poultry farming in boosting the rural economy and ensuring nutritional security.

He said the new facility would improve the department's efficiency in supporting farmers and promoting sustainable practices across Karbi Anglong. The event was attended by Secretary Bidyashri Langhasa, SDVO Diphu Dr Hongbari Engtipi, and other departmental staff. Officials and staff members expressed their appreciation to the KAAC leadership for prioritising infrastructure development in the veterinary sector and noted that the upgraded facilities would help enhance coordination, training, and outreach to farmers.

2 drug peddlers arrested

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, July 18: In a continued crackdown on the drug menace in the state, Jagiroad Police on Friday arrested two drug peddlers and seized approximately 60 grams of heroin from their possession. The duo was apprehended at a police check post along National Highway 27 while traveling in a four-wheeler (registration number AS 23 Q 1763) from Nagaon to Guwahati. The arrested individuals have been identified as Azizul Rahman of Hojai and Moksudul Momin of Nagaon. Police said an investigation into the incident is underway.

Munindra Nath Ngatey assumes charge as new DC of Dima Hasao

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 18: Dr Munindra Nath Ngatey has officially taken charge as the new District Commissioner (DC) of Dima Hasao district.

According to an official statement, he assumed office on July 15, following his transfer from Biswanath district, where he previously served in the same capacity. His transfer was effected as per government order No. ECF.603404/18-A dated July 13, 2025.

Dr Ngatey succeeds Simanta Kumar Das, who has been appointed as the new Deputy Commissioner of Biswanath district.

Upon taking charge, Dr Ngatey expressed optimism about his new role and affirmed his commitment to the development of Dima Hasao and the welfare of its

people.

He stated that he looked forward to working closely with all stakeholders to ensure inclusive growth and efficient administration across the district.

Outgoing DC Simanta Kumar Das formally handed over responsibilities to Dr Ngatey in the presence of senior officials at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Haflong.

Das served Dima Hasao with dedication during his tenure and will now take up his new posting in Biswanath as per the government notification.

Dr Ngatey's appointment comes at a time when Dima Hasao district is witnessing multiple developmental initiatives, and his experience is expected to bring fresh momentum to ongoing projects.

Youth arrested in Jorhat for duping retired AAU professor

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, July 18: A youth identified as Ishanjyoti Baruah has been arrested in Jorhat for allegedly duping senior citizen and retired Assam Agricultural University professor, Pranab Kumar Baruah.

The victim is also a reputed artist of

Assam.

According to an official source, Pranab Kumar Baruah had filed a police complaint around two months ago, reporting the loss of his mobile phone and suspicious withdrawals from his pension account.

He had stated that money was being withdrawn by an unknown individual.

Following an investigation into the complaint, police traced the alleged involvement of Ishanjyoti Baruah in the case and subsequently arrested him.

Further investigation is underway.

Awareness programme on KKHSOU admissions held at Biswanath College

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, July 18: An awareness programme on admission to various courses of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU) for the academic session 2025-2026 was held at Biswanath College on Friday. The event was attended by KKHSOU Vice Chancellor Professor Rajendra Prasad Das as Chief Guest.

Addressing the gathering, Professor Das emphasized the university's mission to extend access to higher education across Assam, ensuring that no youth is deprived of academic opportunities.

He urged participants to encourage eligible learners, particularly those unable to pursue education in the regular mode, to enrol in KKHSOU and continue their studies. Biswanath College Principal and Centre-in-Charge of the KKHSOU Study Centre, Dr Chintia Mani Sharma, delivered the welcome address and highlighted the university's role in supporting youth and working professionals who face challenges in accessing conventional education. Professor Pranab Saikia, Dean of KKHSOU, elaborated on the university's academic structure, regulations, and the wide range of courses offered. He noted that KKHSOU

is the first open university in the region to adopt the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme under the National Education Policy 2020. Kokil Hazarika, President of the Biswanath College Governing Body, lauded the university's efforts since its inception. Assistant Registrar (Study Centre), KKHSOU, Birinchi Borah, introduced the event and outlined the support mechanisms available at study centres. Dr Nareish Thakur, Coordinator of the Biswanath College KKHSOU Study Centre, delivered the vote of thanks.

Over 150 people participated in the programme, including Apurba Das, President of the Biswanath College Alumni Association, learners and alumni of KKHSOU, NCC cadets of Biswanath College, students and office bearers of the college's students' union, and members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. The event also witnessed the presence of local education heads, teachers, the President of Biswanath Chariali Nagarik Santha, the Secretary of All Assam Mohila Kobi Mancha, members of Biswanath Chariali Lekhika Santha, leaders from the Biswanath Zila and Chariali Anchalik units of AASU, and representatives from the Biswanath Zila Journalist Association and the Biswanath Chariali Press Club.

Dhubri marks World Youth Skills Day with painting competition

HT Correspondent

DHUBRI, July 18: To mark World Youth Skills Day, a vibrant painting competition was organised at R K Basu Bangla Bidyapith, Dhubri, with the aim of promoting creativity and skill development among young students.

The event drew enthusiastic participation and highlighted the importance of nurturing artistic talents in youth.

The programme was jointly organised by Mera Yuva Bharat, Dhubri — an initiative under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India — and the NGO, The Humanity.

A large number of students from various schools took part in the competition, showcasing their cre-



ative expression and imagination through art.

In the results announced at the end of the event, Sunithi Rajak of Girls School (Class 9) won the first prize, followed by Debjani Gan-

guly of Happy Convent School (Class 8) who secured the second prize, and Rick Dutta of SP English Medium Higher Secondary School (Class 7) who claimed the third prize.

The entries were judged by a panel of noted art educators including Monojit Das, Gautam Sharma, and Syamal Ghosh, whose presence added significant value to the event.

Special guests present on the occasion included Sonia Acharjee, In-Charge Principal of R K Basu Bangla Bidyapith, along with senior journalists Pranabashish Roy, Mehtab Uddin Ahmed, and Ashique Rahman.

The competition succeeded in its objective of encouraging creative skills and reinforcing the role of artistic expression in youth empowerment.

The programme concluded on a positive note, leaving a lasting impression on participants, educators, and guests alike.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Metaphors have a way of holding the most truth in the least space. -Orson Scott Card

Woo-Christian policy in Kerala

The Bharatiya Janata Party's much-hyped political strategy to woo the Christian population in Kerala has fallen flat in the face of strong opposition from within the community. That the opportunistic strategy has not been to the liking of the community was clear from the very beginning. The latest manifestation of Christian anger against it came from the result of the recently-held by-election to the Nilambur Assembly constituency. The BJP had fielded a Christian candidate with an eye on the community vote in the constituency. But the strategy failed dismally with the party's vote share actually registering a steep decline! In the wake of the poor show of the BJP candidate who lost his deposit, the party's state leadership came in for stringent criticism from within the party. BJP state president Rajiv Chandrashekar and other top leaders who crafted the strategy had to bear the brunt of the criticism in the meeting held to review the result. The BJP had formulated the Christian-wooing strategy mainly with an eye on the local bodies election to be held later this year and the crucial Assembly elections due next year. That it won't produce the desired results is evident from the strong undercurrent of the community's anger against the BJP as was evident from the voting pattern in Nilambur.

The resentment among the Christians against the BJP found powerful expression in an editorial in Deepika daily, the mouthpiece of the Christian church in Kerala. The editorial of July 14 has gone hammer and tongs against the BJP's double standards in hunting with the hunter and running with the hunted. How can the BJP, which says it is with the Christians in Goa and Kerala, which boast a sizable Christian population, ask for their votes while the party remains silent on the growing atrocities against the community in North Indian states, Odisha and Maharashtra? That is the question posed by the strongly-worded editorial. And the BJP leaders have maintained a deafening silence on the sensitive issue. The latest incidents of attacks against Christians have come from Maharashtra where a BJP MLA, Gopichand Padalkar, has openly announced a reward ranging between Rs 3 and 10 lakh for anyone organising attacks against the community. Another party MLA is on record that illegal construction of churches was going on in districts like Dhule and Nandharbar. As if all this was not enough, Maharashtra's Revenue Ministry has hinted at a new law against forcible conversions in the State. There is already a law against such conversions. Why is then the clamour for a new anti-conversion law? That is the question asked by the Deepika editorial.

The editorial further says that, since the Modi Government assumed power in 2014, there has been a rise - as many as 4316 instances, according to the United Christian Forum report - of attacks against the Christian community. The year 2024 alone saw 834 incidents. The Uttar Pradesh police filed as many as 835 FIRs, and made 1682 arrests. But out of this conviction has come in only four cases!

Mandela's message for today: Leadership, Equality, and Human Rights

By: Vinod Chandrashekar Dicit

The world will be celebrating Nelson Mandela International Day on July 18 — Mandela's birth anniversary. Nelson Mandela was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician, and philanthropist. He was President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 and was a key figure in the fight against apartheid. Mandela's leadership, compassion, and commitment to equality and justice have made him a global icon of hope and freedom. Mandela Day is a global call to action for citizens of the world to take up the challenge and follow in the formidable footsteps of Madiba, a man who transformed his life, served his country and freed his people. Its objective is to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better and in so doing, to build a global movement for good.

A day not only to honour the man himself, but also a chance for us to join the global movement to make the world a better place. Most of us know the facts of his life: his fight against apartheid, his imprisonment for 27 years first at Robben Island, then at Pollsmoor Prison and finally at Victor Verster Prison, how he became the first Black President of South Africa, his winning the Nobel Peace Prize etc. Nelson Mandela of South Africa was an icon for modern democracy. Today Nelson Mandela is acclaimed as one of the greatest personalities of our times. He belongs to that category of men who have graced our civilization with their personal charisma and noble contributions. He was a champion for rights of all humans. He showed to the world that all souls are created equal without any string attached. He was a leader with a difference. Mandela spent twenty-seven consecutive years of his life in detention. For 18 years (1964 – 1982) he was held on Robben Island, in 1982 he was moved to Pollsmoor Prison, Cape Town, and in 1988 he was again moved to Victor Verster Prison, in Paarl, till 1990. A real leader according to him works and serves the people making them know about their strengths. He was not for 'power', 'money' or 'greed'. This humble soul was created for benefits other souls who were suffering. He said, 'it is an ideal which I hope to live for and to see it re-

alised. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die'.

Mandela followed three rules throughout his life, which he did at great personal sacrifice: [1] Free yourself, [2] Free others & [3] Serve every day. Mandela's greatest legacy is perhaps his commitment to the redemptive powers of hope and struggle. He played a major role in many political endeavors, many anti-apartheid movements such as the Program of Action, a policy based initiative that was founded on the principles of non-violent "civil disobedience, boycott, strike, and non-co-operation". Peace was his motive. He achieved objectives for benefits of all mankind without 'violence and killings' which is a lesson to everybody in present day world. He showed to world how humanity can be achieved through peace without violence and killings. In 1975 he wrote letter from prison "The cell is an ideal place to learn to know yourself," & "Never forget that a saint is a sinner who keeps on trying." Mandela was a liberator of the stature of Gandhi. Both shared a common vision and passion for the breaking away of the shackles of tyranny and oppression. Both stand as stalwarts of our proximate history. Nelson Mandela was one man who was able and willing to stand up and fight back. Indeed, we can also see how this man developed his legacies through his years in prison, his activist years and his elaborate life afterwards. Many people have been inspired by the South African movement, especially their decision to forgive and move on. He's endowed with many personality traits; this makes him a natural leader and also has developed many leadership skills and strategies in his lifetime.

Mandela's legacy continues to inspire people worldwide to stand up for justice, equality, and human rights. His message of forgiveness, compassion, and leadership remains a powerful force for positive change. He was a super human being & an architecture of Modern South Africa and of the world. Mandela will always be remembered as a saint, a sage of humanity in line with Mahatma Gandhi. Hope our present & future generations learn from his great experiments with struggle for oppressed and downtrodden.

Bodoland at the crossroads: Autonomy, Identity, and the contest for credibility

As the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections approach, the region finds itself at a crucial juncture—one that could redefine the trajectory of autonomy, inclusive development, and political representation in Assam's most distinctive administrative entity. The Bodoland region, long marked by conflict and compromise, has travelled a challenging road—from insurgency and marginalisation to structured peacebuilding and constitutional self-governance. Yet, as voters prepare to cast their ballots, deeper currents of identity politics, administrative limitations, and evolving party strategies converge, making this year's BTC polls not only a test of leadership but of the very promise of autonomy.

The foundation of modern Bodoland politics lies in two historic milestones: the 2003 Bodo Accord that gave birth to the BTC under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, and the more recent 2020 Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Accord. The 2003 agreement was pivotal in recognising the Bodo people's aspiration for political empowerment through self-governance, while the 2020 accord went further, acknowledging the multicultural character of the region and giving Bodo the status of an associate official language of Assam. These accords were not mere political compromises but attempts to engineer a democratic solution to decades of armed resistance and ethno-political alienation. They also reflected a broader vision: one of dignity, coexistence, and development across the diverse communities of the Bodo heartland.

Yet, as history has often shown in Assam, peace accords and official recognition do not automatically extinguish deeper social insecurities. Nowhere is this more evident than in the persistent language debate that continues to shadow BTC politics. Language, in this context, is more than a means of communication—it is a symbol of identity, belonging, and political legitimacy. Recent controversies, such as a Bodo student organisation advocating for Bengali identity to be reflected in official records, and the State government's countervailing assertion of Assamese as the sole official language, underscore the fragility of the social compact. These tensions rekindle old fears among communities—of exclusion, of being labelled "outsiders," and of losing access to political and cultural rights. When rhetoric around language becomes inflammatory, the inclusive vision of the BTR Accord risks being unravelled.



The dilemma, however, is not only symbolic or cultural; it is deeply material. The BTC, despite enjoying a constitutional status that affords considerable autonomy, remains constrained in terms of fiscal capacity and administrative reach. While both the Central and State governments have provided generous grants in the wake of the accords, the council's internal revenue generation remains weak. This fiscal dependency limits the region's ability to transform autonomy into meaningful, everyday improvements for its people. Infrastructure remains underdeveloped, employment opportunities are scarce, and access to quality education is uneven.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT
By: Dipak Kurmi

These deficits persist despite the Pramod Boro-led administration rolling out over 30 flagship initiatives aimed at youth empowerment, education, public works, and livelihood support. Signature programmes like the Bodo Super 50 Mission signal intent and direction, but the larger challenge, as Boro himself acknowledges, lies in creating an agile and accountable governance model that can translate legal autonomy into developmental gains at the grassroots.

In this context, the upcoming BTC elections represent a defining moment. For the first time in recent memory, all major political parties—BJP, United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), Bodoland People's Front (BPF), Congress, and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)—have chosen to abandon alliance politics and contest independently. This significant break from past electoral strategy is not merely tactical; it reflects a broader recalibration of how political success is defined in the region. The BJP, in particular, has decided to contest

all 40 BTC seats, signalling a high-stakes gamble based on its organisational confidence and expanding grassroots presence.

The BJP's evolution in Bodoland merits special attention. During the last BTC term, the party supported the UPPL in forming the council government, using that opportunity to understand local dynamics and develop its own cadre. Now, emboldened by years of investment in training, data-driven outreach, and digital infrastructure, the party believes it can stand independently on the strength of its organisational architecture.

Drawing from party organisation theory, the BJP in Bodoland has evolved into a "hybrid party"—combining the precision of a professionalised, cartel-like structure, the expansive appeal of a catch-all party, and the relentless mobilisation tactics of a mass-based movement. This synthesis is practically embodied in initiatives like the 'Pristha Pramukh' system, which ensures continuous voter engagement at the booth level and allows for targeted outreach that is both personal and strategic.

By decoupling from alliances, the BJP is also putting to test a central premise of modern party politics: that robust, autonomous organisational machinery can replace the need for tactical coalitions. In many ways, the party's decision mirrors its national model of political expansion, whereby it enters new territories by first supporting a regional ally, gradually builds infrastructure and capacity, and eventually seeks dominance through self-reliance. If successful in Bodoland, this strategy could become a template for the party's approach to other Sixth Schedule and autonomous regions across India.

For the UPPL, BPF, Congress, and AGP, the decision to contest independently is fraught with both peril and potential. These parties now face the urgent need to scale up their grassroots presence and mirror the BJP's hybrid organisational structure. Mere rhetoric or reliance on legacy vote banks will not suffice. Sustainable engagement—not just campaign rallies or manifesto launches, but sustained presence and responsiveness—has become the new currency of political credibility. Each party must demonstrate not only electoral viability but also administrative capacity to govern an ethnically complex and resource-challenged region.

The transformation of BTC politics into an arena of organisational competition is both promising and perilous. On the one hand, it pushes parties to become more responsive, professional, and inclusive. On the other, it risks overshadowing the more delicate aspects of Bodoland's unique social fabric—especially the need to maintain a politics of coexistence, where cultural and linguistic differences are not only respected but celebrated. In an era where national and regional identities often clash, Bodoland must serve as a model of how constitutional autonomy can be harmonised with multiculturalism.

This makes the 2025 BTC election more than a local contest. It is a referendum on the real meaning of the Bodo and BTR Accords. Can self-rule lead to self-reliance? Can linguistic diversity be reconciled with a cohesive political identity? Can parties move beyond symbolic politics to offer real governance for youth, farmers, students, and entrepreneurs? The answers to these questions will shape not just the future of the BTC, but potentially, the larger experiment of decentralised governance under the Sixth Schedule.

In the final analysis, Bodoland today stands at a critical inflection point. The peace it has earned is fragile but precious; the autonomy it enjoys is incomplete but evolving; and the elections it holds are not merely procedural but profoundly transformational. Whether the promise of inclusive development, dignity, and harmony—enshrined in the Accords—is fulfilled or diluted will depend not just on who wins, but on how they govern. For the people of Bodoland, this election is not just about parties or personalities, but about securing a future where peace is productive, identity is inclusive, and governance is grounded in grassroots reality. (the writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

As chair of 2026 summit, PM Narendra Modi has to act as true leader of Global South

By: Prakash Karat

The 17th BRICS Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro on July 6-7, the first summit with the expanded membership of eleven countries. Soon after, US President Trump threatened to impose 10 per cent tariffs on those countries that align with BRICS. Earlier too, Trump had threatened 100 per cent tariffs on BRICS countries saying that they wish to destroy the supremacy of the US dollar and weaken America. Why is Trump so threatened and provoked by BRICS?

BRICS originally comprised of five countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. It began in 2009 with the first four countries and South Africa joined a year later. BRICS was conceived to be a forum which would reflect the interests and aspirations of the global south. The five members of the BRICS constituted 40 per cent of the world's population and a quarter of the world's economy. At the 16th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg in 2024, it was decided to admit six more countries to the forum—Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Indonesia. Now these eleven countries of BRICS put together represent 49.5 per cent of the world's population, 40 per cent of the world's GDP and 26 per cent of the world's trade.

The BRICS is not a bloc or an alliance. It is a grouping of countries of the global south (Russia being the sole exception), which seeks to arrive at common positions on reform of multilateral institutions, trade, economic cooperation, climate change and technology. As such, BRICS has the potential to challenge the domination of the G-7 countries and Western imperialism over the institutions like the IMF, the World Bank, and trade and financial mechanisms. The BRICS emerged in the background of the global financial crisis of 2008 and became more relevant after the failure of G-20 to come out of the shadow of G-7 countries.

The Rio de Janeiro Declaration has reflected the position of the global south clearly with regard to the two acts of aggression which have occurred. It has condemned the attacks on Iran's sov-

ereignty and nuclear sites, and it has strongly condemned Israel's renewed attacks on Gaza and the blockade of food and humanitarian supplies. The declaration has also expressed serious concern over the rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures, without naming the United States in this regard. It has also reiterated the long standing demand for greater voting powers for the major global south countries in the IMF and the World Bank, and for the representation of Brazil and India in the UN Security Council.

What has provoked the ire of President Trump is the way BRICS has been evolving steps and measures to lessen dependence on the dollar and loosen the grip of the US and G-7 countries over the multilateral financial institutions. With the United States increasingly utilising economic and financial sanctions against specific countries and excluding them from the international financial and banking systems, more and more countries sought to safeguard their interests through alternative arrangements. BRICS members have discussed trade in local currencies and currency swap arrangements.

Steps for cross-border payments are also on the agenda. The Rio Declaration states that the leaders will task ministers of finance and central bank governors of their countries "to continue discussion on BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative, and acknowledge the progress made by the BRICS Payment Task Force (BPTF) in identifying possible pathways to support the continuation of discussions on the potential for greater inter-operability of BRICS payment systems." Though there is no specific goal of an alternative currency arrangement, the limited steps to reduce dependence on the dollar is raising the red flag in the Trump administration.

That the BRICS is making gradual progress in setting up some alternative institutions is evident in the example of the New Development Bank (NDB). This was set up in 2015 with a capital of \$100 billion and is headquartered in Shanghai. The



bank seeks to provide loans for infrastructure projects rather than loans to repay loans. The bank has so far extended \$36 billion for 98 infrastructure projects in BRICS member countries and other countries of the global south. At present the head of the bank is Dilma Rousseff, the former President of Brazil. Apart from the NDB, there is also the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) that consists of a common fund from amongst the BRICS central banks. The CRA offers support to a member country during a currency crisis.

There are critics from the Left who dismiss BRICS as of no consequence because it does not have a consistent anti-imperialist agenda. This criticism is misplaced. The BRICS is not an anti-imperialist platform. In so far as the forum articulates the position of the global south and initiates common endeavours which meet the development needs and aspirations of the global south, it will serve the purpose of strengthening multipolarity. As the BRICS forum grows both in terms of reach and cohesion, it will be an expression of the contradiction that exists between the US-led imperialist order and the developing countries. Many of the BRICS members, including India, have strategic and economic ties with the United States. But, these countries are also objectively having a stake in a multi-polar world which will serve their national interests better. For such countries, participation in BRICS provides more opportunities to preserve a degree of strategic autonomy while

still being aligned to the US-imperialist order.

The Trump presidency is witnessing unilateral acts of aggression in trade and all other spheres which is badly affecting countries of the global south; the trade war is not sparing even close allies like Canada, the European Union, Japan and South Korea. While this is weakening the US-led imperialist alliance, conversely the appeal of BRICS as an authentic forum for global south is increasing. More and more countries are aspiring to join BRICS. The Rio Summit introduced a new 'partner countries' category. Eight countries have been extended this partner status—Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda and Uzbekistan. With this innovation more countries of the global south have become associated with the forum.

The BRICS chairship is for a one year term. Brazil was the chair for 2025. Under the leadership of President Lula, some other significant steps were taken. The group introduced a new framework for joint action which signified the group's coordinated position ahead of the United Nation's upcoming Climate Change conference, known as COP30. On technology, the declaration advocated for more inclusive global discussions on Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance, echoing the concerns of the global south that are often under-represented in these debates. Another outcome was the proposal for a BRICS Multilateral Guarantees initiative, to facilitate infrastructural and

development investment across the global south by providing investment guarantees to reduce risk. The 2026 chair will be India and Modi has declared the theme to be, "Building Resilience and Innovation for Cooperation and Sustainability". Despite all its professions to be the voice of the global south, the Modi government's foreign and strategic policies have generally been aligned with the United States and Israel. Its current pre-occupation to make terrorism the primary agenda in all multi-lateral institutions based on its Pakistan-centric approach has also not been in tune with the overall concerns of the global south. It is keen to cement its role in the US sponsored QUAD. Yet, India is also being subject to the vagaries of Trumpism. However much it seeks to compromise with Trump's aggressive demands, it will be at the receiving end of many of Trump's blows.

The official stance of the government is that it seeks to promote multipolarity. In the recent period, India and China have taken joint steps to reduce tensions on the border and begin the process of restoring economic and travel ties. This should remove hindrances to a smoother cooperation within the BRICS forum. It is to be hoped that the Modi government will utilise the BRICS leadership position to pursue an agenda which will promote the collective interests of the global south and rebuff all attempts to weaken the alternative policies and mechanisms which have been set in motion. (IPA Service)

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The International Institute of Import & Export Management (iiiEM), a leading name in global trade education since 2008. The Institute is thrilled to announce the launch of its upcoming Export Import batch, starting in August 2025.

As India's premier institute for export-import training, iiiEM has transformed thousands of entrepreneurs and professionals into global trade titans through its unmatched practical training ecosystem. It operates from 15 active state-of-the-art centers across India and extends its influence to Bangladesh.

With India aiming to grow its global trade, iiiEM's mission to "Build Exporters Worldwide" is making a big impact. Supported by its own export house, Manohar International, which ships to over 50+ countries, iiiEM offers real-world training that makes it India's go-to choice for learning international trade.

"We want to help Indian entrepreneurs shine on the world stage," said Mr. Dipak Manohar, Founder and Director of iiiEM (International Institute of Import & Export Management), who

runs successful export businesses himself.

"Our program guides learners step-by-step to start their own exports with training from real exporters. iiiEM turns dreams into success."

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iiiEM's huge presence in export-import education stands out:

- 15 Active Training Centers Across India: With centers in Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Kolkata, and more, iiiEM makes learning accessible nationwide.

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- Nationwide Accessibility: 15 active training centers across India, including major hubs like Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi, and Kolkata.

- Trusted by Industry Leaders: Graduates are well-placed in leading global trade firms.

- Lifetime Mentorship: Continuous, personalized guidance from expert exporters ensures

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- Exclusive Career Opportunities: Access to www.iiemjobs.com, a dedicated job portal connecting learners to prime global trade roles.

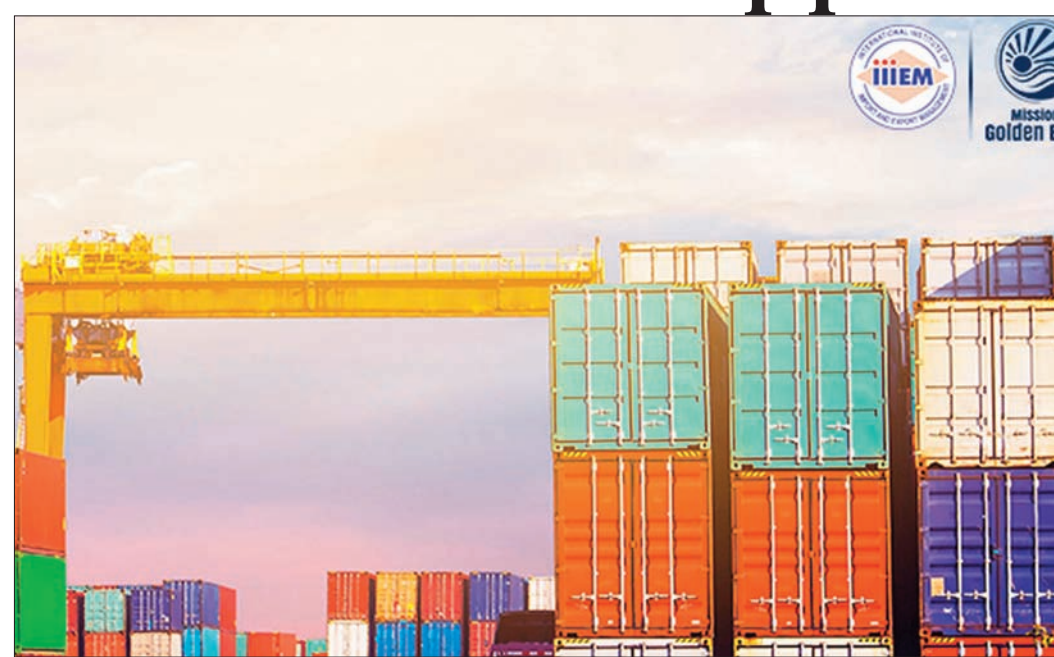
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The flagship foundational program in export import is engineered to equip learners for immediate export success. Offered both in-person at 15 active centers and online via Zoom, this program imparts crucial practical skills, including market research, product selection, buyer identification, and comprehensive support for their inaugural export shipment.

- Export Import Management: Learn trade rules, paperwork, and strategies.
- Shipping and Logistics Man-



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iiiEM's legacy shines through its alumni, who have conquered markets worldwide. Mihir Mistry, an iiiEM graduate, successfully exported industrial mold tools to Canada, leveraging the institute's practical guidance. Other notable achievements include:

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SSC CHSL Recruitment 2025 – CHSL Exam, Online Apply for 3131 Posts

Staff Selection Commission (SSC).
Last Date: 18/07/2025.

Staff Selection Commission (SSC) has released the official notification of Combined Higher Secondary Level (10+2) Exam 2025 for the recruitment to the 3131 Group C posts in the cadre of Lower Divisional Clerk/ Junior Secretariat Assistant, Data Entry Operator Grade A and Data Entry Operator (DEO) in various Ministries/ Departments/ Offices of the Government of India and various Constitutional Bodies/ Statutory Bodies/ Tribunals, etc.

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of exam: Combined Higher Secondary Level Examination, 2025

Name of posts:

Lower Division Clerk(LDC)/ Junior Secretariat Assistant

Data Entry Operator (DEO)

Data Entry Operator, Grade "A"

No of posts: 3131 posts (approx.)

Pay Scale:

Lower Division Clerk(LDC)/ Junior Secretariat Assistant (JSA): Pay Level-2(Rs. 19,900-63,200)

Data Entry Operator (DEO): Pay Level-4 (Rs. 25,500-81,100) and Level-5 (Rs. 29,200-92,300)

Data Entry Operator, Grade 'A': Pay Level-4 (Rs. 25,500-81,100)

Helpline No: 18003093063 (Toll Free Helpline Number to be called in case of any difficulty in filling up the Application Form)

Age Limit: Candidates age must be between 18 to 27 years as on 01st January 2026 i.e. Candidates born not before 02-01-1999 and not later than 01-01-2008 are eligible to apply.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below

SC/ST: 5 years

OBC: 3 years

PWD: 10 years

PWD (OBC): 13 years

PWD (SC/ ST): 15 years

ESM: 3 years

Educational Qualification:

Data Entry Operator (DEO)/ DEO Grade 'A' in Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Ministry of Culture: 12th Standard pass in Science stream with Mathematics as a subject from a recognized Board or equivalent.

LDC/JSA and DEO/DEO Grade 'A' (except DEOs in Department/ Ministry mentioned above): Candidates must have passed 12th Standard or equivalent examination from a recognized Board or University.

SC/ ST PWD/ ESM/ Women: Nil

UR/ OBC: Rs 100/-

Payment mode: BHIM UPI, Net Banking or by using Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, RuPay Credit or Debit cards or in cash at SBI Branches by generating SBI Challan

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official SSC Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for SSC CHSL Recruitment.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on the "Online Registration" and complete the registration process .

In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.

Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

Make payment of application fee as per your category and submit the form.

At the end, take a print out of the application form.

Starting date of submission of online application: 23rd June 2025

Last date of submission of online application: 18th July 2025

Schedule of Tier-I (Computer Based Examination): 8th to 18th September 2025

Schedule of Tier-II (Computer Based Examination): February-March 2026

Candidates applied online for Combined Higher Secondary Level (10+2) Exam and found eligible will have to appear in Computer Based Examinations to be held in two tiers:

Tier-I

Tier-II

Marks scored by candidates in Computer Based Examinations, if conducted in multiple shifts, will be normalized by using the formula published by the Commission and such normalized scores will be used to determine final merit and cut-off marks.

The Tier-I Examination will consist of Objective Type, Multiple choice questions only. The questions will be set in English, Hindi and any language opted by the candidate in the application form.

Total marks : 200 marks

No of questions : 100 questions

Negative marking: There will be negative marking of 0.50 marks for each wrong answer.

Time duration: 60 minutes (80 minutes for the candidates eligible for scribe as per official notification).

Exam centres: Itanagar (5001), Dibrugarh (5102), Guwahati(Dispur) (5105), Jorhat (5107), Silchar (5111), Imphal (5501), Ukhrul (5503), Shillong (5401), Aizwal (5701), Dimapur (5301), Kohima (5302), Agartala (5601)

Subject	No. of questions	Maximum Marks
English Language (Basic Knowledge)	25	50
General Intelligence	25	50
Quantitative Aptitude (Basic Arithmetic Skill)	25	50
General Awareness	25	50
Total	100	200

English Language: Spot the Error, Fill in the Blanks, Synonyms/ Homonyms, Antonyms, Spellings/ Detecting mis-spelt words, Idioms & Phrases, One word substitution, Improvement of Sentences, Active/ Passive Voice of Verbs, Conversion into Direct/ Indirect narration, Shuffling of Sentence parts, Shuffling of Sentences in a passage, Cloze Passage, Comprehension Passage.

General Intelligence: It would include questions of both verbal and non-verbal type. The test will include questions on Semantic Analogy, Symbolic operations, Symbolic/ Number Analogy, Trends, Figural Analogy, Space Orientation, Semantic Classification, Venn Diagrams, Symbolic/ Number Classification, Drawing inferences, Figural Classification, Punched hole/ pattern-folding & unfolding, Semantic Series, Figural Pattern-folding and completion, Number Series, Embedded figures, Figural Series, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Emotional Intelligence, Word Building, Social Intelligence, Coding and de-coding, Numerical operations, Other sub-topics, if any.

Quantitative Aptitude:

Number Systems: Computation of Whole Number, Decimal and Fractions, Re-

lationship between numbers.

Fundamental arithmetical operations: Percentages, Ratio and Proportion, Square roots, Averages, Interest (Simple and Compound), Profit and Loss, Discount, Partnership Business, Mixture and Allegation, Time and distance, Time and work.

Algebra: Basic algebraic identities of School Algebra and Elementary surds (simple problems) and Graphs of Linear Equations.

Geometry: Familiarity with elementary geometric figures and facts: Triangle and its various kinds of centres, Congruence and similarity of triangles, Circle and its chords, tangents, angles subtended by chords of a circle, common tangents to two or more circles.

Mensuration: Triangle, Quadrilaterals, Regular Polygons, Circle, Right Prism, Right Circular Cone, Right Circular Cylinder, Sphere, Hemispheres, Rectangular Parallelepiped, Regular Right Pyramid with triangular or square Base.

Trigonometry: Trigonometry, Trigonometric ratios, Complementary angles, Height and distances (simple problems only) Standard Identities like $\sin 2\theta + \cos 2\theta = 1$ etc.,

Statistical Charts: Use of Tables and Graphs: Histogram, Frequency polygon, Bar-diagram, Pie-chart.

General Awareness: Questions are designed to test the candidate's general awareness of the environment around him and its application to society. Questions are also designed to test knowledge of current events and of such matters of everyday observation and experience in their scientific aspect as may be expected of an educated person. The test will also include questions relating to India and its neighboring countries especially pertaining to History, Culture, Geography, Economic Scene, General policy and scientific research.

Candidates who qualify for SSC CHSL Tier I will have to appear in SSC CHSL Tier II, which consists of two sessions, each with specific sections. In Session I, the questions are MCQ-type, while in Session II, there's a typing test/ skill test to assess typing speed and skill. For more details, pl check official notification.

Soil Conservation Recruitment 2025 – 34 Ranger & JE Posts

Last Date: 09 & 15/08/2025.

Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) has released two employment notifications for the recruitment of 34 Soil Conservation Ranger and Junior Engineer Posts under Soil Conservation Department, Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

1. Soil Conservation Ranger

No of posts: 16 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 9

OBC/ MOBC: 1

SC: 3

STP: 2

STH: 1

Pay: PB - 3, Rs.22,000 /- to 97,000 /- Grade Pay: Rs.9,700/-

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification: Candidates must possess Bachelor's degree in Science from any Govt. recognized University with at least Physics / Chemistry / Botany / Geology / Forestry / Environmental Science as one of the subject.

Or
Bachelor's degree in Agriculture / Agriculture Engineering / Civil Engineering from any Govt. recognized University.

Physical Fitness: Candidates must fulfill following physical standard requirements in terms of height and chest as per given in the advertisement.

2. Junior Engineer

No of posts: 18 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 8

OBC/ MOBC: 6

SC: 2

STP: 1

Reserved for TT & Adivasi: 1

Pay: PB - 3, Rs.14,000 /- to 70,000 /- Grade Pay: Rs.8,700/-

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 40 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Educational Qualification:

a. The candidate must possess a 3 (three) year Diploma Course either in Civil Engineering or Agriculture Engineering from a Government recognized Institution. No other diploma holder shall be eligible to apply.

b. The Diploma Course must be a regular course. Diploma Course obtained through distance mode of Education, by whatever name called, will not be considered.

Citizenship: Candidates must be Indian Citizens as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India.

Residentship:

(i) The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam.

(ii) The candidate must produce PRC issued in Assam for educational purpose/ Employment Exchange Registration certificate as proof of residency along with the online application form.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

SC: 5 years

ST: 5 years

OBC/ MOBC: 3 years

PwBD: 10 years

Application Fee: Category-wise application fee is as under.

Category Fee (in Rs.)

General Rs.297.20/-

OBC/MOBC Rs.197.20/-

SC/ST/BPL Rs.47.20/-

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these posts by visiting at official recruitment portal of Assam Public Service Commission. They may follow below mentioned steps .

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on Online Application Form link .

A new webpage will be opened.

Enter all your personal and educational details as required .

Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.

Pay the application fee as per your category and at the end click on submit button .

Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form .

Soil Conservation Ranger

Starting date of submission of online application: 9th July 2025

Last date of submission of online application: 9th August 2025

Junior Engineer

Starting date of submission of online application: 16th July 2025

Last date of submission of online application: 15th August 2025

Soil Conservation Recruitment 2025 – 34 Ranger & JE Posts

Last Date: 20/07/2025.

Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 50 Forest Ranger posts in the Assam Forest Service under Environment & Forests Deptt., Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of post: Forest Ranger in the Assam Forest Service

No of posts: 50 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 44

OBC/ MOBC: 0

SC: 2

STP: 2

STH: 2

Name of department: Environment & Forests Deptt., Assam

Scale of Pay: PB - 3, Rs.22,000 /- to 97,000 /- Grade Pay: Rs.10,300/-

Citizenship: Candidates must be Indian Citizens as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India.

Residentship:

(i) The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam.

(ii) The candidate must produce PRC issued in Assam for educational purpose/ Employment Exchange Registration certificate as proof of residency along with the online application form.

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

SC: 5 years

ST: 5 years

OBC/ MOBC: 3 years

Educational Qualification: Applicant must possess Bachelor's Degree (or equivalent) in Science or Engineering of any recognized University with at least in one of the following subjects:-

i. Agriculture

ii. Botany

iii. Chemistry

iv. Computer Applications/ Computer Science

v. Engineering (Agriculture/ Chemical/ Civil/ Computer/ Electrical/ Electronics/ Mechanical)

vi. Environmental Science

vii. Forestry

viii. Geology

ix. Horticulture

x. Mathematics

xi. Physics

xii. Statistics

xiii. Veterinary Science

xiv. Zoology

Candidates must fulfill following physical standard requirements in terms of height and chest.

Height (Minimum)

Category	Male	Female
Gen/OBC/		
MOBC/SC	163 cm	150 cm
ST (H)/ ST (P)	152 cm	145 cm

Chest

Gender	Normal	Expansion
Male	79 cm	05 cm
Female	74 cm	05 cm

Category Fee (in Rs.)

General Rs.297.20/-

OBC/MOBC Rs.197.20/-

SC/ST/BPL Rs.47.20/-

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these posts by visiting at official recruitment portal of Assam Public Service Commission. They may follow below

Agreeing sanctions is getting harder

The EU has slapped several rounds of sanctions on Russia since Putin ordered his troops into Ukraine in February 24, 2022. (AP)

Dated, the 4th July/2023

Sd/-
District Fishery Development
Officer
Karbi Anglong, Diphu
Dated Diphu the 15th July' 2023

Memo No AFH - 79/SOPD/2025-26/277-83

Arunachal Cabinet approves key reforms in education, child safety and governance

ITANAGAR, July 18: The Arunachal Pradesh cabinet on Friday approved a series of crucial decisions aimed at strengthening technical education, boosting internal security, enhancing child protection, ensuring transparent housing allocation, and improving administrative efficiency across departments.

Among the major decisions, the cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, approved the creation of 34 teaching and non-teaching posts for the Government Engineering College at Toru in Papum Pare district to bolster technical education in the state.

To augment internal security infrastructure, the cabinet sanctioned the raising of the 6th Indian Reserve Battalion (IRBn), a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

Arunachal Pradesh currently has two state armed police battalions (AAPBNs) and five IR Battalions.

The addition of the new battalion is expected to enhance policing capacity, ensure better law and order, reduce dependency on Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), and create employment opportunities for eligible local youths.

In a key move towards child protection, the cabinet adopted the model guidelines for support persons under Section 39 of the POCSO Act, 2012, with necessary state-specific modifications.

These guidelines mandate one support person per 10 cases to assist child victims during pre-trial and trial stages, and also detail their qualifications, selection procedures, duties, and responsibilities.



To streamline the allotment of general pool government quarters in the state capital and districts, the cabinet

approved new guidelines. This measure is aimed at curbing encroachment, misuse of quarters, and ensuring greater transparency and accountability.

Strengthening the legal infrastructure, the cabinet approved the creation of three posts of deputy director (prosecution), 10 posts of assistant director (prosecution), and 18 clerical staff positions in the directorate of prosecution.

Existing additional public prosecutors will be redesignated as deputy directors. Additionally, the pay matrix levels of public prosecutor, additional public prosecutor, and assistant public prosecutor have been revised to maintain parity with government norms.

As part of cadre restructuring in the directorate of forensic science at the police training centre (PTC) Banderdewa,

the cabinet approved amendments to the Recruitment Rules for Scientist-E, Scientist-D, Scientist-C, and laboratory assistant posts, including change in nomenclature and revision of pay structures.

Further, to boost civil aviation operations in the state, the cabinet approved the creation of 10 new posts under the Directorate of Civil Aviation.

It also cleared the transfer of veterinary officer posts from the rural development department to the animal husbandry, veterinary and dairy development (AHV&DD) department.

These wide-ranging approvals reflect the government's ongoing commitment to improving public service delivery, strengthening governance systems, generating employment, and safeguarding citizen welfare. (PTI)

NEC Secretary reviews cultural and infrastructure projects in Itanagar

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, July 18: North Eastern Council (NEC) Secretary S K Bhalla visited several key cultural and infrastructure projects in Arunachal Pradesh's capital on Friday, underscoring the Council's continued support for heritage preservation and development in the region.

The projects inspected during the visit were funded by the NEC.

According to an official statement, Bhalla began his tour with a visit to the State Emporium and Artifact House, a project completed in 2018. He commended Director of Textiles and Handicrafts, Dorjee Phuntso, and his team for their display of tribal products representing the diverse communities of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Secretary noted NEC's satisfaction in having supported initiatives that empower local artisans and promote the state's handloom and handicraft sectors.

Bhalla next visited the southern

gate of the historic Itafort, where the Protection of Archaeological Park project is being executed with NEC's assistance.

Deputy Director of Archaeology Bultun Dutta and his team from the Research Department briefed him on the historical significance of the fort and outlined measures underway to enhance its appeal to tourists. Bhalla praised the progress of the renovation and emphasized the importance of conserving such cultural assets.

The NEC Secretary also inspected the ongoing construction of a new administrative block at Dera Natung Government College, a project being executed at an estimated cost of ₹6.86 crore.

He directed Executive Engineer Er Tchi Nabo of the PWD to ensure timely completion by August in accordance with the specifications of the Detailed Project Report (DPR), to allow the college administration to function from the new premises and improve service delivery for students.

Continuing his visit, Bhalla reviewed the gallery expansion work at the Jawaharlal Nehru State Museum, another NEC-supported project.

During his inspection, he lauded the museum's existing collection and the state's efforts to curate cultural and historical exhibits from all eight Northeastern states, facilitating an "Ashtalakshmi Darshan" experience for visitors.

The proposed digital museum plan, presented by Deputy Director of Museums & Archives Tage Babin and Assistant Director of Culture Dr Radhe Yampi, also received appreciation from the NEC official. The visit reaffirmed NEC's commitment to fostering inclusive development by supporting projects that preserve the region's unique cultural identity while enhancing infrastructure.

Bhalla was accompanied by NEC Director (HRD&E) Bamin Tarang and Joint Director (Project Coordination), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Sanjay Kumar Phukan.

Arunachal Guv briefs Prez on state's transformative efforts across sectors

ITANAGAR, July 18: Arunachal Pradesh Governor K T Parnaik on Friday apprised President Droupadi Murmu of the state's key initiatives and transformative efforts across sectors during a meeting at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Parnaik informed the President about the state government's commitment to contributing to 'Viksit Bharat' through its region-specific roadmap - 'Viksit Arunachal'.

He highlighted the key measures being implemented to uplift lives of people and ensure inclusive growth in the frontier state, a Raj Bhavan release said.

The governor also briefed the President on the follow-up actions and compliance measures related to critical issues discussed during the last governors' conference, it said.

Parnaik outlined the Raj Bhavan's proactive role in promoting public health, particularly in the fight against tuberculosis, alongside efforts in women's empowerment, youth development, and the enhancement of health and education sectors.

During the meeting, Parnaik presented Murmu with a copy of Orchids of Arunachal Pradesh, a comprehensive reference book showcasing the state's orchid diversity, the release said. (PTI)

Pre-dawn blaze guts house in Yingkiong; no casualties reported

HT Correspondent

YINGKIONG, July 18: A devastating fire broke out in the early hours of Friday morning at Upper Market in Yingkiong, completely destroying a dwelling house and leaving a family homeless.

The incident occurred around 5:30 AM, officials said.

According to an official statement, the fire was intense and spread rapidly, leaving no time to salvage any belongings.

Fortunately, there were no reports of injuries or casualties.

The exact cause of the fire is yet to be determined, and an investigation is underway.

Swift action by personnel from the Fire and Emergency Services, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and local residents helped bring the blaze under control before



it could spread to neighbouring homes.

Their coordinated response is being credited with preventing further destruction in the densely populated area.

The District Administration also responded promptly by providing emergency relief materials to the

affected family.

Arrangements were made to relocate them to a designated temporary relief camp, ensuring they had immediate shelter and basic necessities.

Authorities have assured that further support will be extended to the affected family as per government provisions.

NABARD sanctions ₹ 4,613 cr for rural projects in Arunachal: GM Mishra

ITANAGAR, July 18: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned ₹ 4,613 crore for 485 infrastructure projects across Arunachal Pradesh. These projects, supported under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), have significantly contributed to enhancing rural connectivity, irrigation systems, and livelihood generation. NABARD General Manager Damodar Mishra said here on Friday.

Addressing the 44th foundation day of the bank here, Mishra said the institution remains deeply committed to inclusive growth and sustainable rural development in the state.

"NABARD has not only financed critical infrastructure but has also been driving rural credit planning, the digitisation of primary agricultural credit societies (PACS), promotion of micro-enterprises, and climate-resilient farming practices," Mishra said.

He added that NABARD's vision for Arunachal Pradesh is aligned with national priorities and focuses on building self-reliant, cooperative-led rural economies.

The event also served to mark the global observance of the International Year of Cooperatives, declared by the United Nations.

NABARD's Arunachal Pradesh regional office organised a sensitisation programme on the theme 'Cooperatives Build a Better World', underscoring the importance of cooperative institutions in achieving equitable development. (PTI)

Taba Tedir re-elected as president of Kho-Kho Association of Arunachal



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, July 18: Former Education and DIA Minister Taba Tedir was unanimously re-elected as president of the Kho-Kho Association of Arunachal Pradesh (KKAAP) during the body's 3rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at a city hotel here on Friday.

The election process was conducted as part of the AGM and was witnessed by observers from the Sports Authority of Arunachal (SAA), Arunachal Olympic Association (AOA), and the Kho-Kho Federation of India (KKFI).

Legal experts and a returning officer also supervised the proceedings.

KKFI Vice President and North East in-charge M Madhusudan Singh, who attended as an observer, said the central

government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been placing renewed emphasis on indigenous sports like Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, and Yoga.

"This is my second visit to Arunachal, and I see tremendous progress in the state's Kho-Kho landscape. Arunachal is now ranked third in the Northeast in terms of development in the sport," he said.

He lauded the inclusion of Kho-Kho in school-level competitions, a step taken by the state government under the direction of chief minister Pema Khandu.

Singh expressed optimism that with continued effort, Arunachal's players could make a mark at zonal, national, and even international levels.

He also said India's goal is to make Kho-Kho an Olympic event by 2036, as envisioned by KKFI President Sudhanshu Mittal.

In his address to the AGM, Tedir said the Pema Khandu-led government has been fully supportive of indigenous sports.

"As a founding member of the state's Kho-Kho movement, I've always believed this game can strengthen both physical fitness and our cultural identity. During my time as Education Minister, Kho-Kho was included in school games across the state," he said.

He assured that the newly elected body would continue its work with greater vigour to strengthen Kho-Kho in the state.

"We are committed to developing the best players and teams who can represent Arunachal at higher levels. With everyone's cooperation, we can achieve much more," Tedir added.

Issues related to funding, infrastructure, and promotional strategies were also discussed during the meeting, along with future plans to strengthen district-level activities and training.

General Secretary Puto Bui, former general secretary Tatar Mosi, former treasurer Maruk Talar, member Suraj Raja, and several district presidents and executive members also addressed the AGM.

Forces seize cache of arms, ammunition

ITANAGAR, July 18: Security forces have recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition during a search operation in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district, a defence official said on Friday.

Acting on a tip-off, the Assam Rifles unit under Spear Corps launched a search operation and seized six arms and

ammunition along the Miao-Vijoyanagar axis, Defence PRO Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

During the operation, specialised teams, niche technology equipment, and tracker dogs were deployed. Further investigation is underway to trace the source and the intended use of the seized weapons, the official added. (PTI)

Governor Parnaik meets Prez, discusses Arunachal's progress

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, July 18: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt General KT Parnaik (Retd), PVSM, UYSM, YSM, called on the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Friday.

According to an official statement, the Governor was accompanied by the First Lady of the State, Anagha Parnaik.

During the meeting, Governor Parnaik presented the President with a copy of Orchids of Arunachal Pradesh—a comprehensive reference book showcasing the state's remarkable diversity of orchid species, many of which are rare, endemic, and of international botanical significance.

The statement informed that the Governor apprised the President of the developmental progress underway in Arunachal Pradesh and reiterated the State Government's commitment to contributing to the

national vision of 'Viksit Bharat' through its own roadmap of 'Viksit Arunachal'.

He highlighted ongoing initiatives across sectors aimed at fostering inclusive growth and improving the lives of people in the frontier State.

Governor Parnaik also updated the President on follow-up measures taken with regard to key points discussed during the last Governors' Conference.

He reaffirmed the State's support for national priorities and emphasized the significance of cooperative federalism in addressing challenges in remote and diverse regions.

The Governor further briefed the President on the Raj Bhavan's proactive interventions in areas such as public health—particularly the fight against tuberculosis—women's empowerment, youth development, and education and healthcare improvements.



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, July 18: In a morale-boosting interaction, Chairman John Neelam and Vice-Chairman Bengia Yayang Tadar of the Sports Authority of Arunachal (SAA) on Friday met members of the Junior State Football Team ahead of their participation in the upcoming Dr BC Roy Trophy 2025-26.

The national-level championship will be held from July 27 to 31 in Balaghat, Madhya Pradesh. The SAA leadership commended the players' preparation and urged them to represent Arunachal Pradesh with pride, unity, and discipline.

"You are not just representing yourselves; you are carrying the hopes and aspirations of an entire state," said Neelam, encouraging the players to trust in their training and maintain

the spirit of sportsmanship.

Vice-Chairman Tadar acknowledged the rising recognition of football talent from Arunachal and reaffirmed institutional support to the team. She encouraged the players to stay focused and make the most of the opportunity. As a gesture of solidarity, the officials distributed track suits to all players and staff members, symbolising team unity and support.

The SAA also reiterated its commitment to grassroots sports development by ensuring logistical aid, infrastructure, and motivation to budding athletes.

The team, led by Head Coach Rocky Ramching, will be representing Arunachal Pradesh with a 21-member squad. The SAA extended its best wishes to the team for a spirited and successful campaign at the national stage.



অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ

ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022.

No. 69PSC/DR-9/3/2023-2024

NOTIFICATION

It is for the information of all concerned that the Assam Public Service Commission will hold interview/viva-voce for the posts of **Adviser (Production)** and **Adviser (Finance)** under **Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprise Department** (Advt. No.20/2025 and 21/2025) as per programme given below at its office at Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22.

Sl No.	Name of the Post	Name of the Department	Date of Interview/ viva-voce	Reporting Time
1	Adviser (Production)	Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprise Department	2 nd August, 2025	9:00 A.M
2	Adviser (Finance)	Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprise Department	2 nd August, 2025	9:00 A.M

Kindly note that the candidates appearing for interview/viva-voce must bring the following testimonials in ORIGINAL along with self attested photocopies in chronological order, thereof for verification/scrutiny on the day of interview:

- H.S.L.C/H.S Admit Card/ Mark sheet/Pass Certificate as proof of age.
- H.S.L.C. Mark sheet and Pass Certificate.
- H.S.S.L.C. Mark sheet and Pass Certificate.
- Bachelor Degree Mark sheet and Pass Certificate.
- CGPA Conversion Formula of the respective universities (if applicable)
- Domicile Certificate like PRC, etc.
- State Government Employee of Assam must submit No Objection Certificate from their respective employer or Permanent Resident Certificate, etc.
- Caste/ Updated PwBD certificate (if applicable).
- Experience Certificates
- Character Certificates
- Declaration Form A. ("May be downloaded from" APSC's website)
- Any other documents relevant as per advt.

The Accept and Reject list of candidates will be uploaded on 23-07-2025 and the intimation letters on 25-07-2025 in the Commission's official website (www.apsc.nic.in). No intimation letter to the eligible candidates shall be sent separately by post. The candidates shall have to download their own intimation letter from the aforesaid website.

Sd/-
Secretary,
Assam Public Service Commission
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

DIPR /D/HLT/75/19-Jul-25

Modi says BJP only protector of Bengali 'ashmita'; slams TMC's infiltration politics

DURGAPUR, July 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday tore into the TMC, accusing it of risking Bengali 'ashmita' and national security by promoting infiltration for vote-bank politics and alleged that the Mamata Banerjee government has "crossed all limits" of appeasement politics.

Modi, who launched projects worth Rs 5,400 crore in the state, across the oil and gas, power, rail, and road sectors, also positioned the BJP as the harbinger of a new Bengal, promising a clean break from the past, saying "the BJP has big dreams for West Bengal. We want to build a prosperous, developed Bengal. All the projects being launched here are a step towards that dream."

In a stinging critique of Bengal's economic environment under TMC, Modi said the state has become inhospitable for industry and investors.

"TMC's 'Gunda Tax' is deterring investment in Bengal. The state's resources have fallen into the hands of the mafia, and government policies are deliberately designed to enable ministers to engage in blatant corruption," he alleged.

In a fiery address at a packed rally in Durgapur, Modi positioned the BJP as the only party that truly respects and protects



Bengali 'ashmita' (pride), calling for an end to what he termed a regime of "lies, lawlessness and loot."

"TMC, because of its vested interests, has put the identity of West Bengal at stake. For the sake of vote-bank politics, infiltration is being encouraged here. A complete ecosystem has been created to support infiltrators. This is a threat to both national security and Bengal's security and identity," Modi alleged.

He also accused the ruling party of "openly challenging constitutional institutions" and "defending illegal immigrants."

Amidst a growing political row over the alleged harassment of Bengali-speaking migrant workers in BJP-ruled states, Modi turned the tables on the TMC.

"For the BJP, Bengali 'ashmita' is supreme. Wherever there is a BJP government, Bengalis are respected, Bengali language is respected," Modi said to thunderous applause.

"The TMC is actively helping infiltrators. I want to say this very clearly that those who are not citizens of India and have entered illegally, the law will take its own course in accordance with the Constitution," he said, sending a clear message on illegal immigration.

Modi said the TMC's appeasement politics have "crossed all limits" and they are now on the streets to protect infiltrators. TMC's corruption and appeasement are pushing the youth out of Bengal, he added.

Taking a swipe at the TMC, Left and Congress, the Prime Minister said: "For years, the TMC and Left ran the government in Delhi with Congress but never considered recognising Bangla, whereas it was the BJP government that granted it classical language status."

Recalling the time when Bengal attracted job-seekers from across the country, he said people used to come here from across India for employment, but today, the youth of Bengal are forced to migrate even for small jobs. (PTI)

No.TDB/SOPD/105/2024-25/

Date 17/07/2025

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Block Development Officer, Tamulpur Development Block, Dist-Tamulpur, BTC, Assam invites bid affixing non-refundable Court fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and Twenty Five Paise), only from the approved and eligible contractor Class-I (A, B, C), Class-II or Class-III category registered with Assam PWD (R&B)/Irrigation Deptt. for the following work under Tribal Affairs (P), Department under SOPD during 2025-26. Tender Box will be available for dropping tender in the Office of the Block Development Officer, Tamulpur Development Block from 18/07/2025 up to 2.00 PM on 09/08/2025 (if any holidays or Bandh falls then the subsequent day) and the tender box will be opened at the same day on 3.00 PM in same office.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Tender value (In Lakh)	Time of Completion	Tender Cost & Earnest Money & Date of Tender
1	Improvement of road with sand gravelling from Lt. Prahad Rajbongshi house to Ramen Ramchary House at Dongpar	2.00	90 days from the date of issue of final work order.	1. Tender cost @ 0.03% of A/A amount to be pledged by Bank draft in favour of Principal Secretary, BTC. 2. Earnest money @ 2% (Increase of ST/SC 1%) of estimated value to be pledged by demand draft/FDR in favour of B.D.O Tamulpur Development Block 3. Bidders are specifically requested to inspect the field and study the working condition before submitting their offer/bid.
2	Improvement of road with sand gravelling from Parkmunda Shiv Mandir to Teteliguri Kalakuchi	2.00		
3	Improvement of road with sand gravelling from Sukhan Tekam House to Mohan Tekam House at Pub Howly	2.00		
4	Improvement of road with sand gravelling from Sango Boro House to Mantu das House at Ramchuburi	2.00		
5	Improvement of road with sand gravelling from Deben Das house to Debkanta Das house at Ramchuburi	2.00		
6	Improvement of road near Rahul Armin House to Jamal Ali house and adjacent areas of Gargari Madhya Chuba	8.00		
7	Improvement of road near Ajhar Islam House to Chota Alia Bathou Mandir and adjacent areas	8.00		
8	Improvement of road near Milan Bazar Chowk to Gohaikamal road and adjacent areas.	15.00		
9	Improvement of road near Moktab Ali to Nasir Ali and adjacent areas of Balipana	8.00		
10	Improvement of road near Bhoben Narzary house to Khagen Rajbongshi House and adjacent areas of Sauraguri Bareigaon	8.00		
11	Improvement of road from Guwakuchi village to Kalakuchi Lakh Mandir and adjacent road	15.00		

Details NIT may be seen at Office of the B.D.O Tamulpur Development Block, Tamulpur, Dist- Tamulpur.
IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/1735
Sd/- Block Development Officer,
Tamulpur Dev. Block, Tamulpur

INDIA bloc parties to hold key online meet today

AAP distances itself from opposition grouping

NEW DELHI, July 18: INDIA bloc parties will hold an online meeting on Saturday to reach a consensus on issues that they would raise to corner the government during Parliament's Monsoon Session and convey a message of unity, but AAP has distanced itself from the opposition grouping.

The TMC, which was earlier said to be skipping the INDIA bloc meeting, however, said its national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee will attend the online meeting.

The meeting comes right before the Monsoon Session of Parliament, which starts on Monday. It will be held after a long gap since the INDIA bloc parties jointly deliberated the country's political situation. Congress general secretary in-charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said the INDIA bloc is united and its prominent leaders will hold deliberations online on Saturday and meet in Delhi later.

Late on Thursday night, the Congress announced that a meeting of the leaders of the INDIA bloc parties will be held online on Saturday evening to discuss the prevailing political situation of the country.

The leaders would deliberate on a host of key issues, including the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar, the demand for a discussion on the Pahalgam attack, and Operation Sindoor.

US President Donald Trump's claims of bringing about a halt in hostilities between India and Pakistan, and the push to impeach Justice Yashwant Varma, embroiled in a row following the discovery of burnt wads of currency at his residence after a fire incident, are also likely to feature in the discussions.

However, in a jolt to opposition unity ahead of the Parliament session, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) distanced itself from the INDIA bloc, saying it is not part of the alliance anymore and questioned the Congress' role in leading it.

"The AAP has cleared its stand. The INDIA bloc was for the (2024) Lok Sabha polls. We fought the Delhi and Haryana Assembly polls on our own. We are going to fight the Bihar election solo. We fought the bypolls in Punjab and Gujarat all by ourselves. The AAP is not part of the INDIA (bloc)," Singh told PTI Videos.

He, however, said AAP will strongly raise issues in Lok Sabha while asserting the party has "always played the role of a strong opposition".

The Arvind Kejriwal-led party contested the Lok Sabha seats in Delhi and Haryana during the

2024 general elections in alliance with the Congress. Slamming the Congress, Singh questioned its role in leading the opposition bloc.

"It is not a child's play. Did they hold any meeting after the Lok Sabha polls? Was there any initiative to expand the INDIA bloc? Sometimes they criticise Akhilesh Yadav, sometimes Udhav Thackeray and sometimes Mamata Banerjee. The INDIA bloc should have been united. The Congress is the biggest party of the bloc. But did it play a role (in ensuring opposition unity)?" he asked.

Meanwhile, the TMC said that initially it was to skip the INDIA bloc meeting that was to be hosted in Delhi, but now that it is going to be held online, Abhishek Banerjee will attend it.

On the INDIA bloc's online meeting, Ramesh said all the prominent leaders of the bloc will attend the Saturday meeting. "People would not be able to come to Delhi on Saturday due to different programmes. It has been decided that we will have an online meeting before the Parliament session. After that, we will meet in Delhi also," he said and asserted that the INDIA bloc was united. "The question that should be asked is why the name of the BJP president after J P Nadda has not been announced till now... The BJP people need to worry about what is happening in their party and what is happening between the BJP and the RSS," Ramesh said. In a post on X Thursday night, Congress General Secretary K C Venugopal said, "A meeting of the leaders of the INDIA parties will be held online on Saturday, July 19, 2025, at 7 pm to discuss the prevailing political situation in the country."

During the Parliament session, the top Congress leadership would also raise issues such as the demand for the restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and rising atrocities against women in the country.

The opposition party has also decided to raise farmers' problems, the issues of rising unemployment, safety and security of the country and the Ahmedabad air crash during the session.

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi had convened a meeting of the party's parliamentary strategy group at her 10, Janpath residence here on Tuesday evening.

Top party leaders, including Congress president Kharge, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha Pramod Tiwari, Jairam Ramesh, K Suresh, Manickam Tagore and others had participated in the meeting. (PTI)

Six Naxalites killed in encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur

NARAYANPUR, July 18: Six Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh on Friday, police said.

A gunfight broke out in the afternoon in the forest of Abujmahad region when joint teams of security forces were out on an anti-Naxal operation following inputs about the presence of ultras. Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P told PTI.

"Multiple exchanges of fire between the security forces and Maoists occurred since the afternoon. So far, the bodies of six Maoists have been recovered from the encounter site along with AK-47/SLR rifles, other weapons, explosive material and daily use items," he said. The operation is still underway, the IG added.

Hailing security forces, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai

said, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, his government has been marching ahead firmly towards fulfilling the resolve of making the country completely Naxal-free by March 31, 2026.

"In a major operation by security forces, six Naxalites have been neutralised so far in Abujmahad of Narayanpur district. I congratulate all the brave jawans of the security forces involved in the operation and salute their indomitable courage," he said in a statement.

"The valour of the jawans has further strengthened our resolve of 'Naxal Mukti Chhattisgarh'. Under the leadership of PM Modi ji and the guidance of Union Home Minister Amit Shah ji, we are moving forward firmly towards the accomplishment of the resolve of making

the country completely Maoist-free by March 31, 2026," the CM added.

With the latest action, 221 Naxalites have been killed in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh so far this year.

Of them, 204 were eliminated in the Bastar division, which includes districts of Bijapur, Bastar, Kanker, Konadgaon, Narayanpur, Sukma, and Dantewada, as per police.

Notably, anti-Naxalite operations have intensified in Chhattisgarh since the BJP was elected to power in the 2023 assembly polls. More than 420 Maoist cadres, including senior functionaries, have been gunned down by security forces in separate encounters during this period. Shah has repeatedly declared that under the leadership of PM Modi, the government is committed to eradicating Naxalism by March 31 next year. (PTI)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF SURVEYS, (HILL CELL), DIPHU, K/A.

No. HC.87/2013-14/

Dated Diphu the 16th July, '2025.

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing Non-refundable KAAC court (receipt) of Rs. 10/- (Rupees ten) only/- eventually to be drawn up hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms and will be received by the undersigned upto 4:00 PM or on 28/07/2025 and will be opened on the same date. Place and the hours in presence of the renderers on their authorized agent, if any. If the day of the opening of tender happens to be any holiday/Non working day the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept reject any tender without any reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted.

Sl. No.	Group No.	Name of Works	Estimate Amounts (Rs. In Lakhs)	Earnest Money	Time of allowed for completion
1.	A	A Construction of Boundary Brick wall with Iron Gate In the ADS, Quarter of o/o the ADS, Hill Cell), Diphu.	11,00,000/-	ST @ 1% General @ 2%	4(Four) Months
2.	B	Construction of Staff Quarter Assam Type with Bathroom fitting & fixing of ADS,(Hill Cell), Diphu. (Quater No. 5)	25,00,000/-	-do-	4(Four) Months
3.	C	Construction of Boundary Brick Wall of Staff Quarter of Sri Swapan Haflongbar, Computer Grade-II and 3 (Three) others Quaters of o/o the ADS,(Hill Cell), Diphu.(Quater No. 1,2,3,4)	26,50,000/-	-do-	4(Four) Months
4.	D	Construction of Office Toilet in the o/o the Asstt. Director of Surveys, (Hill Cell), Diphu.	6,50,000/-	-do-	4(Four) Months
5.	E	Construction of Water Staggering with Pump fitting and fixing in the ADS, (Hill Cell), Diphu.	15,00,000/-	-do-	4(Four) Months
6.	F	Construction of office Sign Board with Iron Gate in the o/o the ADS(Hill Cell), Diphu.	4,00,000/-	-do-	4(Four) Months
7.	G	Renovation of Office Building Wall with Iron Grill in the o/o the ADS,(Hill Cell), Diphu.	5,00,000/-	-do-	4(Four) Months
8	H	Renovation of Office Building Fitting of Floor tiles, Doors, with Bathroom tiles in the o/o the ADS,(Hill Cell), Diphu.	8,00,000/-	-do-	4(Four) Months

Details tender documents may be obtained from the Asstt. Director of Surveys, (Hill Cell), Diphu during working hours.

Terms and condition: -

1. The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below as per Schedule rate for Building/works etc. for all division under APWD for the year 2013-14.
2. Earnest money should be deposit in favour of the undersigned in the form of call Deposit/Bank Draft and should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
3. The rate must be carried on as directed by the EE (W), KAAC/KAAC authority.

Sd/-

Asstt. Director of Surveys,
(Hill Cell), Diphu, K/A.

Dated Diphu the 16th July, '2025.

Memo No. HC.87/2013-14/87-A

No.HDBK-34/6th ASFC/2022-23/2549

Dated: 17th July, 2025

TENDER EXTENSION NOTICE

It is for general information to all Concerned that the receiving date of Tender circulated Vide Memo No.HDBK-34/6th ASFC/2022-23/2549, Dated, Hatidhura, the 14th July/2025 scheduled on 21/07/2025 is hereby postponed due to unavoidable circumstances and scheduled to be on 29th July,2025.

Sd/-

Block Development Officer
Hatidhura Dev. Block, Hatidhura

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/1794

NHPC to set up 800 MW Pumped Storage Project in Tripura first in NE: Power Minister

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, July 18: In a move to generate more power in Tripura, a Pumped Storage Project (PSP) will be set up in the state the first such project in the North-East after the 900 MW pumped storage project at Bagmundi in Purulia.

The National Hydro Power Corporation of India (NHPC) will set up this pumped power storage plant in Tripura, which will generate a total of 800 MW of power.

Tripura's Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath informed this while participating in the 29th North Eastern Region Power Committee meeting held in Guwahati on 18th July.

In this meeting, the Power Minister relieved not only Tripura but all the North Eastern states of India from a huge financial burden. A day earlier, in the Technical Committee meeting, a proposal was made to increase the gas price for the OTC Palatana power project. If implemented, this would have imposed a huge financial burden on

consumers not only in Tripura but across the entire North Eastern region.

However, Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath strongly opposed the proposal, stating that it was not only unreasonable but also against the public interest. He said the burden of crores of rupees in additional expenditure would fall on the people, which was unacceptable. Due to his strong stance, the North Eastern Power Committee was compelled to reject the proposal. Later, the Power Minister said that the Government, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji, is committed to the ideals of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas' to build an Atmanirbhar Bharat, and each of us must contribute with utmost sincerity to implement this vision.

He mentioned that everyone is aware of India's progress in the green hydrogen sector. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has highlighted the National Green Hydrogen Mission, which will pave the way for India

to become a global hub for hydrogen production and export.

The Power Minister informed that Tripura is working diligently to accelerate the implementation of clean and green energy initiatives announced by the Government of India to achieve net zero carbon emissions. So far, around 45,000 solar street lights, 4,900 solar pumps, 215 solar micro-grids, 3 MW of solar rooftops, and 2 MW of off-grid solar power have been installed, generating a total of 26 MW of solar power.

"As per the guidelines of the Ministry of Power, Government of India, Pumped Storage Projects will be set up in the state. The NHPC will establish a pumped power storage plant in Tripura, which will generate 800 MW of power. This will be the first pumped power storage plant in the North-East after the 900 MW project at Bagmundi in Purulia," said the Power Minister.

The Minister also stated that integrating battery energy storage systems with renew-

able energy will ensure the availability of power during peak hours by utilizing surplus renewable energy generated during day-time/off-peak hours. The installation of storage batteries in Tripura to store solar energy for use during peak load periods is also being explored.

"The Central Government has taken several landmark initiatives in the power sector. These reforms have transformed the sector with a focus on providing affordable electricity to all. We all know that the North-East region of the country is not only rich in natural resources but also in social capital," he added. He said that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is providing funding to address the power sector challenges in the North-East region by developing and expanding power generation, transmission, and distribution systems.

"The Tripura government has signed an agreement worth Rs 2,275 crore with ADB to strengthen and improve power distribu-

tion efficiency in the state. Under the ADB project, two power projects — Rokhia in Sepahijala district and the Gomati hydropower project in Gomati district — are planned for major renovation. Currently, the gas-based Rokhia power project generates 63 MW of power, and its installed capacity will be doubled by modernizing the plant. Similarly, the capacity of the Doombur hydropower project will be increased from 5 MW to 10 MW," said the Minister.

The Power Minister also stated that a detailed roadmap for the Inter-State Transmission System requirements for Tripura up to 2031-32 has been finalized. This includes the construction of new GIS/AIS substations, new transmission lines, augmentation of EHV substations, and the replacement of old conductors with high-conductivity HTLS conductors to adequately meet future demand. Additional proposals for development up to 2034-35 are also under consideration.

ENGINEERING WORKS

E-Tender Notice No. GNM-USFD-022025-MLG; Date: 15-07-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Name of work: (A) USFD testing of old Flash Butt welding joints by Phased Array Ultrasonic Weld Tester (PAUT) in the jurisdiction of Alipurduar and Tinsukia Division of NF Railway. (B) Grinding of weld fins of FB weld rail (52 Kg/60 Kg) with all tools and plants at site in running rail without Block as per direction of IRPWM/FB Manual and as per directed by Engineer in Charge or his representative at site in the jurisdiction of Alipurduar and Tinsukia Division. Approximate Tender Value: ₹2,09,76,012.54. Bid Security: ₹2,54,900.00. E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 14-08-2025 and Opened at 15:15 hrs. on 14-08-2025 at office of the Principal Chief Engineer/ N.F. Railway, Maligaon, Guwahati-781011, Assam. For details please visit www.irps.gov.in

By: Chief Engineer/Track, Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

Special Task Force formed in West Tripura to identify, deport illegal immigrants

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, July 18: The West Tripura District Police has constituted a 15-member Special Task Force (STF) to detect, identify, and deport illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar. Tripura shares an 856-km-long international border with Bangladesh, making it a sensitive zone for cross-border movement.

According to an order issued by Dr. Kiran Kumar, Superintendent of Police, West Tripura District, the STF will include the Officers-in-Charge of all 15 police stations in the district. The team will be led by Debasish Saha, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DIB), West Tripura.

The order states that the STF has been tasked with the identification and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi nationals and Rohingyas residing in or detained within the district. Upon identification, the biometrics—fingerprints and facial photographs—along with demographic details of the individuals, must be uploaded to the Ministry of Home Affairs' Foreigners Identification Portal.

Drugs worth over ₹ 36 crore seized in Mizoram

AIZAWL, July 18: The Narcotics Control Bureau and the Assam Rifles have seized huge quantities of heroin and methamphetamine tablets worth ₹ 36.79 crore in east Mizoram's Champhai district, officials said on Friday. Acting on a tip-off, officials of the NCB and personnel of the Assam Rifles launched a joint operation on Thursday during which they recovered 642 gram of heroin and 10,44 kg of methamphetamine tablets, they said.

Methamphetamine, also known as 'ice' or 'crystal meth', is a highly addictive stimulant that exhibits powerful euphoric effects similar to those of cocaine. (PTI)

TMP leader demands deportation of Bangladeshis staying illegally in Tripura's Sepahijala

AGARTALA, July 18: Tripra Motha Party (TMP) leader Umasankar Debbarma on Friday demanded that the police detect and deport Bangladeshis, who are illegally staying in Sepahijala district. According to Debbarma, more than 100 Bangladeshis are staying in eight Village Committees (VCs) under Bishalgarh and Sonamura subdivision of Sepahijala district illegally.

"Today, we met Superintendent of Police (SP), Sepahijala district, Bijoy Debbarma and handed over a memorandum seeking his intervention to de-

tect and deport all the Bangladeshi citizens staying in eight VCs of the district," Debbarma, a member of District Council (MDC) of Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADAC) told reporters.

Debbarma said the party delegation has mentioned the locations where the Bangladeshis are living.

He said the SP assured that he will take up the issue with District Magistrate (DM), Sepahijala, Siddhartha Jaiswal and the authority of Forests to take proper steps about the alleged

presence of Bangladeshis.

The TMP, an ally of the BJP-led coalition government in Tripura, has raised concerns about illegal infiltration and the presence of Bangladeshis in the northeastern state.

TMP leader David Debbarma is on a 2,500-km-long 'Delhi chhogo abhiyan' (march) to highlight the infiltration problem in the border state. Party MLA Ranjit Debbarma had already written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking his intervention to stop infiltration from across the border. (PTI)

Meghalaya: Aspiring entrepreneurs trained in Jaintia Hills pottery craft

SHILLONG, July 18: Thirty aspiring entrepreneurs from Meghalaya's Jaintia Hills were trained in traditional Larnai pottery as part of a seven-day skill development programme aimed at preserving indigenous knowledge and promoting rural livelihoods, officials said.

Organised by the Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Community and Skill Development Centre (DDUCC), Wahajer, a constituent college of North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), the programme titled 'Application of Indigenous Knowledge in Pottery Making' was held from July 12 to 18 at the DDUCC community hall.

Renowned artisan Roilin Pyrtuh from Larnai village, known for its centuries-old pottery tradition, led the training.

Larnai, located in West Jaintia Hills, is famous for its distinctive black pottery, crafted entirely by hand without the use of a potter's wheel.

The process includes traditional clay preparation, shaping, open-firing, and finishing techniques that have been passed down through generations.

Pyrtuh learned the craft from her mother, continuing a multi-generational family legacy.

Her family stands among the few still exclusively practising traditional tech-

niques without mechanisation, crafting one-of-a-kind pottery entirely by hand.

Participants, including women, youth, and farmers aspiring to start small enterprises, received hands-on training in various stages of the pottery-making process.

The sessions focused on equipping them with livelihood skills while promoting cultural preservation and sustainable entrepreneurship.

The valedictory function held on July 18 was graced by NEHU pro vice-chancellor Prof. S. Umdor as chief guest, and Lukas Jat, member of Wahajer village, as guest of honour.

Also in attendance were Dr. FR Sumer, principal in-charge, DDUCC; Latu Nartiang, branch manager of Meghalaya Co-operative Apex Bank, Ummulung; faculty, students, and community members.

Umdor commended the DDUCC team for promoting indigenous trades and encouraged participants to tap into opportunities in local markets and tourism.

He noted that the initiative aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which integrates vocational education with academic learning.

Certificates of participation were awarded to all trainees. (PTI)

Two militants arrested in Manipur for extortion activities

IMPHAL, July 18: Security forces arrested two militants belonging to proscribed outfits in Manipur for their alleged involvement in extortion activities, police said on Friday.

One cadre of the banned Prepak was apprehended from Thinnungi Mamang Paton area in Bishnupur district on Wednesday, a senior officer said.

"He had undergone a 30-day basic military training at Kakching Khunou and was also involved in extortion from schools, pharmacies, government offices, doctors and engineers in Bishnupur district and Imphal areas," the police said.

"One member of the outlawed National Revolutionary Front of Manipur was arrested from Koirengi Awang Potshangbam Road in Imphal East district on Wednesday," the officer said.

"He was accused of being involved in abduction, demanding ransom to raise funds for his outfit and also supplying arms and ammunition," the police said. He also "played an instrumental role in the movement of militants" in the valley, the officer added. (PTI)

Manipur's Nikhil Okram to represent India at Mister International 2025 in Philippines

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 18: In a significant achievement for northeast India, Nikhil Okram from Manipur has been officially crowned Mister International India 2025 by Mega Entertainment.

As India's official representative, Nikhil will compete at the prestigious Mister International Pageant scheduled to be held in the Philippines in December this year.

The announcement was made in an official statement issued by Mega Entertainment, the national franchise holder for the Mister International India pageant.

Nikhil's selection follows his recent win at the 14th Set Wet Mega Mister North East 2025, where he emerged as one of the three title winners from the region.

The national-level selection was overseen by Abhijeet Singha, National Director of Mister International India and Founder of Mega Entertainment, through a rigorous and merit-based process.

Hailing from Imphal, Nikhil is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education at Manipur University.

Apart from his academic pursuits, he is an active member of the National Service Scheme (NSS), working on youth development and social welfare initiatives across the state.

Kavita Keisham, Manipur State Director of Mega Entertainment, described the achievement as a collective win for the state and the entire region.

"Nikhil has always shown exceptional dedication and spirit. His selection to represent India is not just a personal victory but a triumph for Manipur and the Northeast. I urge everyone to support him as he carries our hopes to the international stage," she said in the official statement.

Nikhil's journey from a state-level pageant finalist to the national titleholder reflects the growing presence and influence of Northeast India in the domains of fashion, lifestyle, and youth empowerment.

His success continues a trend of emerging talents from the region who have earned national recognition and are now stepping onto global platforms.

To ensure that Nikhil is well-prepared for his international role, Guwahati-based PR and reputation management agency Life's Purple has been onboarded as the official PR Partner for Mega Entertainment.

During his reigning tenure, Life's Purple has been guiding him with reputation management advisory and media training.

With a strong foundation in education, social commitment, and stage presence, Nikhil Okram is poised to represent India with pride, dignity, and purpose at Mister International 2025.

His upcoming participation is not only a personal milestone but also a symbol of the Northeast's continued rise in the national and global spotlight.

eCF No. 320507/289

ADVERTISEMENT FOR

ASSAM PENSION SCHEME FOR JOURNALISTS FOR THE YEAR 2025-26

Applications are invited from the retired journalists for awarding Pension under the "Assam Pension Scheme for Journalists" for the year 2025-26.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION:

- He/She has to attain 60 (sixty) years of age and has to retire from the job of a Journalist/Photo Journalist/Correspondent/Proof Reader/Camera Person etc.
- He/She must be domicile of Assam and must have served as a journalist in Assam for not less than 20 years preceding his/her date of retirement.
- He/She must be a journalist as defined under Working Journalist Act, 1955. Preference will be given to those who were issued Recognition/Accreditation Card by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Govt. of Assam. However, the persons who served as a journalist continuously for 20 years or more, will be given more preference.
- He/She must not be in the pay roll of any media house. He/She must not also be drawing pension from any other source except under the Employees Provident Fund.
- The Proprietor, Proprietor-cum-Editor, Manager-cum-Editor and those whose nature of job is not related to working journalist will not be eligible for the scheme.
- The Government Servant shall not be eligible for Journalist Pension. One person shall not get more than one pension out of Pensions for Journalist/ Literature/ Sports persons.
- E-mail ID for communication/query : journalist.dipr@gmail.com

How to apply:

Intending candidates will have to submit their application to the office of the undersigned (Hard Copy), duly filled up in the prescribed format along with all related papers/documents as per the Application Proforma. The application will be termed as incomplete if not submitted with all relevant documents.

Address for submission.

THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS, ASSAM
LAST GATE, DISPUR, GUWAHATI-781006.

APPLICATION PROFORMA CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE/LINK: <http://dipr.assam.gov.in>

LAST DATE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION -31st July, 2025
THE HARD COPY OF THE APPLICATION MUST REACH THE OFFICE OF THE UNDERSIGNED ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE. NO APPLICATION WILL BE ENTERTAINED AFTER LAST DATE.

Sd/-

Director
Information and Public Relations
Assam, Dispur, Guwahati-6

DIPR /D/HLT/77/19-Jul-25

অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022.

No.9PSC/E-7/2025-26

NOTIFICATION

In continuation of this office Advt. No. 12/2025 vide letter No.5PSC/E-29/2024-25 Dated Guwahati the 23rd March, 2025 and subsequent Notification No.197PSC/CON/Exam-27/2024-2025 dated Guwahati the 17th July 2025, attention is hereby drawn for the candidates who have qualified to appear in the Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024.

- The application process for Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024 will be in online mode only.
- Prescribed online application forms for the Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024 will be available in the Assam Public Service Commission's website www.apsc.nic.in. The Online Applications can be filled up from 22nd July, 2025 12:00 Noon to 5th August, 2025 till 5:00 P.M., after which the link will be disabled. Last date for payment of prescribed fee is 7th August, 2025 till 5:00 P.M. Candidates must note the following:-
 - The Candidates must read the 'Guidelines' and 'How to Apply' before filling up the application form.
 - The candidates may download the syllabus for Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024 from the Commission's website www.apsc.nic.in CCE (Main) Syllabus.
 - Only those PwBD candidates who have earlier applied for Scribe at the time of Combined Competitive (Preliminary) Examination, 2024 will get Scribe for the Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024 upon application for the same addressing the Commission with valid documents as mentioned in the Appendix-II (Certificate regarding physical limitation in an examinee to write) and Appendix-III (Candidates opting for own Scribe) of the Advt. No. 12/2025 thirty (30) days before scheduled date of Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024. Candidates can send hard copy of their application to the Commission's office or email at apsc-asm@nic.in.
 - Candidates have to choose their order of preference(s) among the Services/Posts advertised through the Advt. No.12/2025 vide letter No.5PSC/E-29/2024-25 Dated Guwahati the 23rd March/2025 and subsequent Addendum No.7PSC/E-29/2024-2025 Dated Guwahati, the 29th March/2025 and Corrigendum No.11PSC/E-29/2024-2025 Dated Guwahati, the 9th April/2025 regarding the same. Candidature will be considered only for those cadres/posts that he/she has chosen while submitting the online application form for Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024.
- The Commission will hold the Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024 at Guwahati Centre as per programme given below.

Date	Forenoon (09:00 AM to 12:00 P.M)	Afternoon (01:30 PM to 04:30 P.M)
11.10.2025 (Saturday)	Paper-1 Essay	Paper-2 General Studies-I
12.10.2025 (Sunday)	Paper-3 General Studies-II	Paper-4 General Studies-III
13.10.2025 (Monday)	Paper-5 General Studies-IV	Paper-6 General Studies-V

N.B. - The list of candidates along with Roll Nos. and e-Admission Certificates will be uploaded by 19th September, 2025 and 20th September, 2025 respectively in the Commission's website www.apsc.nic.in. No e-Admission Certificates shall be sent separately by post.

- The Roll No. of the candidates for the Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024 will remain the same as that of Combined Competitive (Preliminary) Examination, 2024.
- FEES FOR C.C. (MAIN) EXAMINATION:**

Under the Digital India initiative by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, APSC has decided to launch its Online Recruitment portal with the help of CSC-SPV, a MeitY approved organization, which will charge a processing fee of Rs. 47.20/- from each candidate.

Sl. No.	Category	Application fee (Rs)	Processing Fee Charged by CSC-SPV (Rs)	Total Amount (Rs)
1.	General	250	47.20	297.20
2.	OBC/MOBC	150	47.20	197.20
3.	SC/ST/ BPL/PwBD/ Women	Nil	47.20	47.20

Mode of Payment: Candidate can pay their application fees through Internet Banking/Debit Card/ Credit Card only.

- Candidates appearing in the examination should also bring with him/ her extra copies of the photograph similar to the one uploaded in the online application form to the Examination Hall.
- The e-Admission Certificate will be uploaded in the Commission's website. The candidates should download the same and check carefully to ensure that the particulars on the e-Admission Certificate are correct. In case, there is any error in the e-Admission Certificate, it should be brought to the notice of the Commission by an e-mail with a request to issue correct e-Admission Certificate. No candidate will be allowed to enter into the Examination Hall without e-Admission Certificate.

- Candidates will have to appear in the Examination only at the Venue mentioned in his/her e-Admission Certificate.

N: B:-

- No change shall be entertained once online application is successfully submitted.
- If any information submitted by the candidates while filling online application form for Combined Competitive (Preliminary) Examination, 2024 and Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2024 is found wrong/incorrect at any stage, his/her candidature will be liable to cancellation.
- The candidates should contact the Commission, through email ccapsc@gmail.com or 1800-572-2343 in case of any assistance regarding filling up the online application form for Combined Competitive (Main)

Sd/-

Secretary,
Assam Public Service Commission
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

DIPR /D/HLT/76/19-Jul-25

FREIDA PINTO TO LEAD NETFLIX'S SERIES BASED ON JHUMPA LAHIRI'S SHORT STORIES 'UNACCUSTOMED EARTH'



LOS ANGELES, July 18: Indian actor Freida Pinto is set to headline Unaccustomed Earth, a series adaptation of author Jhumpa Lahiri's short story collection of the same title.

The project was announced by streaming service Netflix in April and will feature eight episodes, according to entertainment news outlet Variety.

Pinto, known for starring in critically-acclaimed and award-winning movies such as "Slumdog Millionaire", "Rise of the Planet of the Apes", "You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger" and "Love Sonia", will essay the role of Parul Chaudhury.

Unaccustomed Earth is described as an "epic, soapy, and culturally vibrant drama about a tight-knit Indian American community navigating love, desire, and belonging".

"Rich with nuance, passion, and unforgettable characters, Unaccustomed Earth invites you into the elite and insular Indian-American community of Cambridge, MA.

When a star-crossed romance between a devoted wife and her long-lost love comes to light, a scandalous affair is born and new battle lines are drawn in this intensely interconnected immigrant community," the official logline read.

The series will be written by John Wells, best known for developing hit American show "Shameless" and directing movies such as "August: Osage County" and "Burnt", in collaboration with Madhuri Shekar, who will serve as the showrunner.

Ritesh Batra, the director of The Lunchbox and Photograph, will helm and executive produce the first and second episodes.

Filmmaker Nisha Ganatra, who had originally optioned the book and developed the series, will also executive produce.

Lahiri will executive produce as well, along with Erica Saleh, Erin Jontow and Celia Costas.

Her 2003 novel "The Namesake" was famously adapted into a 2006 film by Mira Nair, starring Kal Penn, Tabu, and Irrfan Khan.

Unaccustomed Earth will be produced by Warner Bros Television, where Wells is under an overall deal. (PTI)

SUNIEL SHETTY, JACKIE SHROFF-STARRER 'HUNTER 2' TO PREMIERE ON JULY 24 ON AMAZON MX PLAYER

NEW DELHI, July 18:

"Hunter 2 – Tootega Nahi Todega", featuring Jackie Shroff and Suniel Shetty, will stream on Amazon MX Player from July 24.

The show revolves around Shetty's ACP Vikram Sinha, going against the crime world to save his daughter.

In season two, Sinha "gets pulled into a new maze that is far more twisted faced against a villain who is charming, unflinching, and impossible to read," according to a press release.

"Hunter 2 – Tootega Nahi Todega" reunites Shroff and Shetty, who have worked together on movies such as "Border", "Hulchul", "Apna Sapna Money Money", "Aan" and many others.

Shetty said action feels personal in the new season.

"Season 2 of 'Hunter – Tootega Nahi Todega' digs deeper into Vikram's past, his pain, and what drives him. What I love most is how personal the action feels this time. It's not just about guns and chases, it's about what's at stake emotionally. And that emotional weight made every scene more intense," he said in a state-

ment.

Shroff added, "Jumping into 'Hunter 2 – Tootega Nahi Todega' was a wild ride.

The world had its own vibe, and then this salesman walks in and turns it all upside down. Playing him was like holding fire in your hands - calm, yet deadly." Directed by Prince Dhiman and Alok Batra, the crime thriller is produced by Yoodle Films. "Hunter" season two also stars Anusha Dandekar and Barkha Bisht.

"With 'Hunter 2 – Tootega Nahi Todega', we've scaled up every aspect of the storytelling. From the emotional depth and character arcs to the intense action and global canvas.

Suniel Shetty's return and Jackie Shroff's entry take the narrative to a whole new level, creating a compelling face-off that's both personal and powerful.

At Amazon MX Player, our focus remains on delivering stories that resonate emotionally while offering a high-impact viewing experience." Amogh Dusad, head of content at Amazon MX Player, said. (PTI)

Tillotama Shome-starrer 'Baksho Bondi' to open Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2025

NEW DELHI, July 18: Actor Tillotama Shome's Bengali film "Baksho Bondi" will serve as the opening at the 2025 edition of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM).

The film, co-produced by Shome and actor Jim Sarbh, will have its official Australian premiere on August 14, setting the stage for the 16th edition of the festival.

Directed by first-time filmmakers Tanushree Das and Saumyananda Sahi, the film is set in a Kolkata suburb and follows Maya, played by Shome, a working woman whose story unfolds through moments of quiet strength and resilience.

The movie, titled "Shadowbox" in English, had its world premiere at the 75th Berlin International Film Festival. It is a co-production between India, France, the US and Spain.

"Baksho Bondi" is incredibly close to my heart. Playing Maya was a lesson in listening to silences, in discovering strength in small acts, and in understanding how quiet resilience shapes women's lives in a world that often overlooks them."

"After Berlin, bringing Maya's story

to Melbourne feels special... because of the incredible strength and spirit of inclusion that radiates from Mitu, the festival director of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne. This film is a love letter to working women, to dusty afternoons in Barrackpore and to the courage that quietly persists even when no one is watching," Shome said in a statement.

Festival director Mitu Bhowmick Lange praised the film as a "tender, honest, and visually stunning" work.

"We are honoured to open IFFM 2025 with 'Baksho Bondi', a film that exemplifies the strength of Indian independent cinema while touching on themes that are deeply personal and globally relatable. Tillotama Shome's performance as Maya is nothing short of extraordinary."

"It is exactly the kind of cinema we are proud to showcase at IFFM, and we are excited for Australian audiences to experience this gem on our Opening Night," she said.

Backed by the Victorian Government, IFFM 2025 will run from August 14 to 24. The IFFM Awards Night, celebrating excellence across film and OTT, will take place on August 15. (PTI)



Priyadarshan announces 'Haiwaan' with Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan

MUMBAI, July 18: Filmmaker Priyadarshan has officially announced "Haiwaan", his upcoming film that reunites actors Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan. The "Hera Pheri" director recently posted a picture of the two actors watching India vs England test match at Lord's Cricket Stadium in London on Instagram.

"Haiwaan" - my next film with @ak-

shayku-mar and Saif Ali Khan at Lord's," he wrote in the caption on Tuesday.

The details of the plot have been kept under wraps.

Akshay and Saif have shared the

screen space in many movies such as "Main Khiladi Tu Anari", "Yeh Dillagi", "Aarzu", "Tu Chor Main Sipahi" and "Keemat".

They were last seen together in the 2008 action film "Tashan", which also featured Kareena Kapoor Khan and Anil Kapoor. Akshay is

working on two more movies with Priyadarshan — horror comedy "Bhoot Bangla" and the much-awaited third part of the "Hera Phera" franchise. Saif Ali Khan was last seen in Netflix's "Jewel Thief" and also featured in films like "Devvara: Part 1" and "Adipurush". (PTI)



Vaani Kapoor on cancel culture: 'Don't understand this volatile behaviour'

MUMBAI, July 18: Actor Vaani Kapoor says she does not understand the current wave of "cancel and boycott culture", which she believes is contributing to a toxic environment and restricting artistic freedom.

The actor, who will soon make her digital debut in Netflix's Mandala Murders, expressed her views on censorship and online hate during an interview, highlighting the impact such behaviour has on artists and society at large.

"I don't get the cancel and boycott culture," said Kapoor. "Censorship, in any form, limits an artist's freedom to take creative risks and explore new ideas."

Her remarks come in the wake of the controversy surrounding her recent film Abir Gulaal, a romantic drama co-starring Pakistani actor Fawad Khan. The film, scheduled for release in May, was shelved following the Pahalagam terror at-

tack. In the aftermath, political figures and trade bodies renewed calls to boycott Pakistani artists, ultimately preventing the film's release in India.

When asked about how the situation affected her, Vaani responded:

"I'm not so into censorship. I believe in certification. Sometimes, there's no limit — when I hear about censorship, I think, 'They can cut this or that.' As an artist or filmmaker, you're constantly trying to create something new. But with boundaries set around you, how much can you truly explore new territory?"

Kapoor, known for films like War, Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui, and Raid 2, criticised the rise of "cancel and boycott" movements, which she feels have made public discourse increasingly toxic.

"This whole cancel culture — 'say one wrong thing, cancel them, boycott them' — I don't get that



volatile behaviour. We're being far too harsh with one another," she said.

"I keep hearing so much toxicity and hate — 'Let's cancel this person today, let's boycott that one'. Don't do that, yaar. Give people space. Let them be."

At the trailer launch of Mandala Murders, Kapoor also spoke about the negative psychological effects of online hatred, particularly among younger people still discovering their identity.

"There's a psychological impact — people start to doubt themselves before they even understand who they are. Whether it's kids in school or college, or someone in the industry, we're all affected by it," she said.

"We're human. We'll make mistakes — we're not saints. But you learn from your errors."

Calling for empathy and compassion, Kapoor added:

"Just because we have a difference of opinion doesn't make someone a bad human being. It doesn't mean they should be cancelled or that they don't deserve a place in the world. Don't be so harsh. Be happy, kind, and give love a chance."

Mandala Murders is a psychological thriller produced by YRF Entertainment, with Aditya Chopra, Uday Chopra, Yogendra Mogre, and Akshaye Widhani serving as executive producers. The series premieres on Netflix on 25 July. (PTI)

EAST BENGAL SIGN THREE FOREIGNERS

KOLKATA, July 18: East Bengal on Friday announced the signings of Brazilian Miguel Figueira, Palestinian Mohammed Rashid and Argentine defender Kevin Sibille for the upcoming Indian Super League season.

A versatile midfielder, Figueira is known for his creativity and defensive composure, and reunites with Coach Oscar Bruzon, under whose guidance he enjoyed a successful stint at Bangladesh's Bashundhara Kings, winning three consecutive Bangladesh Premier League titles from 2021-24 and two consecutive Independence Cups (2022-24).

The tall midfielder represented Brazilian Serie B club Goias EC before joining Bashundhara where he struck 37 goals and made 26 assists in 64 appearances.

Rashid, a standout performer for the Palestinian national team, helped his country reach the round of 16 in last year's AFC Asian Cup.

The 30-year-old midfielder travels to India after a notable stint with Indonesian Super League side Persebaya Surabaya, where he played 33 matches and scored six goals.

His previous clubs include Bali United (Indonesia), Jabal Al-Mukaber (Palestine), Smouha SC (Egypt), Persib Bandung (Indonesia), Al-Jeel (Saudi Arabia), Shabab Al-Bireh (Palestine) and Hilal Al-Quds (Palestine).

A product of the River Plate Academy, Sibille joins the Red and Gold brigade from Spanish club SD Ponferradina.

Sibille exhibited his defensive prowess across spells with Atletico Baleares, CD Castellon and Valencia B. In the 2024-25 season, the 26-year-old logged 2,602 minutes across 32 matches for Ponferradina.

"Miguel is a game changer in the attacking third. He is at the peak of his career and is expected to display exceptional quality and score crucial goals for the team," coach Bruzon stated in a release.

"Kevin is a young and modern centre-back who not only excels in the main defensive duties of winning duels, blocking shots and covering the backline with his pace, but also contributes to the team's offensive play through his passing and ball control.

"Rashid is a disciplined and strong-minded defensive midfielder, known for his ball-winning ability, interceptions, tactical awareness, leadership, high work-rate and mobility," added the coach. (PTI)

England beat Sweden on penalties to reach Euro 2025 semifinals after dramatic comeback

ZURICH, July 18: With 12 minutes remaining, defending champion England was heading out of the Women's European Championship.

But then the Lionesses came roaring back. Two quick goals saw them stage an improbable comeback to draw 2-2 against Sweden and then win a penalty shootout to advance to the semifinals.

"Very hyper, still very emotional, I think lots of adrenaline still in my body, I mean," England coach Sarina Wiegman said, who added that it was the most chaotic match that she had ever been part of.

"I can't remember anything like this.

"I think that's a quality that's so strong from this team, that together they're fighting back and not playing well, but sticking together, that shows so much resilience."

The shootout featured some terrible attempts — nine misses in all — before England triumphed 3-2 with 18-year-old Smilla Holmberg missing the last one after Lucy Bronze had powerfully dispatched hers for the Lionesses.

"Stressful. Stressful watching, stressful playing," England goalkeeper Hannah Hampton told British broadcaster the BBC when asked about the shootout.

"Every time I saved one I was thinking please just put it in so we have a bit of a cushion." Their keeper then just went and saved the next one and I was thinking 'oh goodness, here we go."

England would have been thankful to get to penalties, however, as its earliest exit from a major tournament in more than a decade loomed before goals from Bronze and teenage substitute Michelle Agyemang took the match to extra time.

It is the first time in the history of the Women's Euros that a team has fought back from two goals down in a knockout match.

"Today I thought three times we were out," Wiegman said.

"And then when you miss so many penalties then I was really conscious OK now it's done' and then they missed again.



"So that needs a little bit of luck of course that they then missed, for them of course the most horrible way to go out of the tournament and for us maybe even more exciting."

England will face Italy in a semifinal in Geneva on Tuesday.

Sweden had topped its group with maximum points after three wins, including a memorable 4-1 victory over Germany last time out, and it started where it left off in Zurich.

England appeared on the back foot from the off and as they tried to play it out from the back a pass rebounded off Filippa Angeldahl and came to Stina Blackstenius, who teed up a completely unmarked Kosovare Asllani to slot into the bottom left corner.

The goal was timed at 1 minute, 46 seconds.

Sweden was finding space on the right flank and exploited it again to double its lead. Black-

stenius raced onto Julia Zigiotti Olme's pass and held off Jess Carter as she surged into the area and calmly dispatched the ball into the far bottom corner.

Hampton pulled off fine saves to deny Fridolina Rolfö and Blackstenius and keep England in the game and that proved crucial.

Chloe Kelly was brought on in the 78th minute and she had an immediate impact as she whipped in a cross from the left for Bronze to head in at the back post.

And another precise cross two minutes later was nodded down for fellow substitute Agyemang to head in the equalizer.

It was the 19-year-old's second goal for England in her third appearance.

There were few real chances in extra time, meaning that penalties would be needed to separate the sides.

Both Sweden and England

Inter Kashi become I-League champions after CAS rejects AIFF Appeal Committee decision

NEW DELHI, July 18: Inter Kashi were on Friday declared I-League champions after the Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) rejected the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) Appeal Committee's decision of awarding the title to Churchill Brothers of Goa.

The AIFF had announced Churchill Brothers as the I-League champions after its Appeal Committee ruled against Inter Kashi in a matter related to the fielding of an 'ineligible player'. The Varanasi club had ended at second spot after points were deducted from their tally.

But following an appeal by Inter Kashi, the CAS asked the AIFF to reverse its decision of awarding the 2024-25 season title to Churchill.

"The AIFF shall forthwith declare Inter Kashi FC as winner of the I-league 2024-25 season," the Lausanne-based CAS said in its order.

"The appeal filed on 4 June 2025 by Inter Kashi FC against the decision issued on 31 May 2025 by the Appeal Committee of the All-India Football Federation is partially upheld.

"The decision issued on 31 May 2025 by the Appeal Committee of the All India Football Federation is set aside," said the CAS award handed by sole arbitrator Frans de Weger of the Netherlands.

This is, in fact, the second appeal won by Inter Kashi against the AIFF Appeals Committee's decision, having already secured a favourable verdict last month.

Inter Kashi thus won the I-League title in its second season of featuring in the second tier club competition of the country. They had finished fourth in their maiden I-League season in 2023-24. Under the rules, Inter Kashi will be promoted to the top-tier Indian Super League (ISL) in 2025-26 season though the event is on "hold" due to the uncertainty over the issue of the renewal of Master Rights Agreement - to expire on December 8 - between the AIFF and the organisers Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL).

The I-League champions of 2022-23 and 2023-24 - Punjab FC and Mohammedan Sporting respectively - were promoted to the ISL.

The CAS, in its verdict, also asked the AIFF to amend the points table of the I-League 2024-25 to reflect Inter Kashi's top position.

Accordingly, Inter Kashi FC will get 42 points, Churchill Brothers will secure 40 points for the second position, while Real Kashmir would be third with 37 points.

Earlier, Churchill were on top with 40 points, followed by Inter Kashi (39) and Real Kashmir (37).

The AIFF will also have to pay 55 per cent of the cost of arbitration, amounting to 3,000 Swiss francs (₹ 3,22,275 approx) to Inter Kashi, while the other parties to the case - Churchill, Namdhari FC and Real Kashmir - will have to shell out 15 per cent each (Swiss francs 1,000 or ₹ 1,07,413 approx).

"The costs of the arbitration, to be served to the Parties by the CAS Court Office separately, shall be borne for 55% by the AIFF, 15% by Churchill Brothers FC Goa, 15% by Namdhari FC and 15% by Real Kashmir FC.

"The AIFF shall pay an amount of CHF 3,000 (three thousand Swiss francs) and Churchill Brothers FC Goa, Namdhari FC and Real Kashmir FC shall each pay an amount of CHF 1,000 (one thousand Swiss francs) to Inter Kashi FC as legal contribution towards its legal costs and other expenses incurred during these arbitral proceedings."

On June 17, Inter Kashi won their first appeal at the CAS against AIFF Appeals Committee's April 18 ruling in a case relating to their match against Namdhari FC - who were alleged to have fielded an 'ineligible player' - in an I-League match on January 13. (PTI)

Shillong Lajong names Birendra Thapa as new head coach

SHILLONG, July 18: Meghalaya's Shillong Lajong FC has appointed former player and long-time club associate Birendra Thapa as the club's new head coach ahead of the upcoming I-League season, officials said here on Friday.

Popularly known as Coach Biru, Thapa brings with him nearly two decades of experience, having been associated with the club since 2001 in multiple roles, including player, team manager, and assistant coach.

Thapa played for the club from 2001 to 2009 and was part of the historic squad that qualified for the 2009-10 I-League season.

After his retirement from professional football, Thapa was appointed as the Team Manager and Assistant Coach, a role he held for a decade until 2019.

From 2020 to 2024, he served as Assistant Coach with Mohammedan Sporting Club and Sreenidi Deccan, gaining vital coaching experience at the national level.

In 2024, he returned to the club as assistant coach for the previous I-League season.

In another key development, the club also announced the appointment of George Vannie Lyndoh Nongrang as the new assistant coach.

A former youth player for the club between 2013 and 2017, George rejoined the side in 2024 as part of the coaching staff.

"A new chapter begins with familiar faces for the upcoming season," the club said in a statement.

Club officials expressed confidence in the new leadership, stating that both appointments reflect the club's vision to build on its legacy with homegrown talent and leadership that understands the ethos and culture of the team.

With the appointment of Thapa and George to the coaching setup, the club is aiming for a strong showing in the upcoming season, banking on the continuity and deep-rooted association both individuals share with the institution. (PTI)

Euro 2025: Switzerland draw inspiration from historic upsets as it preps for Spain in quarterfinals

BERN, July 18: Switzerland coach Pia Sundhage is leaning into soccer history to prepare for one of the toughest games in her storied career Friday at the Women's European Championship.

Her fast-improving young team has a quarterfinal against world champion and tournament favourite Spain in the Swiss capital that once staged a legendary upset.

The "Miracle of Bern" — when West Germany stunned Hungary in the men's 1954 World Cup final — might have seemed ancient history to Switzerland's players who have been taken to the nation's hearts this month.

A more recent vintage is Switzerland's men surprisingly beating Spain, the soon-to-be champion, at their opening game of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

"We try to share stories, that's what life is all about," Sundhage

said Thursday, hours after showing video of that 1-0 Swiss win to her players.

"Sharing stories brings us together."

"And just the mindset that it is possible," the veteran coach said.

"We feel it, we remind each other it is possible because it's football."

Switzerland defender Noelle Maritz said listening to Sundhage and watching the game film "really made me feel goosebumps."

The modern Wankdorf Stadium that hosts Switzerland's first game in the knockout rounds at any Women's Euros is built on the site of soccer lore from 71 years ago.

The great Hungary team captained by Ferenc Puskás had beaten West Germany 8-3 in the group stage, and in the final scored twice within eight minutes.

The Germans rallied to win 3-2 in a shocker that was the subject of a movie, "Das Wunder von Bern," which was released in



2003. "We told that story as well, of '54," Sundhage said Thursday.

"Those old stories and pictures are wonderful. If you want to change something you have to repeat it and have to spread the word."

Sundhage credited the idea of seeking inspiration in the past from the squad's sporting coordi-

nator, Johan Djourou. The former Arsenal defender went to three World Cups with the men's national team though missed the 2010 tournament in an injury-hit season.

"He was talking about it in a very emotional way," she said of one of just two wins in 27 games against Spain for the Swiss men.

"There are some stories that we would like to happen again."

On Friday, as it was 15 years ago, Switzerland will face Spanish generational talents: Andrés Iniesta and Xavi Hernandez then, Alexia Putellas and Aitana Bonmatí now.

"She's a unique player," the California-born Maritz said of trying to control Bonmatí.

"She really knows how to decide matches."

The host nation's Euro 2025 already will be remembered as a success in the national soccer story, even if it is Spain advancing to a semifinal against France or Germany.

Yet Sundhage wants more facing the 2023 Women's World Cup winner, which she expects will dominate possession of the ball.

"I would say this is the biggest ever" challenge, the 65-year-old coach said.

"We're going to play against the world champs, and on home soil. This is the moment." (AP)

COULD SOCCER EVER BECOME 'FOOTBALL' IN THE US?

NEW YORK, July 18: It is the world's most popular sport and yet there is still debate over what it should actually be called.

Is it football or soccer?

U.S. President Donald Trump waded into the topic while at the Club World Cup final in New Jersey last Sunday.

He joked that he could pass an executive order to bring the United States in line with much of the rest of the world and ensure that from now on Americans refer to it as football.

"I think I could do that," he said with a smile during an interview with host broadcaster DAZN.

It was a light-hearted comment, but at a time when the U.S. is playing an increasingly significant role in soccer the question of why Americans continue to call it by a different name to the one by which it is most commonly known has been raised again.

There is, of course, already a popular sport called football in the U.S. — and that complicates things. "They call it football, we call it soccer. I'm not sure that change could be made very easily," Trump said.

Soccer keeps growing in the U.S. and so does its influence on the sport. It is co-hosting the men's World Cup with Canada and Mexico next year — the third year in a row that it stages a major tournament after the 2024 Copa America and this summer's Club World Cup.

Other factors are keeping soccer more often in the U.S. consciousness — and perhaps they will make saying "football" more commonplace in a tough sporting landscape.

One of the greatest players of all time, Lionel Messi, plays for MLS team Inter Miami; the popularity of the Premier League and Champi-

ons League is booming; and the documentary series "Welcome to Wrexham" about a low-level Welsh club co-owned by Hollywood actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney, has attracted new eyeballs.

Despite "soccer" being widely associated with the U.S., it is commonly accepted that the word was actually coined in Britain, perhaps as far back as the 1880s.

The exact date when it was first used is not known, but it is believed "soccer" was derived from "association football," which was the first official name of the sport.

The charity English Heritage says the nickname may have first been used by pupils at the iconic Harrow School to "distinguish the new association game from their older pursuit, known as 'footer'."

Numerous versions of football began to flourish, often involving handling a ball more than kicking

it. One example dating back to the 1600s and still played today in England is Royal Shrovetide Rugby is another example.

The English Football Association was created in 1863 and drew up codified rules for associated football to set it apart from other versions being played elsewhere in Britain and, from there, soccer as we know it was born.

Dr. Stefan Szymanski, a professor of sport management at the University of Michigan, co-wrote the book "It's Football, Not Soccer (And Vice Versa)" and explored the origins of the name. In a lecture to the American University of Beirut in 2019 he said soccer was "very clearly a word of English/British origin."

"And bear in mind that the name 'association football' doesn't really appear until the 1870s," he said, "so it appears really very early on in the history of the game and the

word 'soccer' has been used over and over again since it was coined at the end of the 19th century."

"Soccer" is not a commonly used term in Britain these days but that has not always been the case.

It was the title of a popular Saturday morning television show, "Soccer AM," which ran from 1994 to 2023 on the Premier League's host broadcaster Sky Sports.

England great and 1966 World Cup winner Bobby Charlton ran popular schools for decades, titled "Bobby Charlton's Soccer School."

And Matt Busby — Manchester United's iconic manager who won the 1968 European Cup — titled his autobiography, which was published in 1974, "Soccer at the Top, My Life in Football."

That book title suggests the terms "soccer" and "football" were interchangeable in British culture at that time. (AP)

67th Foundation Day celebration of KASA held



HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 18: The 67th Foundation Day celebration cum extended meeting of the Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) was held on July 17 at the Sarsing Teron Langkung Habe Multi-Purpose Sports Complex, KASA Complex, here. Marking 67 years of dedicated service to sports and youth development in the region, the event reflected KASA's enduring legacy and continued commitment to nurturing athletic talent. The celebration was graced by the presence of CEM of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and President of KASA Dr. Tuliram Ronghang, chairman of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council Raju Tisso, general secretary of KASA, Dr. Pankaj Teron, joint secretary, KASA Dr. Bishnu Ram Nunisa along with other Executive Members, MACs, members of KASA, sub-association representatives, and dignitaries. An extended meeting was held as part of the programme, where important issues concerning the growth and direction of the association were discussed. Updates, challenges, and future plans were deliberated, with active participation from all concerned. The event highlighted the collective vision and dedication of all stakeholders toward strengthening the sporting infrastructure and culture in Karbi Anglong.

Jadeja's 'incredible fight' at Lord's Test earns him Team India's MVP tag



LONDON, July 18: India head coach Gautam Gambhir led the chorus of praise for experienced all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, describing his heroics in the Lord's Test against England as an "incredible fight".

Jadeja remained unbeaten on 61 off 181 balls but despite his valiant knock, India went down by 22 runs in the third Test.

"That was an incredible fight. The fight from Jaddu was absolutely brilliant," said Gambhir in a video titled 'The MVP ft. Ravindra Jadeja', which was posted on the BCCI website on Friday.

Chasing a modest 193, India's batting line-up crumbled with the top eight lasting less than 40 overs.

But Jadeja, who came in at No. 7, stood firm and showed immense courage and grit alongside tailenders Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj.

Together, they batted for more than 34 overs to keep India afloat. Bumrah faced 54 balls for his 5 and Siraj played out 30 deliveries for his 4 before becoming the final wicket to fall to Shoib Bashir.

India folded for 170 in 74.5 overs to trail 1-2 in the five-match series.

"His batting has reached another level. In the last two Tests the consistency and the calmness he brought to the dressing room. I've watched him for so many years and how he's developed his game

now, his defence is rock solid, looks like a proper batter," Gambhir's deputy Ryan ten Doeschate said in the video.

India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak, Jadeja's former Saurashtra teammate at domestic level, highlighted the all-rounder's temperament under pressure.

"I always felt he has the ability to take pressure. With so much of experience, he normally comes with something that the team needs in any challenging conditions. Really, really valuable to the team," Kotak said.

Pacer Mohammed Siraj echoed the sentiment, underlining Jadeja's all-round value.

"It's very difficult to get a player like me and we are lucky to have such a player in our team," Siraj said.

Opener Shubman Gill, speaking at the post-match press conference, had earlier summed up Jadeja's impact.

"He is one of the most valuable players of India. The skillset he brings with his batting, bowling and fielding. He is someone who is very rare to find. The way Jaddu bhai batted was a very proud effort. The character and the courage they showed was tremendous," Gill had said.

India will have to win the fourth Test beginning in Manchester on July 23 to keep their hopes of winning the series alive. (PTI)

LONDON, July 18: Armed with multiple match-winners, India will look to continue their excellent build-up to the forthcoming World Cup when they face England in the potentially series-deciding second and penultimate women's ODI here on Saturday.

India won the opener at Southampton by four wickets, and a victory at Lord's will give the visitors an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match rubber. This would extend their string of wins in the format in recent times, including the tri-series triumph involving Sri Lanka and South Africa in May.

The games against England carry added significance as they serve as vital preparation for the ICC Women's ODI World Cup, which India will host later this year.

With several players delivering standout performances, competition for spots in the World Cup squad is heating up, but this problem of plenty is a happy headache for India coach Amol Muzumdar and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur.

The management has several options to choose from for certain roles. The depth and bench strength of the team has never been this good.

In the absence of pacers Renuka Singh Thakur and Pooja Vastrakar due to injuries, the side preferred Kranti Goud over the slightly more experienced Arundhati Reddy. The 21-year-old newcomer showed her mettle



tle with two big wickets in the opener while sharing the new ball with Amanjot Kaur, who is also a rookie.

Pratika Rawal has emerged as the preferred choice for Smriti Mandhana's partner at the top of the order while Shafali Verma also remains in contention after her form in the T20 Internationals, the Women's Premier League (WPL), and domestic cricket.

Harleen Deol is also in good nick and in the event Shafali returns to the playing XI in near future, Rawal could be pushed down to

the number three slot.

However, in that case, it will be difficult to accommodate Deol in the line-up that also comprises Harmanpreet, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma and Richa Ghosh.

Even the spin department has plenty of depth with the likes of left-arm spinner N Shree Charani joining the likes of Deepti, Sneha Rana and Radha Yadav.

Charani was named Player of the Series in the preceding T20I series for topping the wickets tally with 10 scalps.

Coming off her Rishabh Pant-like one-handed six during a match-winning half-century in the first ODI, senior all-rounder Deepti will be the cynosure of all eyes on Saturday.

Having ticked almost all the boxes on the tour during which they won their maiden T20I series on these shores, victory in the ODI rubber would further boost India's preparations and morale ahead of the global showpiece, which starts on September 30.

As far as England are concerned, they will need to pull up their socks and find a way to start winning matches.

The result in the opener was India's fifth consecutive ODI victory on English soil.

Teams:

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Yastika Bhatia (wk), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Sree Charani, Shuchi Upadhyay, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Sayali Satghare.

England squad: Nat Sciver-Brunt (c), Em Arlott, Tammy Beaumont, Lauren Bell, Maia Bouchier, Alice Capsey, Kate Cross, Alice Davidson-Richards, Charlie Dean, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Lauren Filer, Amy Jones, Emma Lamb, Linsey Smith.

Match starts at 3:30pm IST. (PTI)

Badminton Asia Junior C'ships: India begin campaign with 110-69 win over Sri Lanka

SOLO (INDONESIA), July 18: India notched up a 110-69 win over Sri Lanka in their Group D clash to kick off their campaign on a positive note at the Badminton Asia Junior Mixed Team championships here on Friday.

The mixed doubles combination of Vishnu Kode and Reshika U began India's march with an 11-5 win over Keneth Aruggoda and Isuri Attanayake in the relay point system where a team had to bag 110 points to win the match.

Sisters Gayatri and Mansa Rawat then extended India's lead to 22-14 against Attanayake and Sithumi De Silva before junior world no. 1 Tanvi Sharma stamped her class against Sithuli Ranasinghe to make it 33-21 for India.

Not one India singles player or pair lost any 11-point relay and by the time the match reached the halfway mark, the winners had taken a 55-31 lead.

India will now face United Arab Emirates in their second group game on Saturday before

taking on Hong Kong China on Sunday which could decide who tops the group standings.

India achieved their best result in the mixed team event back in 2011, clinching a bronze medal. Last year, India fell short of a medal after losing 2-3 to Malaysia in the quarter-finals.

The tournament features 17 teams divided into four groups—three groups have three teams each, while one group has five teams. Each team plays every other team in their group once, with the top two from each group advancing to the quarter-finals.

This year's championships adopted a 110-point relay system. Each tie consists of 10 matches (two each in men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles, and mixed doubles) with the team reaching 110 points first declared the winner. There is no playoff for third place; both losing semi-finalists are awarded bronze medals. (PTI)



Long way to go before racism is rooted out: First black cricketer to play for England

BECKENHAM, July 18: Forty five years after becoming the first Black cricketer to play for England, Roland Butcher says there is still a long way to go before racism is rooted out of the game and the British society in general.

Butcher, who shuttles between his native Barbados and the United Kingdom, is currently in England spreading the message of an inclusive society through his autobiography — 'Breaking Barriers: Barbados to England and Back'.

Speaking to PTI, the 71-year-old, who made history by playing three Tests and as many ODIs for England, looked back at his early days as a black cricketer in the '70s and '80s, his last minute withdrawal from the rebel tour of South Africa in the apartheid era and how his story opened the doors for the younger generations who went on to play for the country.

"I am pragmatic enough to understand that something doesn't just finish just like that. The only thing that would finish anything in a hurry is a meteorite. But everything takes time and you chip away at it," said Butcher, a former batter.

"Racism has been chipped away in England by a foreign person since the 1950s. We're in 2025 and we're still talking about it. So that tells you just how long the process is."

"I think it's a never-ending process. It's one that has to be worked at all the time. So, you know, you've got to keep chipping away. We've got it to this point, but there's still a long way to go."

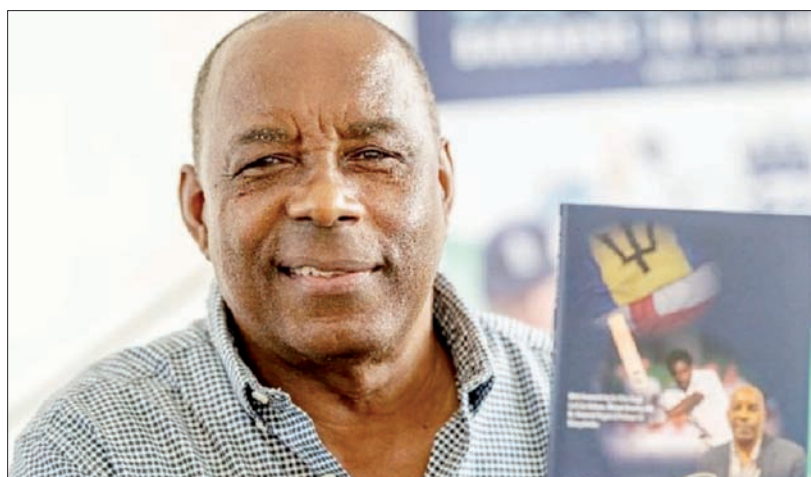
Butcher was among the many in the cricketing world that were shocked by racism allegations made by Karachi-born cricketer Azeem Rafiq against his county team Yorkshire in 2020, leading to multiple resignations at the club.

Though it is easier to call out racism in county cricket than his playing days, Butcher feels the discrimination, whether subtle or in your face, remains.

"There has been incremental progress. I don't think that you will just suddenly get a blank sheet of paper and it'll all be a perfect drawing on it. That's not going to happen. I think it's something that has to be worked at continuously. And gradually over time, let's reduce the instances."

"But it's not going to just suddenly disappear. If something's been going on for centuries, it doesn't disappear within one year. And both players, ECB, everybody has to work at it. Trying to just level the playing field. That's the important thing," said Butcher. Butcher played for Middlesex from 1974 to 1990. He faced racism on the county cricket circuit but the others had it much tougher.

"Well, for me personally, it wasn't that bad because (as he grew up in Barbados



before moving to England at the age of 13). I am the sort of person that I didn't let anything deter me from what I really wanted to achieve. But in saying that, back in the '80s, there certainly was a lot of racism in England, not just in cricket, but I think in society."

"A lot of black players had difficult times, more difficult times than me around the circuit. But having made the breakthrough, I think it assisted a number of other black players who had been striving to get forward."

"I'm still very proud of that achievement because as I said, not only did I get to where I wanted to be as an international cricketer and achieve what I wanted to, I'm very proud that it opened the doors for many and many black players have passed through that door as well."

Having said that, incidents of casual racism remain fresh in Butcher's memory.

"One of the things that I remember me personally is, I was fortunate to play in a very good Middlesex team that was very successful. We had a lot of good players, but we also had, at any one time, we had five black players in the team. So there was myself, Wayne Daniel, Will Slack, Neil Williams and Norman Collins."

"So, you know, we were a pretty multi-racial team, but it didn't stop opposition fans from remarking at times. I can remember one particular game against Kent where we were taking the field after tea and as we walked through the crowd, someone remarked, 'look, they've got five of them'."

"I just thought, how perceptive, we've been playing all day and you only just realised that there's five black players in Middlesex team," he recollected as if it was yesterday.

Butcher was a beacon of hope for the Black community in England but a controversy erupted when he decided to tour South Africa in 1989 when the apartheid

policy was still in effect and the team from the rainbow nation was banned from international cricket.

There was intense backlash and Butcher realised that it was in his and his community's best interests that he did not board the flight to South Africa with a predominantly white team, including captain Mike Gatting.

"I had made the decision to go for various reasons. And, then in reflection over a period of time, perhaps a little bit more education, I realised that going would be perhaps not the best thing in my interest or in the interest of black people in South Africa and outside of South Africa."

"There were legal challenges but then I made the decision to withdraw from the tour," said Butcher, who played county cricket against the likes of Farok Engineer, Sunil Gavaskar, Bishan Singh Bedi and Imran Khan.

In the end, Butcher said it is not all doom and gloom when it comes to dealing with racial matters in England, considering a sizeable chunk of the country's population is black or coloured.

"I think Britain is a much more tolerant country now than it used to be. It has to be if you think of the nationalities that live within England, Scotland and Wales right now. They have no choice but to be more tolerant because there are large percentages of foreign people living in this land."

"...Back in the '70s, '80s, '90s, it would have been much more difficult to call out racism because any black or Asian or any foreign player didn't feel they could speak out because they were not represented in any way."

"Now they've got more of a voice because they're now encouraged to speak out. If you have a problem within your club, you're now encouraged to speak. And they've got people dedicated within the clubs to listen to you and take it forward. That didn't happen before. So again, that is progress," concluded Butcher. (PTI)

Erigaisi storms into semifinals, Praggnanandhaa bows out of title race

LAS VEGAS, July 18: Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi defeated Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov to storm into the semifinals but R Praggnanandhaa bowed out of the title race after losing to USA's Fabiano Caruana at the USD 750,000 Freestyle Grand Slam Tour here.

Arjun prevailed over Abdusattorov 1.5-0.5 while Praggnanandhaa lost an intense battle 3-4 against Caruana.

The American duo of Levon Aronian and Hans Moke Niemann were the other winners in the quarterfinal stage, defeating compatriot Hikaru Nakamura and Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan respectively.

While Aronian won by a 2.5-1.5 margin over four games, Niemann took longer in beating Sindarov 4-2.

In the semifinals, Arjun will take on Aronian while Niemann will meet Caruana.

In the lower bracket, world number one Magnus Carlsen regained his winning touch and ousted Vidit Gujrathi 2-0. American Wesley So won 1.5-0.5 against compatriot Samuel Sevian while Leinier Dominguez Perez had a smooth 1.5-0.5 victory over Bibisara Assaubayeva of Kazakhstan.

Vincent Keymer of Germany, the winner of the first leg, defeated Robson Ray, also from America, by 2.5-1.5 margin.

Arjun was a class act in both games and enjoyed the advantage from the word go.

Playing white in the second game the Indian won a rook for a Bishop early, and very soon, it did not look like a Freestyle game, as Arjun simply overpowered Abdusattorov with his extra material.

Earlier in the first game too, Arjun enjoyed an advantage after the opening, but some unforced errors in the later part of the game allowed the Uzbek to get a half point.

Praggnanandhaa and Caruana were involved in as many as seven decisive games and the Indian was in lead on three occasions. Praggnanandhaa won the first, lost the second and the story continued till the sixth, until Caruana pulled away before winning the decisive seventh game.

It is not the end of the road for Praggnanandhaa though as he now moves to the lower bracket with seven other players for another set of knockout games.

Results quarterfinals: Arjun Erigaisi (Ind) beat Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) 1.5-0.5; R Praggnanandhaa (Ind) lost to Fabiano Caruana (Usa) 3-4; Levon Aronian (Usa) beat Hikaru Nakamura (Usa) 2.5-1.5; Hans Moke Niemann (Usa) beat Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb) 4-2.

Lower bracket: Leinier Dominguez Perez (Usa) beat Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz) 1.5-0.5; Magnus Carlsen (Nor) beat Vidit Gujrathi (Ind) 2-0; Wesley So (Usa) beat Samuel Sevian (Usa) 1.5-0.5; Vincent Keymer (Ger) beat Robson Ray 2.5-1.5. (PTI)

'Soft' Dukes ball to be examined, says manufacturer after complaints

LONDON, July 18: In the eye of a storm, the manufacturer of the Dukes ball on Friday said it will conduct a thorough review following widespread criticism of the "soft" balls used in the first three Tests between India and England, according to a report in the BBC.

The on-field umpires have regularly changed the balls in the ongoing five-match series as they were unable to retain hardness and were going out of shape quickly, particularly post 30 overs. The whole process has caused delays to the match proceedings.

Following criticism by India captain Shubman Gill and former English pacer Stuart Broad, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) will collect as many used balls as possible and return them to the company that produces Dukes balls by the end of the week.

"We will take it away, inspect and then start talking to the tanner, talking about all of the raw materials - everything," Dilip Jajodia, owner of British Cricket Balls Ltd, who make the Dukes, told BBC Sport.

"Everything we do will be reviewed and then if we think some changes need to be made or tightened up, we will."

The ball used for Test series is decided by the host board.

The Dukes is used in England, Test matches in India are played with the SG ball, while teams use the Kookaburra in Australia.

The Dukes ball, which has been in production since 1760, has faced some issues in Test and County cricket in recent years.

During the Lord's Test, Gill was upset with the ball they were given by the umpires after the second new ball had to be changed in the first hour of the second morning.

While Jasprit Bumrah had taken three quick wickets with the original ball, the Indian bowlers failed to make a single breakthrough in the rest of the first session after the red cherry was changed.

Broad, a fierce critic of the Dukes ball in recent years, also expressed his displeasure with the replacement ball.

England lead the five-match series 2-1 after victories in London and Leeds, while India won in Edgbaston. (PTI)

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