Page 1 Aug 23_Normal Pages 8/22/2025 9:58 PM Page 1

6 WORLD

● PM Modi, Prez Putin among 20 world leaders to attend SCO summit: China
● Sri Lanka's former president Ranil Wickremesinghe arrested

8 NATION

● PM flays INDIA bloc for opposing SIR, 130th Constitution Amendment Bill
● Bihar SIR: SC allows excluded voters to submit claims with Aadhaar, other 11 prescribed docs

26 YEARS OF DEDICATED JOURNALISM
www.thehillstimes.in

THE HILLS TIMES

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU
Voice of the hills people

Vol. No. XXVI Issue No. 219 RNI-ASSENG/2000/12862 DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 2025 PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8

Second phase of Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan launched

Scheme to strengthen financial autonomy of women: CM

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday launched the second phase of cheque distribution under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan at a public rally in Nalbari, according to an official statement.

In this phase, 33,909 members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), including 31,179 women from rural Nalbari and 2,730 from the Nalbari Municipality, have each been granted financial assistance of ₹ 10,000 to support entrepreneurial activities.

The Chief Minister distributed cheques to 13 beneficiaries to mark the launch.

Addressing the gathering at the playground of PM Shri Ghograpar Higher Secondary School, Sarma said the scheme was designed to strengthen the financial autonomy of women engaged in SHGs.

Assam has nearly four lakh SHGs with around 40 lakh women members, and the government has committed ₹ 3,038 crore to provide seed capital of ₹ 10,000 each.

He said beneficiaries could use the funds individually, with family members, or collectively with fellow SHG members.

After a year, fund utilisation will be reviewed, and those who deploy the assistance effectively would become eligible for ₹ 25,000 in the next phase — ₹ 15,000 from the government and ₹ 10,000 via bank linkage.

Proper utilisation would make them eligible for loans of up to ₹ 50,000, with the government bearing interest liabilities and offering a 25% subsidy. The Chief *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

Assam-Mizoram to maintain status quo on border

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Friday said that his state and Assam have agreed to continue maintaining the status quo in the disputed border areas following renewed tensions along the inter-state boundary.

Addressing the conference of the Mizoram Police Service Association (MPSA) in Aizawl, Lalduhoma said he had spoken with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma immediately after the latest incident. "We have agreed to continue to respect and maintain the status quo in the disputed areas along the inter-state border, which we had already discussed earlier," he said.

Fresh tensions surfaced on August 15 when police personnel and forest officials from Assam allegedly entered Saikhawthlir village in Mizoram's Mamit district and destroyed nearly 290 rubber plants cultivated by locals. The plantation, developed under the

Chief Minister's Rubber Mission, was managed by Mizoram's Land Resources, Soil and Water Conservation Department.

The incident triggered protests in the area and prompted an emergency meeting between the Deputy Commissioners and police chiefs of Mamit (Mizoram) and Hailakandi (Assam) on Monday. Officials of both sides agreed to resolve the matter amicably and strengthen coordination to avoid recurrence, though each side maintained its claim over the land in question.

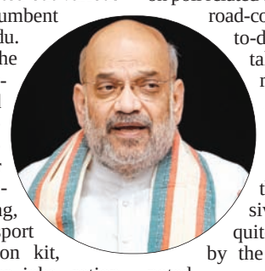
Mamit Deputy Commissioner K. Laltlawmlova stated that the disputed site falls under Mizoram's Kawrtha Forest Division based on official maps of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department. However, Hailakandi DC Abhishek Jain argued that the area lies within Assam's Inner Line Reserve Forest under the Gharmura Range. Citing *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

India will not compromise farmers' interests in any trade deal with US: Shah

KOCHI, Aug 22: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said Chief Minister M K Stalin does not have any right to dub the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill as "black bill" as he alleged the Tamil Nadu chief minister carried out "black deed."

Addressing a party event here, Shah alleged the DMK led the "most corrupt" government in the country and it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who ran the government as per Tamil classical didactic book, Thirukkural's guidance for an able, ideal ruler.

The BJP veteran alleged Stalin had no right to dismiss the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill as a Black Bill as he is a CM who did "black deed." He listed out various 'scams' in the incumbent regime in Tamil Nadu.



Slamming the DMK over "corruption", he alleged several scams, including those related to state liquor corporation TASMAC, sand mining, infrastructure, transport department, nutrition kit, free dhoti, cash for jobs, ration smuggling and a scam over MGNREGA where the money of poor Tamils was swindled.

Citing the case against DMK leader and former Minister K Ponmudy and the recent one of V Senthil Balaji who continued as a minister when he was in jail in connection with an ED case, Shah asked if it was appropriate to be part of the Cabinet and govern despite being jailed.

Taking a swipe at Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, he said her only agenda was to make her son Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister. Similarly, the only agenda of Stalin was to make his son Udhayanidhi the chief minister.

Both will not fructify as the NDA will emerge victorious, Shah asserted.

Alleging that the DMK is leading the most corrupt government in the country, he expressed confidence that in Tamil Nadu a regime of the BJP, AIADMK and other constituents of the NDA will form the government following win in the 2026 Assembly election.

In 2024 LS polls, NDA got 18 per cent vote share and AIADMK (which was not part of NDA at that time) received 21 per cent and when put together, it is 39 per cent.

Alliance with AIADMK is not a mere political agreement but a new path for Tamil Nadu's progress.

Emphasising the importance of booth-level workers and grassroot-level work in BJP's victory, he said during the next 8 months, every worker in Tamil Nadu should focus on poll related tasks such as holding road-corner meetings, door-to-door outreach and take PM's development agenda to every household.

After GST reforms announced by the prime minister, there will be a massive drop in taxes on quite a few items used by the common man, he noted.

PM Modi has announced Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana; a scheme to provide jobs to youths, at an outlay of Rs 1 lakh crore and also a High-Powered Demography Mission against intruders.

"We have to work for the victory of not just BJP candiates but all our NDA members," he said and alleged that the INDIA alliance could neither do good for Tamil Nadu, nor for the country.

Shah addressed the BJP's "Booth Karyakarta Sammelan" here.

He thanked the prime minister and BJP chief JP Nadda for nominating CP Radhakrishnan as NDA candidate to the office of vice president.

"As chairman of the RS, Tamil Nadu's son will decorate the chair." Years ago, the *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

SC protects two journalists booked in Assam

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The Supreme Court on Friday protected from arrest The Wire's founding editor Siddharth Varadarajan and Consulting Editor Karan Thapar in connection with an FIR registered by Assam Police against them over a news article.

A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi passed the order on a plea filed by the Foundation for Independent Journalism (FIJ), which owns The Wire along with Varadarajan.

Senior advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan, appearing for the journalists, said Assam Police was circumventing the orders passed by the court.

She argued despite the court's order granting interim protection in an FIR by Morigaon Police, summons were issued to the journalists in another case filed by the Guwahati Crime Branch.

The senior lawyer said the journalists were summoned on Friday for recording statements in an old FIR lodged in May and they apprehended they might be arrested.

When she said there could be further FIRs and threat of arrest, the bench tried to allay her apprehension saying, "We are watching".

The bench, while protecting the journalists, said everyone was expected to follow the law and asked the journalists to join the investigation and file a status report on the next date of hearing.

On August 12, the top court protected Vardarajan and restrained Assam Police from taking any coercive action against him in connection with an FIR lodged against him over an article on Operation Sindoor.

On May 9, the first FIR was registered by the Guwahati Crime Branch against Varadarajan and Thapar under *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

Suspending AADHAR strong step towards stopping infiltration: CM

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday reaffirmed his government's decision to bar the issuance of Aadhaar cards to individuals above 18 years of age in the state, saying the move was aimed at blocking a "major support system" for illegal infiltrators.

"Being a border state, we deal with a lot of issues and we know how to tackle and fix it. We are taking our fight one step ahead by barring acquiring of Aadhaar by 18+ year olds in Assam, except in rare cases. This will eliminate a major support avenue of the illegal infiltrators," Sarma said.

The Chief Minister said that Aadhaar had often been misused by infiltrators to establish false citizenship claims, access welfare benefits, and legitimise their presence in the state. By tightening Aadhaar enrolment, he asserted, Assam was protecting itself against demographic threats arising from unchecked illegal migration.

Sarma emphasised that the decision was not intended to deprive genuine Indian citizens but to safeguard the state's interests. "We will have rare exceptions, but the larger goal is clear—to ensure that no infiltrator gets an Aadhaar card and later uses it as a weapon to claim Indian identity," he said.

Earlier on Thursday, Sarma announced the measure after a cabinet meeting, stating that Aadhaar registration of adults in Assam will be suspended in next 30 days.

The government's move follows longstanding concerns over cross-border migration from Bangladesh, which successive governments in the state have described as a threat to the state's demography, culture, and resources.

The issue has been politically sensitive in Assam for decades, with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise of 2019 also aimed at detecting and excluding illegal migrants. The Aadhaar restriction is *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

Probe report into infant's death in GMCH soon: Sarma

NALBARI, Aug 22: Stating that there was 'negligence' on the part of the arrested nurse in the death of a newborn in GMCH NICU, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said action will be taken against all involved in the incident based on findings of an inquiry panel.

He said the three-member probe committee formed by the government will submit its report within a day or two.

A four-day-old infant had died after she was found hanging from the wires of a medical equipment in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) on Monday.

The infant, born in the same hospital on August 15, was admitted to the NICU for infection and jaundice.

"I saw with my own eyes that negligence was there. A child has died. The nurses are themselves mothers, and they can understand the pain of losing a child even more than I," Sarma said on the sidelines of a programme here, when asked about GMCH nurses protesting against the arrest of their colleague.

On no other arrests being made so far in the case, Sarma said, "Arrests should not be the objective. It could provoke the doctors elsewhere, and they could also go on a protest. The inquiry committee will submit its report in two-three days, and then we will decide."

"We will take action against all found guilty in the inquiry," the chief minister, who is in-charge of medical *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

After scrutiny of nominations, direct contest between NDA, opposition for VP's post

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The stage is set for a direct contest between ruling NDA nominee C P Radhakrishnan and joint opposition candidate B Sudershan Reddy for the September 9 vice-presidential election, in what is being described as a "south versus south" battle as both hail from southern India.

After a scrutiny of the nominations filed for the vice-presidential poll, all four sets of nomination papers of both the candidates were found to be in order, the office of the returning officer for the election said.

The Rajya Sabha secretary general is the returning officer for the vice-presidential election.

While Radhakrishnan is a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) veteran from Tamil Nadu and the governor of Maharashtra currently, Reddy is a former Supreme Court judge who hails from Telangana.

The vice-presidential poll has been described by the opposition as an ideological battle, even as the numbers are stacked in favour of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Radhakrishnan (67) served as a two-term member of the Lok Sabha from Coimbatore during the tenure of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and later, went on to lead the saffron party in Tamil Nadu.

Reddy (79), who retired from the apex court in July 2011, is a veteran jurist known for several landmark judgments criticising the then Union government for showing slackness in probing black-money cases. He had also declared Salwa Judum, appointed by the Chhattisgarh government, as unconstitutional.

As an apex court judge, Reddy ordered the formation of a special investigation team to take all steps for bringing back unaccounted monies unlawfully kept in bank accounts abroad. Retrieving black money deposited in foreign banks was a key electoral plank of the BJP ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha election.

According to a statement from the Rajya Sabha secretary general, the process of the vice-presidential election commenced on August 7 with the issuance of a notification.

The last date for filing nominations was August 21, while the date for a scrutiny *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

SC modifies 'harsh' direction, orders release of stray dogs post sterilisation in Delhi-NCR

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The Supreme Court on Friday modified its direction prohibiting the release of vaccinated stray dogs from pounds in Delhi-NCR calling it "too harsh" and ordered the canines to be released post sterilisation and de-worming.

A three-judge special bench headed by Justice Vikarm Nath expanded the scope of the stray dogs case beyond the confines of Delhi-NCR and directed all states and union territories to be made parties in the matter.

While pronouncing the order, the bench remarked all similar matters pending in the high courts across the country would come to the top court for a "final national policy or decision" on the issue.

The bench, however, said municipal authorities would continue to comply with the August 11 directions to pick up stray dogs from all localities of Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida, Faridabad and Gurugram and immediately create dog shelters or pounds.

The bench said the August 11 direction, passed by a two-judge bench for the permanent relocation of strays from streets to shelters, should be kept in abeyance for the time being.

"The dogs that are picked up shall be sterilised, dewormed, vaccinated, and released back to the same area from which they were picked up," the bench, also comprising Justices Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria, said.

It clarified the relocation should not apply to dogs infected with rabies or suspected to be infected with rabies and those displaying aggression.

Before any direction for impounding entire stray dog population was given, the court said, it was necessary to examine the existing infrastructure and human resources available with municipal bodies.

"A blanket direction to pick up all the strays and place them *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

Space station to support space tourism

ISRO unveils model of Bharatiya Antariksh Station

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: ISRO on Friday unveiled a model of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) module during the two-day National Space Day celebrations that began here.

India plans to launch the first module of the BAS, its own home-built space station, by 2028, marking its entry into the group of a handful of nations that operate orbital laboratories.

Presently, there are two orbital laboratories -- the International Space Station operated by five space agencies, and the Tiangong space station of China.

India plans to have five modules of the Bhartiya Antariksh Station in place by 2035 as part of its ambitious plans for the space sector.

The BAS-01 module is expected to weigh 10 tonnes and will be placed in a low earth orbit at 450 km above the earth.

Salient features of the BAS include, indigenously developed Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS), Bharat Docking System, Bharat Berthing Mechanism, automated hatch system, platform for microgravity research and technology demonstration, viewports for scientific imaging and crew recreation.

The BAS will also have provision for refilling of propulsion and ECLSS fluids, radiation, thermal and Micro Meteoroid Orbital Debris (MMOD) protection, space suits, airlocks to support extra vehicular activity and plug and play integrated avionics.

The BAS is expected to serve as a research platform for studying various aspects of space, life sciences, medicine, and interplanetary exploration.

It will provide an opportunity to study the effects of microgravity on human health and test essential technologies needed for long-term human presence in space.

The space station will support space tourism, with India entering the commercial space sector by leveraging the orbital lab's resources.

The BAS will contribute to ongoing international *(CONTD. ON PAGE 2)*

Page 2 Aug 23_Normal Pages 8/22/2025 10:04 PM Page 1

Govt mulls enforcing prohibition clauses before other sections post Online Gaming Bill notification

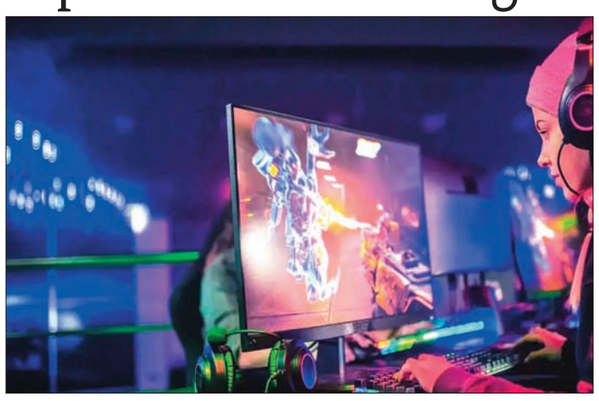
NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The government is considering enforcing the 'prohibition clauses' first up, ahead of other sections, once the Online Gaming Bill gets President's nod and is notified, IT Secretary S Krishnan has said, adding that work has, meanwhile, already commenced on drafting rules for the other provisions of the legislation.

Krishnan told PTI in an interview that the proposed rules in the works will provide a framework for promotion and regulation of e-sports and online social games, as well as the constitution of the regulatory authority envisaged in the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025.

Parliament has passed the bill to ban all forms of games played with money, and promote e-sports and online social gaming, with the Rajya Sabha on Thursday approving it without debate amid din.

The government has asserted that online money gaming has become a serious social and public health issue, causing demonstrable negative impact on society. At the same time, the Centre has thrown its weight behind promoting e-sports and social gaming, and wants to position India as a global hub for game development.

"There is a social evil (around online money games) that the government has wanted to address (through the Bill)...And I think we need to respect that sentiment and make sure that we are able to do whatever work we need to do at the backend much more quickly," Krishnan said. The Ministry of Electronics and IT is gearing up for fast implementation once the presidential nod comes through.



"This is not a legislation which we can allow to just stand on its own. We are examining whether it is possible to bring into effect the 'prohibition' ahead of other sections because in the Bill, there are no specific rules which have to be framed for that part. The only thing we have to do is notify the authorities who enforce," Krishnan said.

Asked if the overall rules may be finalised in the next six months or so, Krishnan asserted that it will be much faster.

"I would not commit to a timeframe, but it clearly can't wait as long," Krishnan said, adding "We have already started working on drafting the rules." On the fate of real-money gaming platforms engaged in sports sponsorships and as well as high-profile endorsements involved, Krishnan made it clear that the onus of compliance rests with the parties concerned.

"They will have to read the law and find out for themselves as to whether they are violating the law or not...figure out whether they are acting in accordance with the law," he said. Krishnan debunked allegations by a section of the industry on policy flip-flop arising from banning online money games.

"...Many people in the industry themselves came and told us at that point 2-3 things. One that the mechanism of self-regulatory bodies may not be a desirable mechanism. It would be better to have the government regulatory body vested with an authority that would be more credible. Second, a clearer delineation between the different kinds of games...So, I think it was fairly clear to everybody in the industry that that policy or rule framework was on hold and the government was considering this issue closely," he said.

On concerns around job losses, he said the employment numbers directly tied to real-money gaming could run into a few thousand, while in contrast, the number of individuals adversely impacted by gaming addiction runs into "several crores", he said.

Instances of suicides, deep family distress, and financial ruin underscore the magnitude of the social harm, he said, adding that society must consider whether protecting a few thousand jobs outweighs the harm inflicted on millions of households.

"There have been suicides, instances of deep family distress...So, I would say that when it came to a question of whether you are looking at a few thousand jobs of talented youngsters who are experienced software professionals and so on, who can easily find another job, because that is the category of people we are talking about, as opposed to the livelihoods of crores of Indians, and hundreds of millions of Indians whose lives and livelihoods are at stake, I think the decision is clear as to which way society needs to view that issue," Krishnan said.

On the issue of investment, he said India's FDI policy has always been guided by reason and ethics, with a preference for sectors that generate real societal value. Investment is welcome in productive, nation-building areas, but given the harmful and detrimental impact of online money gaming, the loss of a few billion dollars of investment in that sector should not be a matter of concern.

"And ultimately, what is it coming for? It is chasing profits from the distress of people so that you can funnel them back to the overseas investors. Now, is that something which is truly desirable?" he said, adding that having this policy clarity now will direct investments in the India growth story, and into areas where it is required. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Scheme to strengthen financial

Minister reiterated that his government is committed to fulfilling promises through initiatives like Orunodoi, Nijut Moina, and the Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan.

Referring to the first phase launched in Behali in April, he said reports of fund utilisation had been largely positive. He also acknowledged the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in enabling welfare schemes in Assam.

The event was attended by Ministers Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Atul Bora, and Jayanta Mallabaruah, Additional Chief Secretary B Kalyan Chakravarthy, State Mission Director Kuntal Moni Sarmah Bordoloi, Nalbari DC Nibedan Das Patowary, along with elected representatives, senior officials, and other dignitaries.

Assam-Mizoram to maintain

provisions of the Reserved Forest Act, 1980, he said rubber plantation in the area is prohibited and could attract scrutiny from the National Green Tribunal.

Mizoram shares a 164.6 km border with Assam's Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts. The long-standing dispute stems from colonial-era demarcations of 1875 and 1933 and has often led to flare-ups, the most violent being in July 2021 at Vairengte when seven people were killed.

Suspending AADHAR strong step

now being projected by the BJP-led government as an additional safeguard. "People of Assam know the pain of illegal infiltration. Our government has continuously pushed back against this menace. This step will further strengthen our resolve," Sarma reiterated.

SC protects two journalists

Section 152 (acts endangering sovereignty, unity and integrity of India) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The FIR listed 14 interviews and articles as against the sovereignty and integrity of India.

There was no further action on this FIR till August 12.

On July 11, Morigaon police station registered another FIR under Section 152 of the BNS against Varadrajan and The Wire for a story run on June 28 about the Indian defence attache's statement about the loss of Indian aircraft in Sindoor.

The top court granted 'The Wire' and others the protection from coercive action in the July 11 FIR of Morigaon police station.

Later, the Crime Branch summoned the journalists in connection with the earlier FIR lodged on May 9.

The top court also granted protection to the journalists and the news portal in this case as well on Friday. (PTI)

India will not compromise

NDA chose APJ Abdul Kalam as President and PM Modi has always worked to honour Tamil, Tamil Nadu and the Tamil culture. In this regard, he underlined initiatives such as Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam, Kashi Tamil sangamam and translation of Thirukkural into 13 languages.

On the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that left many tourists dead, Shah said PM Modi 'promised' to teach a lesson to terrorists.

"Pakistani terrorists killed our innocent citizens in Pahalagam. Modi ji promised to teach a lesson to terrorists and their masters. Through Operation Sindoor, we entered Pakistan and put an end to terror havens," he said.

"Operation Sindoor ended terrorists havens and masters (of terror operatives) while Operation Mahadev killed the three terrorists (behind Pahalgam attack) and avenged the killing of our citizens," he said. (PTI)

Probe report into infant's

colleges of the state and had visited GMCH the evening of the incident, added.

Sarma dismissed allegations that the GMCH is understaffed and said, "Be it nurses, doctors, grade 4 and grade 3 employees, there are more staff than even required at GMCH."

He also maintained that the principal of the hospital will not be transferred over the matter.

"It is a big hospital, and to err is human. If we focus only on the mistake, people who are doing good work get demoralised. We shouldn't make this a matter of public debate, a TRP thing. As chief minister, I have said action will be taken," Sarma asserted. (PTI)

After scrutiny of nominations,

of the nomination papers was August 22. "During the period from the 7th to 21st August, 2025, the Returning Officer for the Vice-Presidential Election, 2025 and Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha, received a total of 68 nomination papers filed by 46 candidates.

"Out of these 68 nomination papers, 28 nomination papers filed by 19 candidates were summarily rejected in terms of section 5B(4) of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952," the statement said.

Forty nomination papers of 27 candidates were taken for scrutiny at 11 am on Friday and rejected under sections 5B(1)(b) and 5C of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election Act, it added.

"The nomination papers of the following candidates were found to be valid and hence accepted -- C P Radhakrishnan (Nomination Paper Sl Nos. 26, 27, 28 and 29) and Buchireddy Sudershan Reddy (Nomination Paper Sl. Nos. 41, 42, 43 and 44)," the statement said.

According to Article 66 of the Constitution, the vice president is elected by the members of the electoral college consisting of the members of both houses of Parliament.

For the 17th vice-presidential election slated to be held on September 9, the electoral college consists of 233 elected members of the Rajya Sabha (five seats are currently vacant), 12 nominated members of the Rajya Sabha and 543 elected members of the Lok Sabha (one seat is currently vacant).

The electoral college comprises a total of 788 members (782 presently) of both houses of Parliament. One Rajya Sabha member, Shibu Soren, has since died.

The NDA is projecting Radhakrishnan as an untainted leader with rich political and administrative experience for the vice president's office and maintaining that these qualities would also prove to be useful as the chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Radhakrishnan was the chairman of the All India Coir Board from 2016 to 2020, a period when coir exports witnessed a significant jump.

The Congress-led INDIA bloc is projecting Reddy as a consistent and courageous champion of social, economic and political justice. Reddy has had a long and eminent legal career, including as a judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, the chief justice of the Gauhati High Court and a judge of the Supreme Court. He also led the committee that undertook the caste survey in Telangana. (PTI)

SC modifies 'harsh' direction

in dog shelters/pounds without evaluating the existing infrastructure may lead to a catch-22 situation because such directions may be impossible to comply with," the bench said.

Outlining the need for a holistic approach in the matter, the bench modified the August 11 directions and said, "Thus, the direction given in the order dated August 11, 2025, prohibiting the release of the treated and vaccinated dogs seems to be too harsh, in our opinion."

Municipal authorities were further directed to create dedicated feeding spaces for stray dogs in each municipal ward.

The bench said feeding areas should be created or identified keeping in view the population and concentration of stray dogs in the particular municipal ward.

"Gantries/notice boards shall be placed near such designated feeding areas, mentioning that stray dogs shall only be fed in such areas. Under no condition shall the feeding of stray dogs on the streets be permitted," it said. Persons found feeding dogs on streets in violation of its directions would face punishment, the bench added.

The top court referred to reports on untoward incidents caused by unregulated feeding of stray dogs while issuing its directions.

It also considered eliminating the practice of feeding dogs on roads and in public places as it posed "great difficulties for the common man" walking on the streets.

Each municipal authority was also ordered to create a dedicated helpline for reporting incidents of violation of the directions.

The top court ordered appropriate measures against the individual or organisation concerned once complaints were received on the helpline.

Modifying the relevant direction, the bench said, "No individual or organisation shall cause any hindrance or obstruction in the effective implementation of the directions given above."

In case of any obstruction in the work of the public official, the violator was ordered to face prosecution.

Notably, the bench directed each individual dog lover and NGO that has approached the top court to deposit ₹ 25,000 and ₹ 2 lakh, respectively, with the apex court registry within seven days, failing which they will not be allowed to appear in the matter any further.

"The amounts so deposited shall be utilised in the creation of the infrastructure and facilities for the stray dogs under the aegis of the respective municipal bodies," the bench said.

It directed the municipal authorities to file an affidavit of compliance with complete statistics of resources like dog pounds, veterinarians, dog catching personnel, specially modified vehicles and cages available as on date for the purpose of compliance of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules.

The top court said desirous animal lovers should be free to move application to the municipal body concerned for adoption of street dogs and it would be the applicant's responsibility to ensure the adopted canine did not return to the streets.

The bench noted several pleas or suo motu petitions were pending in various high courts dealing with common issues.

"Hence, the registry shall seek information about such pending writ petitions from the registrar generals of all the high courts, and thereafter, these writ petitions shall stand transferred to this court for analogous consideration along with the main matter," it said.

The bench impleaded all states and union territories while observing application of ABC Rules was uniform all over India.

It posted the matters after eight weeks for further directions.

The bench's order came in a suo motu case initiated on July 28 over a media report on stray dog bites leading to rabies, particularly among children, in Delhi. (PTI)

ISRO unveils model of

collaborations and serve as a hub for scientific research and also inspire younger generations to consider careers in space science and technology.

The massive 3.8 meter x 8 meter BAS-01 model was the center of attraction among those attending the National Space Day celebrations at the Bharat Mandapam here. (PTI)

Stock markets halt 6-day rally

Sensex, Nifty dive nearly 1 pc as HDFC Bank, Reliance drag

MUMBAI, Aug 22: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty fell sharply by nearly 1 per cent on Friday, snapping their six-day winning streak, as investors turned cautious ahead of US Fed Chair Jerome Powell's Jackson Hole address amid growing global trade uncertainties triggered by Trump tariffs.

Intense selling in market heavyweights HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries also dampened risk appetite, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 693.86 points or 0.85 per cent to settle at 81,306.85. During the day, it plunged 708.94 points or 0.86 per cent to 81,291.77. As many as 2,316 stocks declined while 1,765 advanced and 159 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 213.65 points or 0.85 per cent to 24,870.10.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 709.19 points or 0.87 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 238.8 points or 0.96 per cent.

"Markets snapped a six-session winning streak and ended lower, losing nearly a per cent as sentiment turned weak from the outset and deteriorated further in the latter half.

"The weakness was primarily driven by caution ahead of US Fed Chair Jerome Powell's Jackson Hole address and renewed concerns around global trade and geopolitical tensions, which dampened risk appetite. Domestic profit-booking after the recent rally and a pause in fresh FPI inflows further weighed on sentiment," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. From the Sensex pack, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel, ITC, HCL Tech, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Adani Ports, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank and Tech Mahindra were among the major laggards.

However, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti, Bharat Electronics and Sun Pharma were among the gainers. The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.35 per cent, and the midcap index dipped 0.23 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, metal tanked 1.27 per cent, commodities (1.08 per cent), bankex (1.06 per cent), financial services (0.84 per cent), oil & gas (0.80 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.77 per cent) and IT (0.77 per cent). BSE Healthcare, telecommunication and capital goods were the gainers.

"Market sentiment turned cautious as profit-booking set in after a strong six-day rally driven by GST reform optimism and an S&P rating upgrade. Investors also awaited Powell's comments, which could influence September's Fed policy direction. Adding to the pressure were concerns over the August 27 deadline for additional US tariffs on Indian goods," Gaurav Garg, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

In the six-day rally to Thursday, the BSE benchmark has climbed 1,765 points or 2.14 per cent, and the Nifty rallied 596 points or 2.4 per cent. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled in positive territory. Markets in Europe were trading in the green in mid-session deals. (PTI)

DPS Nagaon students showcase projects on UN Sustainable Goals

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: Delhi Public School, Nagaon organised "Galleria, SDG-2025 (Sustainable Dreams, Global Goals)", an exhibition highlighting projects and models based on the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, according to an official statement.

The event was inaugurated by Nagaon Deputy Commissioner Devashish Sharma, IAS, who attended as the chief guest, along with Administrative Officer Tejash Agnihotri, IAS. Sharma praised the creativity and awareness displayed by the students and also inspired the gathering with the motivational song "We Shall Overcome".

The programme was attended by Pro Vice Chairman Binod Kumar Chhawchharia, School Director Divya Chhawchharia, Principal Ritu Rajnish, and Administrator Anwar Pervej, who welcomed the dignitaries. Parents in large numbers attended the exhibition and applauded the students' efforts.

The event concluded with words of encouragement from the school leadership, reiterating that small steps taken by young minds today can help build a sustainable world tomorrow.

Kolkata metro expansion to boost real estate, say industry leaders

KOLKATA, Aug 22: The expansion of Kolkata's metro network is set to give a major fillip to connectivity, spur housing demand, and boost office leasing activity, industry leaders said on Friday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will later on Friday inaugurate three new stretches — Sealdah to Esplanade (Green Line, 2.6 km), Noapara to Jai Hind Bimanbandar (Yellow Line, 6.77 km), and Hemanta Mukhopadhyay to Beleghata (Orange Line, 4.39 km) — marking a landmark infrastructure push for the city.

Residential property prices in the city have already surged by over 12 per cent in the past year, with metro-linked micro-markets such as East Kolkata, Rajarhat, and Joka/Behala outperforming broader trends, officials said.

LOST

I, Masum Ahmed Laskar, R/O: Vill: Jayantia Basti, P.O:Nilbagan,P.S : Hojai-have lost my Transfer Certificate No 969 issued on Date: 21/11/2007 of Class VIII of Year 2002 and Admission No. 3405 issued by Nilbagan Model Higher Secondary School, Nilbagan.

In Howrah, property values have risen by 8 per cent, while commercial rates climbed as much as 30 per cent near new metro stations, they added.

Merlin Group MD Saket Mohta said connectivity will unlock new growth opportunities, while Emami Realty chief Nitesh Kumar said it would be a big boost for the city's real estate industry.

"Connectivity brings growth and prosperity. It opens new job opportunities and helps in the growth of healthcare, education, and other social sectors, as people from far-off areas can avail themselves of these facilities. The new metro lines will catapult residential sales to a new height, particularly in the suburbs where prices are affordable," he said.

Overall, Kolkata's residential segment saw significant growth in the first half of 2025, driven by a 105 per cent surge in new project launches and strong demand for mid-range and luxury properties. Prices in peripheral areas along the Southern Bypass and beyond will go up, and North Kolkata will see a spurt in new launches, Mohta added.

"While Q1 2025 saw a slight dip in total sales, this was due to an increase in new supply. The new metro lines will add momentum to the residential segment," he said.

"However, the availability of suitable land may be a challenge. Large tracts in areas like Sodepur, Kamarhati, and Titagarh — where industries have shut — can be unlocked for housing and commercial development with suitable policy support," Mohta added.

Emami Realty MD & CEO Nitesh Kumar said metro connectivity would be a "big boon" for the city's real estate industry.

"This will surely enhance connectivity and stimulate economic growth, eventually leading to strong real estate development in the region and Kolkata at large. To put things in perspective, Property cost in Delhi NCR, particularly central locations and outstations like Dwarka, Noida, and Gurgaon, appreciated by almost 150 per cent post-metro connectivity," he said.

He added that Mumbai MMR, especially central areas and suburbs like Andheri and Borivali, witnessed close to 120 per cent appreciation, while Bengaluru localities like Koramangala and Whitefield appreciated by almost 100 per cent.

"Kolkata, too, has seen central, south, Salt Lake, and Howrah appreciate by 150-200 per cent over the years after metro expansion. Surely, we will see the IT sector boom further in the near future," he said.

Credai West Bengal President Sushil Mohta said the expansion would reshape Kolkata's office market. "The inauguration of new metro routes will connect some of Kolkata's busiest areas and bring a notable reduction in travel time while strengthening multimodal connectivity, benefitting lakhs of daily commuters. This will spur office growth in Sector V, Bypass, Rajarhat, and New Town. Sector V is going to be the new Dalhousie Square, while New Town will emerge as a new Park Street," he said.

"The enhanced network will link residential clusters with office hubs, making workplace access more convenient and expanding the catchment area for corporates to attract talent. Kolkata's office market already grew 60 per cent year-on-year in the first half of 2025, with a decade-high transaction volume of 1.4 million sq ft. We expect 2 million sq ft of leasing this year, driven by IT, BFSI, and Global Capability Centres (GCCs). The upcoming World Trade Center in Sector V adds to Bengal's pride, and we will also see malls and shopping complexes coming up in North Kolkata," he added.

Jain Group Executive Director Rishi Jain said, "Even though Joka Metro is incomplete, it has already given a fillip to realty demand in the area. In the last year, prices have appreciated by well over 12 per cent." (PTI)

Page 3 Aug 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 21:33 Page 1

District development committee meeting emphasizes efficiency in public service delivery

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 22: The monthly meeting of the District Development Committee was held on August 21 and 22 under the chairmanship of District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das at the Conference Hall of the DC's Office, Sonitpur. The meeting was attended by District Development Commissioner Lakhinandan Saharia, Co-District Commissioners of Naduar and Rangapara—Manash Kumar Saikia and Kabita Kakati Konwar respectively—Additional DCs Twahir Alam and Jintu Borah, along with designated Heads of Departments of Sonitpur district.

At the outset, the DC stressed the importance of effective and efficient public service delivery through continuous monitoring and evaluation of flagship government programmes. He urged all departments to work in a mission mode to ensure timely completion of projects.

Special emphasis was placed on the Health Department, particularly in reducing child and maternal mortality rates, expanding immunisation coverage, and related parameters. The Agriculture Department was directed to achieve saturation in schemes such as PM-Kisan, PMFBY, and paddy procurement. The Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs Department was asked to enhance coverage under NFSA and streamline distribution.

The implementation of PMAY (Urban) under Housing & Urban Affairs and Town & Country Planning was reviewed, while the Women and Child Development Department was instructed to ensure proper implementation of flagship schemes, with focus on completion and strengthening of allotted Model Anganwadi Centres. Discussions also covered PMJAY, PMMSY, and other key schemes.

The Public Health Engineering Department was directed to operationalise dysfunctional Jal Jeevan Mission schemes and resolve inter-departmental issues related to water supply. The committee also discussed CMAAA, PM Vishwakarma, and industry development potential with the DICC department.

Progress under the PWD (Roads & Buildings), Water Resources Department, and embankment restoration by Tezpur Water Resources Division was also reviewed. The In-Charge ALC presented updates on the Mukhya Mantrir Eti Koli Duti Paat Asoni in tea gardens and inspection drives.

In his concluding remarks, the DC reiterated that all Heads of Departments must ensure efficient implementation and timely completion of schemes. He stressed sincerity, accountability, and commitment so that the benefits of government initiatives reach people while meeting state targets.

Former KAAC executive member Rensing Bey joins BJP in West Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Aug 22: A significant political development unfolded in West Karbi Anglong on Friday as former Executive Member and MAC from the 07 Kaipil Constituency, Rensing Bey, formally joined the BJP during a mass joining programme. The event was attended by KAAC CEM Tuliram Ronghang, BJP West Karbi Anglong District Committee President Radip Ronghang, Howraghat MLA Darsing Ronghang, several MACs, board chairmen, and party office bearers.

The event marked a strengthening of the BJP's presence in the region, reflecting growing support for the party and CEM Ronghang. It underscored BJP's continued efforts to expand influence in the autonomous district functioning under the Sixth Schedule.

Later in the day, a PMAY-U 2.0 certificate distribution ceremony was held under the Donkamokam Town Committee. KAAC CEM Tuliram Ronghang led the event, joined by local officials, highlighting the government's commitment to improving housing and urban living standards.

These events underscore the BJP and KAAC's joint efforts to promote inclusive growth and meet local needs in West Karbi Anglong.

All Party Hills Leaders Conference stages protest in Diphu

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Aug 22: Diphu town, the headquarters of Karbi Anglong District, witnessed a massive protest led by All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC) President Jones Ingti Kathar. The demonstration targeted the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and its Chief Executive Member (CEM) Tuliram Ronghang, accusing the BJP-led administration of undermining the Sixth Schedule provisions.

Hundreds of protestors gathered, carrying placards and shouting slogans against the ruling party. Kathar alleged that the KAAC leadership had failed to safeguard the constitutional rights of the hill people and instead prioritised political gains over public welfare.

The APHLC demanded immediate corrective measures, including transparency in governance and respect for the autonomy of the council. The protest concluded peacefully but sent a strong message of growing discontent among sections of the populace.

420 VCDC decretaries appointed, 26 official vehicles distributed in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 22: The Panchayat & Rural Development Department, BTC, organized a ceremonial distribution programme today at Bodofa Cultural Complex, Chandamari, Kokrajhar. Appointment letters were handed to 420 newly appointed VCDC Secretaries across the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Additionally, 26 official vehicles were distributed to Project Directors of DRDAs and Block Development Officers.

Gracing the occasion as Chief Guest, BTC CEM Pramod Boro underlined the crucial role of rural governance in ensuring balanced and inclusive development. He said the appointment of VCDC Secretaries has created an institutional framework for the effective implementation of rural development schemes.

He highlighted that both State and Central governments are working together to empower rural populations through various schemes. Addressing the new appointees, the CEM urged them to serve people with sincerity and empathy. "Be mentally prepared to help the people. Never say no to those who may not always be well informed. Instead, guide and assist them properly," Boro said.

Earlier, Secretary, P&RD, Dhiraj Saud, emphasized the importance of adhering to rules and performing duties diligently.

The event was also attended by Deputy CEM Gobinda Ch. Basumatary, EMs Dhananjay Basumatary, Dr. Nilut Swargiary, Dr. Dharma Narayan Das, MCLA Madhav Ch. Chetry, and other dignitaries.

CCTOA Sonitpur protests Assam govt's move on Tirap Tribal Belt

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 22: The Sonitpur district unit of the Coordination Committee of Tribal Organisations of Assam (CCTOA) staged a strong protest in front of the DC's office on Thursday, joining statewide demonstrations against the government's decision to include Ahom, Matak, Moran, Chutia, Gorkha, Koch Rajbongshi, Tea Garden, and Adivasi communities in the list of protected classes in the Tirap Tribal Belt.

Over 1,000 members of tribal organisations including TMPK, AARSU, UBPO, ABSU, Tribal Sangha, Nyshi Elite Society, and Garo Union Committee participated. Protesters burnt the notification issued on August 18, rejecting it outright and demanding its withdrawal.

They urged the Assam and Central governments not to compromise the land rights of indigenous tribals in the Tirap Tribal Belt.

Journalist and YouTuber claims FIR by Guwahati police completely baseless, will respond legally

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: Journalist and YouTuber Abhisar Sharma has claimed that the FIR registered by Guwahati Police against him over a video was 'completely baseless' and he will respond to it legally.

Guwahati police's crime branch on Thursday registered an FIR against Sharma over his video allegedly ridiculing the Assam and Union governments and promoting religious enmity, a senior official said.

'The FIR filed against me by @assampolice is completely baseless. It will be responded to legally!', Sharma posted on 'X'.

'In my show, I had mentioned the statement of an Assam judge, where he referred to the Assam government giving 3,000 bighas of land to Mahabal Cement and had criticised it', he said.

Sharma said he had also highlighted Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's 'communal politics with facts — based on his statements'.

The journalist also shared the link to the video on which the FIR has been filed.

The FIR has invoked Sections 152 (sedition), 196 and 197 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS).

This comes close on the heels of two senior journalists — Siddharth Vardarajan and Karan Thapar — being summoned by Guwahati police in connection with cases registered under similar sections — 152, 196, and 197 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) — and asked to appear on August 22.

According to the complaint, Sharma uploaded a video on YouTube accusing the Assam chief minister of pursuing communal politics.

Sharma also mocked the principle of Ram Rajya and claimed that the government "survives only on Hindu-Muslim polarisation," the complainant said.

Complainant Alok Baruah, a 23-year-old resident of Nayanpur, Ganeshguri, stated that the remarks were made with mala fide intent to disrepute the duly elected Union and Assam governments.

The complainant alleged that the offences committed by Sharma are punishable under Sections 152 (which replaced the repealed sedition law and criminalizes acts that endanger the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India), 196 (offense of promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste, or community) and 197 (dealing with with imputations and assertions that are prejudicial to national integration) of the BNS, 2023. *(PTI)*

Mass Joining in BJP's Rongkhang Assembly Constituency programme

HT Correspondent

HAMREN, Aug 22: At the BJP's public meeting and 'Mass Joining Programme' in the newly constituted 111th Rongkhang Assembly constituency in West Karbi Anglong district and the 5 Rongkhang MAC constituency of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), a large number of opposition party workers joined the ruling BJP.

The event continued the BJP's 'Mass Joining Programme' across Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong, under the administrative control of KAAC.

The meeting was attended by prominent BJP hill tribes' leader and CEM of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang, who was present as Chief Guest and welcomed the new members.

Among those joining the BJP were Ren Sing Bey of Kheroni, a former ASDC leader and later Congress leader with significant influence among the Hindi-speaking community in Kopili MAC constituency, and Larta Rangpipi, a woman Congress leader and President of Kopili Mandal Mahila Congress Committee.

CEM Tuliram Ronghang, considered the BJP's face in the hills, said the opposition in Karbi Anglong was insignificant and that Congress and other parties had practically no presence in the region.

The meeting was also attended by Rongkhang MAC Longbison Bey, MLA Darsing Ronghang, and Radip Ronghang, President of BJP, West Karbi Anglong District Committee.

NF Railway enhances safety measures in trains

HT Correspondent

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: N.F. Railway continues to modernize infrastructure to ensure passenger safety and comfort. As part of Indian Railways' modernization, conventional ICF coaches are being converted into advanced Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches equipped with Fire and Smoke Detection Systems (FSDS), Fire Detection and Suppression Systems (FDSS), and Aerosol-based Fire Detection Systems.

A total of 1,223 LHB AC coaches now have FSDS, while 148 power cars and 79 pantry cars are fitted with FDSS. Additionally, 956 AC coaches are equipped with Aerosol-based systems.

These technologies ensure early detection, minimize risks, and enhance safety during train operations. Fire protection systems are being phased in across all power cars, pantry cars, and AC coaches.

NFR also conducts regular safety drives, audits, and inspections to identify vulnerabilities and improve operational safety.

KAMA celebrates 35th Foundation Day with discussions on mountaineering growth

HT Correspondent

DIPHU, Aug 22: The Karbi Anglong Mountaineering Association (KAMA) celebrated its 35th Foundation Day with a daylong programme at the Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) Conference Hall. The event began with the hoisting of the KAMA flag by President Khorsing Terang, followed by homage to departed members.

As part of the celebration, a crucial discussion was held on the promotion of mountaineering and adventure sports in the district. Members emphasised the need to involve more youth in such activities to foster discipline, resilience, and sporting excellence.

Speakers highlighted KAMA's achievements over the past three and a half decades, while also stressing the importance of collaboration with national and international mountaineering bodies. The association resolved to strengthen its outreach programmes and continue nurturing young talent in the field.

Capacity building training for handloom weavers begins

HT Correspondent

MANGALDAI, Aug 22: A month-long capacity building training programme on handloom-based value-added production began here on August 9 and will continue till September 7, according to an official statement.

The programme, organised in Darrang, a NITI Aayog aspirational district, is sponsored under the CSR initiative of the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi) and implemented by GRMD Foundation. The training aims to enhance the skills of local weavers to produce value-added products suitable for both national and international markets.

It also seeks to create awareness about design development, product diversification, and strategies for producing export-quality items.

As part of the programme, participants are being trained on value chain development for price setting, as well as market linkage through both online and offline platforms.

Handholding support to the cluster weavers will also be provided by the GRMD Foundation.

Tezpur University's Assamese Department celebrates UGC NET success

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 22: The Department of Assamese at Tezpur University achieved remarkable success in the UGC NET (Dec 2024 & June 2025) exams. This year, three students qualified for JRF, nine for Assistant Professorship, and four for PhD eligibility. Two students also emerged as national toppers with 100 percentile scores.

The department, which began its postgraduate programme in 2020 with 20 seats, has quickly established itself as a centre of excellence. It has drawn global academic attention with innovative research, including reviving old Assamese scripts.

KKHSOU Lumding College study centre organises admission awareness programme

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Aug 22: The KKHSOU Lumding College Study Centre organised an 'Admission Awareness Programme' under the leadership of Principal Dr. Anuradha Chaudhuri and Study Centre Coordinator Pradip Bahadur Chetry.

Distinguished speakers included Dr. Parag Dutta, Associate Professor of Economics, KKHSOU, and Dr. Trisha D. Baruah, Assistant Professor of Mass Communication, KKHSOU. They highlighted the scope, relevance, and opportunities of the university's academic programmes.

Dr. Satyajit Das of Lumding College anchored the programme, ensuring smooth execution. The event successfully promoted higher education opportunities through open and distance learning.

Body recovered in Sootea

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Aug 22: The floating body of Siddik Sheikh, 35, a resident of Udaipur under Sootea PS, was discovered in a pond by locals on Friday morning.

Siddik had gone missing on August 20. His family searched unsuccessfully and later lodged a missing case at Sootea PS. Unfortunately, his body was later found.

Police from Sootea PS reached the site and sent the body for autopsy.

Audio Song 'Malin Adaprang' released by MG production

HT Correspondent

DIPHU, Aug 22: MG Production released the audio song 'Malin Adaprang' at the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS) Office, KPH, Taralangso, today. The release programme was conducted by Gobin Terang, lyricist and composer of the song, and formally launched by KCS President Humsing Bey and General Secretary Sunil Tokbi.

Other distinguished attendees included KCS Vice President Kamsing Ingti; Secretary (Organization) Bhubon Tokbi; Secretary (Publicity) Hingchong Tisso, and several others.

The song features vocals by Robina Kropi, music composed by Horen Tokbi of Bihai Studio, with lyrics and tune by Gobin Terang.

East Zone Regional Abilympics 2025 begins in Guwahati

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: The East Zone Regional Abilympics 2025 was inaugurated on Friday at Kalakshetra, Guwahati, showcasing the skills and creativity of over 100 participants with disabilities from across the eastern and northeastern states, according to an official statement.

Organised by the National Abilympic Association of India (NAAI) in collaboration with Sarthak Educational Trust, and supported by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, TPCDT, and IndusInd Bank, the event marked the final regional competition ahead of the nationals in New Delhi this November.

Winners will go on to qualify for the 11th International Abilympics in Finland in 2027.

The event was inaugurated by Assam Principal Secretary for Women and Child Development, Mukesh Chand Sahu, in the presence of Bhaskar Jyoti Manta, additional secretary-cum-director of social justice & empowerment, along with senior officials, representatives from NAAI, Sarthak Educational Trust, and other dignitaries.

Participants from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Mizoram, Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha competed across diverse vocational skills such as photography, painting and decoration, crochet, engineering design, hairdressing, massage, and bakery & patisserie.

Sahu emphasised the importance of creating opportunities for persons with disabilities rather than discrimination, describing Abilympics as a platform that nurtures hidden talent and strengthens grassroots communities.

Manta highlighted the state government's efforts to empower PwDs, including the establishment of a National University for Disability Studies near Guwahati, the first of its kind in the Northeast.

Alongside the competitions, a Regional Conference on Disability Inclusion and Skilling was also held, featuring sessions on assistive technology, policy partnerships, inclusive workplaces, and change-maker stories.

Dr Jitender Aggarwal, secretary-general of NAAI and Founder of Sarthak Educational Trust, said the Abilympics was a step towards preparing Indian participants to represent the country at the global platform in Finland.

He noted that Sarthak's Guwahati centre, launched in 2022, has already trained over 900 persons with disabilities, with nearly 70% successfully placed in corporates.

Participants too expressed enthusiasm. Snigdha Rajbongshi, a hearing-impaired contestant from Guwahati, said Abilympics had given her the confidence to dream of representing India internationally through her crochet skills.

The East Zone Regional Abilympics 2025 will continue over two days, celebrating resilience, talent, and inclusion, while reinforcing the message that disability is not inability.

Page 4 Aug 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 21:36 Page 1

THE HILLS TIMES

VOL. XXVI, ISSUE 219, DIPHU, SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 2025

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Experience is a good school. But the fees are high.
-Heinrich Heine

Unemployment rate rising

Unemployment rate in urban areas in India has continued to rise in the fourth month in a row in July 2025 and stood as high as 7.2 per cent, as against 6.5 per cent in April. It rose to 6.9 per cent in May, and 7.1 per cent in July in Current Weekly Status (CWS). Female unemployment rate in July was 8.7 per cent in urban areas, which is at the same level as of April. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) monthly bulletin for July 2025, has found that the unemployment rate among the youth of the age ground 15-29 was as high as 14.9 per cent in CWS. Female youth unemployment rate was higher at 16.7 per cent as against 14.3 per cent among male. The unemployment rate in rural and urban areas has wide difference. Unemployment rate in the rural areas was 4.4 per cent while in urban areas it was 7.2 per cent. Thus, the combined unemployment rate for the country, both in the urban and rural areas, stood at 5.2 per cent in the country, as against 5.1 per cent in April. Unemployment rate among rural male of age 15 years and above was4.6% during July, 2025. For rural female of the same age group unemployment rate was found to be3.9%. In urban areas unemployment rate among female of age 15years and above during July,2025 was 8.7% compared to6.6% observed for male of the same age group.

As for the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), it stood at 54.9% in July 2025 in CWS for persons of age 15 years and above. In rural areas it was 56.9% and while it was 50.7% in urban areas. LFPR among rural male of age 15 years and above was 78.1% during July, 2025. For rural female of the same age group, it was found to be 36.9%.In urban areas LFPR among female of age 15years and above was 25.8%compared to 75.1%observed for male of the same age group. LFPR in CWS among persons of age 15-29 was 41.2 per cent in July 2025. For the male it was 60.9 per cent while for female it was only 21.1 per cent. It goes without saying the female youth workforce are at receiving end, which signifies that the government policies are not yet encouraging for the women, thought the government goes on telling the country about the youth and female empowerment.

It may look strange that despite the Kharif season with increased agricultural activities, LFPR in rural areas has been declined to 56.9 per cent in July from 58 per cent in April. There is very dismal scenario for female workforce since female LFPR in April was 38.2 per cent which further declined to 36.9 per cent in July. Very wide gap persists between male and female LFPR in the rural area. Male LFPR in July was 78.1 per cent that has declined from 79 per cent in April.

SC Urt's refurbished order on stray dogs of Delhi is a welcome compromise

By: Sushil Kutty

The Supreme Court has modified its dog-order of August 11 and "dog-lovers" are beyond relief, except that the order doesn't meet everybody's expectations. The best thing about the order is that dog-lovers have been told not to feed strays on the streets and roads, in the vicinity of schools and at the entrances to gated communities. Food is not always an distraction but dogs might take exception to a stray child or elderly man invading the public feeding areas randomly selected by the compassionate dog-lovers.

The problem is every dog-lover who feed stray dogs selects his or her feeding place. The dog-lover is as territorial as the dog! The Supreme Court's modified order says the strays should be captured, sterilized and immunized and then released back into the human population. And because the stray dogs have been vaccinated against Rabies, children wouldn't be in danger.

The most that will happen will be fear of dogs instilled in the child, a fear that will stay for the rest of his/her lifetime. Fear of stray dogs is an international phenomenon. In Netherlands, it led to strong measures taken and today Netherlands is beyond the ken of stray dogs. But India being 'Sanatani', Indians are default animal-lovers, not just dog-lovers.

The Supreme Court directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to release sterilised and vaccinated stray dogs back into their localities but not before the dogs are tested and declared rabies-free. Stray dogs betraying aggressive behaviour must be kept separate from the rest of the freely roaming stray dogs.

Is the MCD capable of carrying out this task? As it is, dog-lovers have been questioning the commitment of the inept MCD. The feeling drummed into the average Indian that our justices are a notch above common mortals. The stoppage of public feeding of stray dogs is a great relief to people who use roads for a smooth travel from 'Point A' to 'Point B'. Stray dogs often take a liking for unprotected ankles and calves.

So while dedicated public feeding zones are a relief, the rider that sterilized and vaccinated stray dogs should be released back into their territorial biting grounds is still scary for the child and the majority of the elderly. Predicting dog behaviour is not in the domain of children and the elderly.

The top court's order says designated feeding zones must be created and animal lovers can adopt stray dogs using the services of the MCD. A lot has been alleged about the MCD, will the municipal body up to the task? Only time 8will tell, but the three-judge bench of the Supreme Court has taken up the challenge with all sincerity with the hope that no dog breaches its trust.

Dog-lovers have been saying that parents should doggy-train their kids just like they're potty-trained, adding that children provoking stray dogs is a common sight on India's thoroughfares, keep the children on a leash! Dog-lovers are wholly with the "voiceless dogs". So much so, they take exception to even "It's a dog's life", stray dog's are worthless.

The Supreme Court on Friday sought to make amends. giving back to stray dogs their territorial rights is akin to ensuring human rights. But isn't sterilization a breach of dog-rights? Dog spelled and pronounced back-to-front is GOD! And, here, you have dog-lovers affirming that the best way to ensure the end of the stray dog menace is to sterilize them and let time take its toll. The standard lifetime of a dog is at the most 15 years and sterilized dogs will not get aggressive if their breeding rights are taken away without ado.

Aggressive behaviour and rabies are signs. The MCD has been hogging money earmarked for stray dogs. There are about 20 dog-NGOs affiliated to the MCD, and they're no better than the MCD. Chances are the Supreme Court will "look into the matter" when it draws up the promised "national dog policy. As it is, Friday's verdict applies not only to Delhi-NCR but to the entire country.

The final national "dog" must not lose sight of dedicated feeding zones for the stray dogs. Asking parents to doggy-train their children is as impractical as expecting the municipal bodies to set up dog-shelters for crores and crores of stray dogs. The verdict was delivered by a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N V Anjaria, The key modifications include release of sterilized and vaccinated stray dogs into the same area they were rounded up from; That the court has put a stop to feeding stray dogs in public spaces is the game-changer. Rest assured, the strays are not going to take it as an insult. (IPA Service)

The Crisis and Potential of golden silk 'Muga'

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The cultural identity of Assam, its economy, and its ecological heritage find a shimmering embodiment in a single, remarkable creation of nature and human craft — the Muga silk, or as it is reverently known, the golden silk of Assam. Muga, spun from the silkworm species Antheraea assamensis, is unique in both origin and character. The natural golden tint of this silk does not fade with time; instead, it becomes brighter, signifying not just physical longevity but also a deep-rooted cultural endurance. It is not merely a textile; it is a narrative woven with the threads of nature, tradition, and human resilience. The Geographical Indication (GI) tag awarded to Muga in 2007 and to its logo in 2014 was not just a legal recognition — it was a seal of authenticity that reasserted Assam's claim over a heritage product that is irreplaceable, unreplicable, and globally admired. Yet, despite this recognition and heritage value, Muga today faces a host of challenges that threaten its very future. From the ecological instability posed by climate change to the steady decline in traditional skills and unfair market dynamics, Muga's existence hangs in a delicate balance. At the same time, the growth of sustainable consumerism, technological advancement, and renewed interest in indigenous products globally have opened new frontiers of opportunity. The trajectory of Muga now lies at a crucial intersection of preservation and innovation, crisis and opportunity, despair and hope.

Assam's warm and humid climate, its indigenous flora, and unpolluted natural landscape have traditionally provided the ideal environment for Muga silkworms to thrive. These silkworms feed on the leaves of Som and Sualu trees, which flourish in Assam's rural hinterlands. The health and nutritional quality of these trees directly determine the quality of the silk produced. Even slight disruptions in the temperature, humidity, or cleanliness of the surrounding environment have catastrophic consequences for the silkworms. This biological sensitivity makes Muga silk inherently dependent on the preservation of Assam's ecological integrity. However, the increasing industrialization in various regions of the state has brought about alarming changes — air and water pollution, soil degradation, and the depletion of green cover. These factors are directly undermining the conditions necessary for the survival of Muga silkworms. The decrease in the availability of Som and Sualu trees due to deforestation, coupled with changing climatic patterns, has significantly affected the silk's production potential. At a time when sustainability has become a global priority, the traditional and eco-friendly methods employed in Muga production stand out. The entire production cycle — from rearing silkworms to spinning, dyeing, and weaving — is primarily carried out manually and with minimal environmental impact. Predominantly led by rural women, these activities not only ensure the sustainability of the process but also promote economic empowerment at the grassroots level. This aspect of Muga adds another layer of significance: it is not just a product, but a livelihood for thousands, a tradition passed down through generations, and an art form that has defied industrial homogenization.

Historically, Muga has held a distinctive position in Assam's socio-cultural fabric. Its use dates back to as early as 321 BCE, revealing a continuity that few other crafts in the world can claim. During the Ahom dynasty, Muga was not merely an item of clothing but a marker of royal status. Worn by kings and nobles, garments made from Muga such as the kingkhap and chola symbolized dignity and authority. In 1662, French traveler Jean Joseph Tavernier took notice of the golden silk, thereby introducing its aesthetic and material excellence to the Western world. Later, in 1793, the British East India Company began exporting Muga silk to England, with an early consignment of 224 maunds fetching nearly 54,000 rupees — a significant economic marker for the time. These milestones in history showcase not only Muga's cultural relevance but also its robust economic value. Even today, the market price of Muga ranges from 3,200 to 5,000 rupees per kilogram, reflecting its enduring prestige. The major production hubs — the Brahmaputra Valley, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Kamrup, and Dhakuakhana — continue to preserve this legacy. Among them, Sualkuchi, often called the Manchester of the East, is particularly noteworthy. With nearly half its population engaged in weaving and silk production, Sualkuchi has become the living heartbeat of Muga. The settlement of 26 weaver families under the directive of King Dharmapal in the 11th century marks the beginning of a legacy that continues to thrive. The economic history of these regions, rooted in sericulture and weaving, underscores the fact that Muga is not just a cottage industry — it is a cultural economy.

The Geographical Indication tag awarded to Muga is more than a legal trademark — it is a testimony to the inseparable connection between the silk and its native geography. The tag ensures the authenticity of Muga silk, protecting it from inferior counterfeits and enabling genuine producers to access international markets with greater confidence. It gives Assam's rural artisans a new platform and offers the world a window into the region's rich textile tradition. However, the full potential of this recognition remains underutilized. The lack of robust policy implementation, insufficient branding strategies, and inadequate marketing infrastructure have limited the GI tag's effectiveness. What is needed is a multi-pronged approach involving policy reforms, institutional support, and collaborative frameworks between artisans, private investors, and government agencies. Digital marketing platforms and global exhibitions can boost awareness and create a brand identity for Muga that aligns with contemporary consumer expectations. The GI tag is the beginning of a new era for Muga — one that must be followed up with aggressive and intelligent promotion, financial investment, and socio-cultural campaigns.

Despite its many strengths, Muga production faces an existential threat from environmental degradation. The fragile ecosystem that supports Muga silkworms is being severely disrupted by changes in rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, and human interference with natural habitats. The depletion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes has reduced the scope for Som tree cultivation, while pollution from nearby industrial activities continues to alter the microclimate. These factors are detrimental to the silkworms' survival and silk quality. To counter this, conservation strategies must be formulated and executed on a war footing. Large-scale afforestation of Som and Sualu trees, restoration of polluted habitats, and awareness campaigns aimed at preserving biodiversity are urgently needed. Governmental support must be channelled into research and development to adapt sericulture practices to changing climatic conditions. Encouraging community participation and incentivizing ecological stewardship among local populations will also play a critical role. Environmental sustainability is not merely a backdrop to Muga's story; it is the foundation on which its entire narrative rests.

A parallel crisis looms in the form of declining traditional skills. As urbanization and modern lifestyles lure younger generations toward alternative careers, the artisanal knowledge associated with Muga is fading. The complex and time-intensive processes of rearing silkworms, spinning, dyeing, and weaving require years of apprenticeship and dedication. With fewer youth willing to learn these crafts, there is a risk that Muga may lose its authenticity and uniqueness.

Reviving this interest among the younger population will require targeted educational programs, vocational training, and integration of Muga-related content in school curricula. Showcasing success stories of Muga artisans, providing incentives and financial aid to young entrepreneurs in sericulture, and incorporating modern design sensibilities without diluting the tradition could re-attract the youth. The state's sericulture department, along with NGOs and private players, must ensure that this precious knowledge is preserved and passed on, not buried under the weight of modernity.

Economically, the primary producers of Muga continue to face exploitation at the hands of middlemen. These intermediaries often purchase raw silk at deflated prices and sell it at exorbitant rates, leaving the actual artisans with minimal profit. The commercial turnover of Muga may be around 40 crore rupees annually, and exports generate between 100 and 120 crore rupees, but a substantial portion of this revenue bypasses the producers. Rectifying this calls for the formation of cooperatives, the establishment of producer-owned marketing boards, and better access to national and international markets through e-commerce. Emphasizing the exclusivity and quality of Muga in branding can attract premium buyers, particularly in global luxury markets. Infrastructure development is essential — from silkworm rearing centers and spinning machines to modern design and quality control facilities. Only through a concerted effort involving all stakeholders can Muga's economic ecosystem become equitable and sustainable.

Technology holds immense promise for Muga's future. Mechanized reeling and spinning units, automated looms, and climate-controlled sericulture farms can boost productivity without compromising on quality. Digital platforms can be harnessed to expand Muga's footprint in national and international markets. The rising global demand for natural, handmade, and eco-friendly products offers Muga a competitive edge. Strategic collaborations with designers can introduce Muga to haute couture and luxury fashion, making it not only a traditional fabric but also a contemporary style statement. By embracing innovation while honoring tradition, Muga can evolve to meet modern demands without losing its soul.

The ecological narrative of Muga is now more relevant than ever. As the world seeks alternatives to synthetic and polluting textiles, the biodegradable and organic qualities of Muga can be effectively positioned as a benchmark for sustainable fashion. But capitalizing on this will require continuous efforts in environmental protection. Rejuvenating the natural habitats required for Muga's production, monitoring air and water quality, and incorporating environmental education into sericulture policies will be key. The green character of Muga must not remain a rhetorical advantage — it must be demonstrated through actionable policy and practice.

Culturally, Muga must be reclaimed by the people of Assam, especially the youth. Social awareness campaigns, fashion events showcasing Muga-based designs, and media outreach programs can reintroduce Muga as not just an item of nostalgia but a living, breathing symbol of pride. Encouraging its use in weddings, festivals, and social functions can reinforce its relevance. More importantly, the artisans behind Muga must be celebrated — their names, faces, and stories should be brought to the forefront to humanize the narrative and honor their contributions.

In conclusion, Muga represents much more than a textile tradition. It encapsulates Assam's ecological uniqueness, cultural depth, and artisanal excellence. While the GI tag has helped in positioning Muga on the global map, the road ahead is fraught with challenges that require thoughtful and united responses. Environmental conservation, economic reform, technological integration, and cultural revival must converge to ensure that Muga does not just survive but thrives in the 21st century. Assam's golden silk is not merely a heritage of the past; it is a promise for the future — a bridge that links tradition with innovation, ecology with economy, and identity with aspiration.

'ELECTION COMMISSION: PUBLIC TRUST OR POLITICAL PRESSURE'

By: Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

The Election Commission of India was once considered the strongest foundation of democracy. But in recent years, serious questions have been raised about its impartiality and transparency—names missing from voter lists, delays and inconsistencies in voting percentage, limitations of EVM-VVPAT matching, and political influence on the appointment of commissioners. Double standards are also visible in the enforcement of the code of conduct. The biggest crisis is that public trust has started to waver. The existence of democracy depends not only on machines, but on the trust of citizens.

The Election Commission of India was once considered the most trusted watchdog of democracy. But recent controversies have raised questions on its credibility—names missing from voter lists, doubts over the transparency of voting percentage, and questions being raised on the appointment process. The biggest challenge for the Election Commission now is not to make rules or send notices, but to return the trust of the people. Because democracy does not run only on voting machines, but on the trust of the people. If trust is shaken, elections will remain a mere ritual and democracy will lose its true meaning.

Democracy is a game. The playing field is the public, the players are the political parties and the referee is the Election Commission. The question is, how fair will the game remain when the referee himself enters the field wearing the jersey of one team? This doubt has been raised again and again in recent times.

It seems as if the matter of removing names from the voter list has become a new government fashion. The voter sits at home and thinks that he has an existence in democracy, but when he goes to the polling booth on the day of voting, he finds out that he has already been "made to disappear". Just like a magician brings out a rabbit from a hat, the Election Commission shows the art of deleting names. And when you go to complain, you are told - "Fill an affidavit, testify, prove that you are alive." That is, the biggest proof of citizenship in this country is no longer that you are breathing, but that the Commission has ticked your name with a pencil.

The state of transparency of the Election Commission is like the mirror placed on the groom's horse - it is visible to everyone, but gets blurred as soon as one goes close to it. The announcement of the voting percentage is also like the trailer of a Bollywood film - first a glimpse is shown, then after several days the actual figures come, and sometimes the second trailer turns out to be longer than the first. The public asks that when the votes are counted immediately at the booth, then why does it take a week to declare the percentage? The Commission's answer is - "Everything was on our app." But the public thinks, when the photo goes live on social media before the wedding card is printed, then why does the data of the vote counting hang?

Now let us come to EVM and VVPAT. The Commission's argument is that the machines are absolutely safe. The public says, "We also have faith, but please show the slip." The Commission says, "Five booths are enough." This is like a shopkeeper weighing only five grains out of every hundred kilos of flour and saying, "Look, they are whole, now trust the rest." The Supreme Court said that 100 percent matching is not necessary, but the question is that in democracy, trust does not come only from the machine, trust comes from the eyes of the public. If the public wants to see, then show it, after all, what is there to hide?

The situation of appointment of commissioners is even more interesting. Earlier it was said that this appointment should be impartial. Then a new law came and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was removed. Now the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and a Minister will decide who will sit in the Commission. That is, the teacher who checks the exam papers will himself get his favourite candidate passed. What impartiality! The presence of the Leader of the Opposition is just formal, just like a distant uncle who comes in the wedding procession – he is just there for show, the rest of the game is taken care of by the big uncle.

The commission has its own "vision" in implementing the code of conduct. If a leader makes a small comment, a notice is immediately sent. But if the same thing is said by a leader from the ruling party, the commission first goes into a deep meditative state, then into yogic sleep and finally into amnesia. The public says that the commission should take action against everyone equally, but the commission seems to take action against the DJ dancing at a wedding only if it is from the neighbouring neighbourhood, whether the baraatis of the house burst crackers or play loudspeakers, everything is acceptable.

The decisions on election symbol and party division are also amazing. In the case of Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra, the commission's decisions seemed as if the script had already been written. The public quipped that the commission has now become the "property-division officer" of political parties, not of elections. Who will get the party name, who will get the election symbol - all this was decided like the division of a family's property. The only difference is that now the commission is sitting in place of the court and the public knows in advance in whose favor the decision will go.

The real crisis is not whether the commission is doing right or wrong. The real crisis is that the public has now started believing that the commission is not impartial. In democracy, perception is the biggest reality. If the public is convinced that casting vote is just a formality, then it will leave the celebration of democracy and start watching cricket matches in its room. And if the queues for casting votes start getting shorter, then the foundation of democracy will automatically shake.

There is a lot of talk about reform, but the reality is that the need for reform lies more in the thinking of the commission than in itself. If it is necessary to remove a name from the voter list, then do it with double confirmation. If the voting percentage can be declared within the stipulated time, then make a rule. If EVMs are safe, then why fear showing the slip? If the appointments are fair, then why exclude the judiciary? If the code of conduct applies to everyone, then why does the colour of the notice change according to the power?

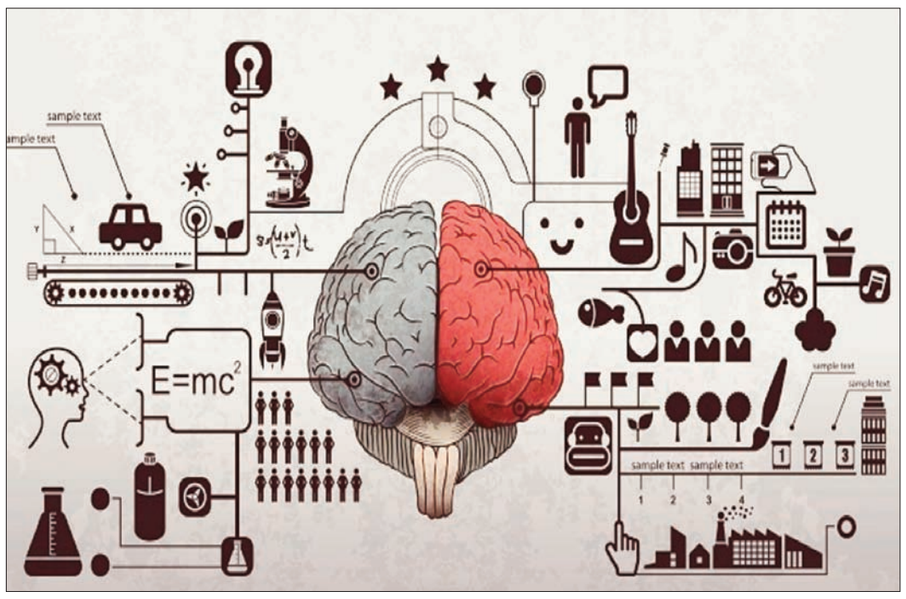
Democracy is a magical word. It shines only as long as the public trust remains intact. If the trust is broken, the lamp of democracy will also be extinguished. It is time for the Election Commission to save its image. Because institutions derive their power not from power but from the people. Power is temporary, but the people are permanent. If the Commission loses the trust of the people, it will remain only a seal in the constitutional framework.

Today, the biggest question before the commission is this—is it really a referee of democracy or a baraabaaz of power? If the referee does not blow the whistle at the right time, the game will not be decided on the field but in history. And history never forgives those who put the sanctity of democracy at stake.

Page 5 Aug 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 19:27 Page 1

Bridging Minds and Machines

New Careers in cognitive sciences



By: Prateek Singh

As human learning, decision-making, and execution become increasingly dependent on computers, machines, and artificial intelligence, it is essential to recognise that these systems remain incomplete without human cognition. Cognition, the mental process through which we acquire, understand, and use knowledge- including perception, memory, reasoning, and problem-solving-serves as the foundation for aligning AI systems with human thought and behaviour. While AI can process vast amounts of data and perform tasks with incredible efficiency, it lacks the intuitive understanding, creativity, and reasoning that define the human mind. Cognitive science bridges this gap, ensuring that technological advancements are not only efficient but also human-centric, reflecting real-world needs and values. For those considering a career at this intersection, cognitive sciences offer an exciting opportunity to shape intelligent systems that combine technological power with the depth of human understanding.

What Are Cognitive Sciences?

Cognitive sciences are the intricate functioning of the human mind and brain. The cognitive sciences include disciplines such as psychology, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, linguistics, anthropology, and philosophy. At its very core, cognitive sciences work to understand how we perceive, think, remember, and act.

Why should this matter to you? Because understanding cognition isn't just academic; it's the foundation for groundbreaking careers in technology, healthcare, education, business, and beyond.

Growing Demand for Cognitive Scientists

The world is changing at a pace that has never been witnessed before, and the power to predict and understand human behaviour is priceless. Industry across the board is in need of cognitive scientists to better design products, to enhance the user experience, find better solutions for mental health problems, and even to shape public policy.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning: The modern tech world demands that AI systems act like humans in their decision-making and problem-solving. Cognitive scientists are integral to developing algorithms that understand natural language, detect patterns, and simulate human-like thinking. They contribute insights from human cognition to ensure AI systems are not just efficient but also intuitive and user-friendly. For instance, natural language processing- the backbone of voice assistants like Alexa or Siri- requires cognitive scientists to decode how humans communicate and interpret language. Similarly, machine learning models benefit from cognitive principles to make better predictions and adapt to complex real-world scenarios.

As India rapidly grows into a global technology hub, the demand for AI professionals with a cognitive science background is soaring. Companies in sectors like fintech, healthcare, and edtech are on the lookout for experts who can merge technical prowess with an understanding of human behaviour, ensuring that technology serves people in meaningful ways. This unique combination of skills not only sets you apart but also places you at the forefront of innovation in AI and machine learning.

Career Roles:

• Human-AI Interaction Specialist: These professionals focus on designing and enhancing the way humans interact with AI systems, ensuring user-friendly and intuitive experiences. They bridge the gap between technology and human behaviour, making AI systems more responsive and natural to use.

• Data Scientist: Data scientists analyse vast amounts of data to identify patterns, make predictions, and inform decisions using AI and machine learning models. By incorporating insights from cognitive science, they develop algorithms capable of adapting to real-world complexities and human behavior

• AI Ethicist: AI ethicists examine the societal, moral, and ethical implications of AI systems to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability. They play a crucial role in formulating guidelines and policies that align AI advancements with human values and the greater good of society.

• Healthcare and Neurotechnology: Cognitive sciences are revolutionising healthcare by driving innovation in diagnostics, treatment, and rehabilitation for a wide range of mental and neurological conditions. By leveraging insights into how the brain functions, cognitive scientists are pioneering advancements in brain-machine interfaces, which enable direct communication between the brain and external devices. These technologies hold the potential to restore mobility for paralysed individuals and enhance human capabilities beyond natural limits.

Additionally, therapies for neuro-degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's are being developed with an in-depth understanding of cognitive decline and brain plasticity. Cognitive sciences are also instrumental in creating tools for cognitive rehabilitation, helping patients recover from strokes, traumatic brain injuries, or other impairments. These innovations are transforming healthcare into a more personalised, effective, and human-centered domain.

Career Roles:

• Neuropsychologist: Experts in understanding the relationship between brain function and behaviour, aiding in the diagnosis and treatment of cognitive disorders.

• Cognitive Rehabilitation Specialist: Professionals who design and implement therapeutic programmes to restore cognitive abilities in individuals with brain injuries or illnesses.

• Brain-Computer Interface Designer: Innovators creating technologies that enable seamless interaction between the human brain and machines, unlocking new possibilities for assistive devices and neurotechnology.

Education and EdTech: India's education sector is ripe for transformation. Cognitive scientists are building personalised learning systems that adapt to the unique needs of each student, making education more inclusive, engaging, and effective. By analysing how students learn and process information, cognitive scientists develop teaching methodologies that enhance memory retention, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Cognitive science principles are being used to design adaptive learning platforms, AI-driven tutoring systems, and gamified educational tools. These innovations empower educators to create learning environments that cater to diverse abilities and learning styles, bridging gaps in traditional teaching methods and ensuring no student is left behind.

Career Roles:

• Learning Experience Designer: Specialists who craft engaging, research-backed educational content and systems to optimise learning outcomes.

• Educational Neuroscientist: Researchers who study the impact of teaching strategies and educational technologies on brain development and learning.

• Cognitive Skills Trainer: Professionals who develop and deliver programmes to improve skills like memory, attention, and problem-solving in students and professionals alike.

Behavioural Economics and Market Research: In the business world, understanding consumer behaviour is a golden ticket to success. Cognitive scientists bring valuable insights into behavioural economics by decoding the cognitive processes behind decision-making. They analyse how emotions, biases, and environmental cues influence purchasing behaviour, enabling companies to craft smarter marketing campaigns and design intuitive, user-friendly products.

For example, cognitive scientists might study how layout and design impact online shopping experiences or how pricing strategies affect consumer perception. These insights drive innovation in branding, product development, and customer engagement, giving businesses a competitive edge in a crowded marketplace.

Career Roles:

• Behavioural Data Analyst: Experts who interpret complex consumer data to identify patterns and trends, guiding business strategies.

• Market Research Consultant: Professionals who design and execute research studies to understand consumer preferences and behaviour.

• Consumer Psychologist: Specialists who study how thoughts, beliefs, and feelings influence consumer actions and brand loyalty.

Public Policy and Governance: Governments and NGOs increasingly rely on cognitive science insights to tackle pressing societal challenges. From improving the effectiveness of public health campaigns to designing education policies that promote equitable learning opportunities, cognitive scientists play a crucial role in shaping policies that impact millions.

For instance, cognitive science principles are applied to nudge strategies, which subtly influence behaviour to achieve desired outcomes, such as increasing vaccination rates or reducing energy consumption. By understanding how people process information and make decisions, cognitive scientists help policymakers craft initiatives that resonate with diverse populations and achieve measurable results.

Career Roles:

• Policy Advisor: Professionals who provide evidence-based recommendations for designing and implementing impactful policies.

• Social Cognition Researcher: Experts who study how societal and cultural factors influence thought processes and behaviour.

• Human Factors Specialist: Specialists who optimise systems, products, and policies to align with human capabilities and limitations.

The Indian Context: Why Now?

India stands at a unique position today to become a global leader in cognitive sciences. Here's why:

Digital Revolution: With the Digital India initiatives and proliferation of AI and big data, the requirement for cognitive science experts is ever grwoing. Industries are looking for professionals who can analyse human behaviour and design tech solutions tailored for India's diverse population.

Focus on Mental Health: As awareness around mental health increases, cognitive science will help fill the gap for India's mental healthcare ecosystem. With this, designing therapy apps to counseling and training, the scope remains unlimited.

Renaissance in Education: The Indian National Education Policy 2020 focuses on critical thinking, problem-solving, and an interdisciplinary approach that aligns with cognitive sciences.

International Opportunities: You can apply your degree in cognitive sciences way beyond India's borders. The demand for cognitive scientists worldwide guarantees work opportunities with the best research institutions, the biggest tech companies, and the largest healthcare organisations globally.

Establishing a Career in Cognitive Sciences

Education: You need to start off with a B.A. or B.Sc. in psychology, neuroscience, computer science, or linguistics. Several universities in India and the IITs, IISc, and private institutions offer courses in these fields.

Skills to Acquire

• Programming and Data Analysis: Python, R, MATLA

• Research Methods: Statistical tools and experimental design

• Communication: Expressing complexity into actionable insight

• Interdisciplinary Thinking: Synthesis of knowledge across disciplines

Practical Experience: Back up your degree with internships, research assistantships, or online projects in the areas of user experience design, AI development, or clinical research.

The Perks: More Than a Paycheck

When making a wise career decision, it is essential to consider three key aspects: intellectual fulfillment, income and financial perks, and societal impact. Cognitive sciences excel in all three areas, making it a compelling choice for aspiring professionals. First, intellectual fulfillment is at the heart of this field. Cognitive sciences encourage you to explore complex questions about human consciousness, intelligence, and behaviour, offering a career that stimulates curiosity and promotes lifelong learning-qualities vital for personal and professional satisfaction.

Second, the field offers strong financial prospects and competitive salaries. According to market trends, the demand for cognitive science professionals has surged, driven by advancements in artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and behavioural analytics. Roles such as AI specialists, data scientists, and market researchers see starting salaries ranging from Rs, 6-12 lakh per annum in India, with experienced professionals earning upwards of Rs. 25-30 lakh annually, particularly in sectors like fintech, healthcare, and education technology. Globally, roles in AI and machine learning are among the most lucrative, with cognitive scientists playing a pivotal role in making technology intuitive, human-centric, and efficient.

Finally, societal impact is a defining feature of cognitive sciences, as the work directly contributes to improving lives. Whether you are developing AI systems to assist individuals with disabilities, pioneering therapies for mental health, or enhancing education systems with cognitive research, the outcomes of your work can create far-reaching, positive change. By combining intellectual satisfaction, strong income potential, and the ability to make a meaningful difference, cognitive sciences provide a well-rounded career path that aligns passion with purpose, ensuring long-term success and fulfillment.

(The author is a NEET-JEE Coach. Feedback on this article can be sent to feedback.employmentnews@gmail.com)

IBPS Clerk Recruitment 2025 – Online Apply for 10277 CSA Posts

Last Date: 28/08/2025.

Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) has released an employment notification to conduct online examination for the next Common Recruitment Process (CRP CSA XV) to recruit 10277 Clerical Cadre posts. The exam is tentatively scheduled in October, 2025 and November, 2025. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here .
Name of examination: IBPS CRP Customer Service Associate – XV
Name of post: Customer Service Associate
No of posts: 10277 posts
State-wise vacancy:
Andaman and Nicobar Islands: 13
Andhra Pradesh: 367
Arunachal Pradesh: 22
Assam: 204
Bihar: 308
Chandigarh: 63
Chhattisgarh: 214
Dadra and Nagar Haveli/ Daman & Diu: 35
Delhi: 416
Goa: 87
Gujarat: 753
Haryana: 144
Himachal Pradesh: 114
Jammu and Kashmir: 61
Jharkhand: 106
Karnataka: 1170
Kerala: 330
Ladakh: 5
Lakshadweep: 7
Madhya Pradesh: 601
Maharashtra: 1117
Manipur: 31
Meghalaya: 18
Mizoram: 28
Nagaland: 27
Odisha: 249
Puducherry: 19
Punjab: 276
Rajasthan: 328
Sikkim: 20
Tamil Nadu: 894
Telangana: 261
Tripura: 32
Uttar Pradesh: 1315
Uttarakhand: 102
West Bengal: 540
Pay: ₹ 24050-1340/3-28070-1650/3-33020-2000/4-41020-2340/7-57400-4400/1-61800-2680/1-64480
Total no of posts: 204 posts
Bank-wise vacancy:
Bank of Baroda: 10
Punjab National Bank: 25
Canara Bank: 25
Union Bank of India: 7
Bank of India: 10
Indian Bank: NR
Central Bank of India: 106
Indian Overseas Bank: 0
UCO Bank: NR
Bank of Maharashtra: 8
Punjab & Sind Bank: 13
Age Limit: Candidates age should be between 20 years to 28 years as on 1st August 2025. candidate must have been born not earlier than 02.08.1997 and not later than 01.08.2005 (both dates inclusive).
Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.
Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe: 5 years
Other Backward Classes (Non-Creamy Layer): 3 years
Persons With Disabilities: 10 years
Educational Qualification: A Degree (Graduation) in any discipline from a University recognised by the Govt. Of India or any equivalent qualification recognized as such by the Central Government. The candidate must possess valid Mark-sheet / Degree Certificate that he/ she is a graduate on the day he / she registers and indicate the percentage of marks obtained in Graduation while registering online.
Computer Literacy: Operating and working knowledge in computer systems is mandatory i.e. candidates should have Certificate/Diploma/Degree in computer operations/Language/ should have studied Computer / Information Technology as one of the subjects in the High School/College/Institute.
Proficiency in the Official Language of the State/ UT: The candidates applying for vacancies of a particular State/UT, should be proficient in (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) the specified / opted local language of that State/UT.
Application Fee:
SC/ST/PWBD/EXSM: Rs. 175/- (inclusive of GST)
Others: Rs. 850 /- (inclusive of GST)
Payment mode: Online (Debit Cards (RuPay/Visa/MasterCard/Maestro), Credit Cards, Internet Banking, IMPS, Cash Cards/ Mobile Wallets)
Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy by visiting official IBPS Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply online.
Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section.
Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "New User ? Register Here".
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 for Apply Online: 1st August 2025
□ Last Date to Apply Online: 28th August 2025
□ Date for Prelims Exam: October, 2025
□ Date for Release of Result for Online Exam: October/ November, 2025
□ Date for Mains Exam: November, 2025

GMCH Recruitment 2025 – 15 Staff Nurse Posts [Walk-in]

Last Date: 26/08/2025.

Gauhati Medical College & Hospital (GMCH), Guwahati has released an advertisement for the recruitment of 15 Staff Nurse Posts on contractual basis under Hospital Management Society for various ward/ICU/Department of GMCH, Ghy-32 (Assam). Interested and eligible candidates may apply here .
Name of post: Staff Nurse
No of posts: 15 posts
Remuneration: Applicable as per labour law
Age Limit: N/A.
Educational Qualification & Experience: Staff must be qualified Diploma in General Nurse Midwifes (GNM) with 1 year experience or B.SC (Nursing) Degree with 1 one year experience.
Mandatory: RM & RN registration (Register Midwifes & Register Nurse).
Interested and eligible candidates may attend the walk-in interview as per the schedule mentioned below. The candidate must be carried their original document at the time of interview and to be produced one set of Xerox copy in the board.
Walk-in Schedule: Date: 26/08/2025
Time: 10:00 A.M
Venue: Conference Hall, Office of the Principal cum Chief Superintendent, GMCH.

SBI Clerk Recruitment 2025 – 6589 Junior Associate Posts, Online Apply

State Bank of India (SBI) has released the official employment notification for the recruitment of 6589 Junior Associate (Customer Support and Sales) vacancy in clerical cadre in various branches of SBI across the country. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.
Candidates can apply for vacancies in one State/UT only. Candidates can appear for the test only once under this recruitment project. The candidates applying for vacancies of a particular State/ UT, should be proficient (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) in the specified opted local language of that State/UT.I Clerk Recruitment Details
Name of post: Junior Associate (Customer Support and Sales)
Name of organisation: State Bank of India (SBI)
No of posts: 6589 posts
No of posts @ North Eastern states: 329 posts

State	No of posts
Assam	176 posts
Arunachal Pradesh	23 posts
Manipur	20 posts
Meghalaya	35 posts
Mizoram	15 posts
Nagaland	22 posts
Tripura	38 posts

Exam centres in Assam: Dibrugarh, Guwahati, Jorhat, Silchar, Tezpur
Pay Scale: Rs.24050-1340/3-28070-1650/3-33020-2000/4-41020-2340/7-57400-4400/1-61800-2680/1-64480.
Helpdesk: In case of any problem in filling up the form, payment of fee/ intimation charges or receipt of Admission/call letter, queries may be made at telephone no. 022-22820427 (between 11:00 AM and 05:00 PM only on Bank working days) or lodge his/her query on http://cgrs.ibps.in.
Candidates are advised not to forget to mention 'Recruitment of Junior Associate-2025' in the subject of the email.
Age Limit: Candidates age should not below 20 years and not above 28 years as on 01.04.2025, i.e. candidates must have been born not earlier than 02.04.1997 and not later than 01.04.2005 (both days inclusive).
Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below

# SC/ST	: 5 years
# OBC	: 3 years
# PwD (Unreserved)	: 10 years
# PwD (OBC)	: 13 years
# PwD (SC/ST)	: 15 years

Educational Qualification: Candidates must be a Graduate in any discipline from a recognised University or any equivalent qualification recognised as such by Central Government. Candidates having integrated dual degree (IDD) certificate should ensure that the date of passing the IDD is on or before 31.12.2025.
Final Year Candidates: Those who are in the final year/ semester of their graduation may also apply provisionally subject to the condition that, if provisionally selected, they will have to produce proof of having passed the graduation examination on or before 31.12.2025.
Local Language Proficiency: The candidates applying for vacancies of a particular State/UT, should be proficient (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) in the specified opted local language of that State/UT. Candidates who produce 10th or 12th standard mark sheet/ certificate evidencing having studied the specified opted local language will not be required to undergo the language test.pplication Fee of SBI Clerk 2025
The category wise fee structure for SBI Clerk online application is given below.

Category	Fee
UR	Rs. 750/-
OBC/EWS	Rs. 750/-
SC/ST	Nil
PWD	Nil

Payment Method: Debit Card, Credit Card, Net Banking or UPI.
Starting date of online application submission: 6th August 2025
Last date of online application submission: 26th August 2025

Page 6 Aug 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 21:46 Page 1

PM Modi, Prez Putin among 20 world leaders to attend SCO summit: China

SCO comprises Russia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and China

BEIJING, Aug 22: China on Friday said the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit to be held in Tianjin later this month will be the largest in the bloc's history, with 20 world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attending it.

The Tianjin meeting of the 10-member grouping from Aug 31-Sept 1 is the fifth summit being hosted by China. It will be the largest in SCO history, China's Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Bin told a media briefing here.

Besides Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, the summit will be attended by PM Modi and a host of world leaders, Liu said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, his Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh are other prominent leaders to attend the summit, he said.

From the subcontinent, Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif, Nepal's Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu will attend the summit, Liu said.

Officials of 10 international organisations, including UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and SCO Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev, will attend the event, making it the largest in the organisation's history.

China is this year's rotating chair of the 10-member bloc. The SCO comprises Russia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and China. The extended SCO plus summit is seen as an attempt by Beijing to showcase its growing influence in the world.

Most of the leaders were expected to stay beyond the two-day summit to witness China's largest military parade to be held in Beijing on Sept 3 to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

China will showcase a series of new-generation armaments in the military parade, such as fourth-generation tanks and aircraft, unmanned intelligence and counter-unmanned equipment, and advanced missiles, including hypersonic ones, official media here reported.

Liu said Xi will chair the 25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO and the "SCO Plus" Meeting, and deliver keynote speeches.

Xi will host a welcome banquet and bilateral events for participating leaders.

This summit will be one of the most important head-of-state diplomacy and home-ground diplomacy events in China this year, Liu said.

In his keynote speeches, Xi will elaborate on China's new vision and propositions for the SCO in carrying forward the Shanghai Spirit, shouldering the mission of the times, and responding to the people's expectations.

Xi will also announce new measures and initiatives by China to support high-quality development of the SCO and comprehensive cooperation, and propose new methods and pathways for the organisation to constructively safeguard the post-WWII international order and improve the global governance system, he said.

Xi will jointly sign and issue a declaration with leaders of other SCO member states, approve a development strategy of the SCO for the next 10 years, issue statements marking the 80th anniversary of the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War and the 80th founding anniversary of the United Nations, and adopt a series of outcome documents on strengthening security, economic, people-to-people and cultural cooperation, he said. (PTI)

Sri Lanka's former president Ranil Wickremesinghe arrested

COLOMBO, Aug 22: Sri Lanka's former president Ranil Wickremesinghe was arrested on Friday for allegedly misusing the state funds during his tenure as head of state, police said.

Wickremesinghe, 76, was arrested at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) headquarters, where he was summoned to record a statement in connection with an investigation into the alleged misuse of government funds, police said.

Later, the veteran opposition leader was produced before a magistrates' court in Colombo.

Wickremesinghe, who served as president from 2022 to 2024, has been accused of using state funds to travel to England to attend a convocation ceremony of his wife, Prof Maithree, in September 2023.

It has been alleged that Wickremesinghe was returning from the US after an official engagement and visited the UK at the state's expense to attend the private engagement of his wife.

The CID had previously questioned his staff about the travel expenses.

Wickremesinghe, who had replaced Gotabaya Rajapaksa as President to serve the balance term until the end of 2024, was credited with steering Sri Lanka out of the economic crisis of 2022.

Wickremesinghe, a lawyer-turned politician who had been in Parliament for more than five decades, also served six separate terms as prime minister.

Wickremesinghe, the nephew of Sri Lanka's first executive president Junius Jayewardene, was first appointed Prime Minister from 1993 to 1994 after the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

According to BBC Sinhala, Wickremesinghe made 23 foreign trips during his time as president, at a cost of more than SLRs 600 million (USD 2 million).

Wickremesinghe is the first former president to be arrested in Sri Lanka, it added.

Born in 1949 after Sri Lanka gained independence from the British, Wickremesinghe was elected to Parliament in 1977 at the age of 28, having worked in the Youth League of the United National Party (UNP) from his university days.

As the youngest minister in Sri Lanka at the time, he held the post of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs under President Jayewardene.

He was later appointed to the Cabinet as the Minister of Youth Affairs and Employment. He has also held the portfolio of Education. Then, in 1989, as a seasoned legislator, he was made the Leader of the House under President Premadasa. He has also served as the Minister of Industries, Science and Technology.

His party UNP, the oldest party in the country, had failed to win a single seat in 2020 parliamentary polls. He was unseated for the first time since 1977 but later found his way to Parliament through the sole national list allocated to the UNP on the basis of cumulative national vote.

In the 2024 elections, he lost to Anura Kumara Dissanayake. (PTI)

Bangladesh interim govt warns media against publicising Sheikh Hasina's statements

DHAKA, Aug 22: Bangladesh's interim government on Friday warned media outlets against broadcasting or publicising statements by Awami League leader and deposed premier Sheikh Hasina, saying that instant legal action will be taken against those violating the order.

"We are warning officials of media involved in such criminal dissemination activities and resolutely inform all that if anyone in future circulates Sheikh Hasina's statements, instant legal actions will be taken," said a statement issued by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's press wing.

The announcement said the broadcasting and publicity of audio of Hasina on television channels, news and online portals is a "serious violation of the Anti-Terrorism Act 2009".

It described Hasina as "a convicted criminal and fugitive accused of mass killings and crimes against humanity."

Hasina, who was ousted in a street movement on August 5, 2024, is being tried in absentia at the International Crimes Tribunal on several charges. The tribunal, however, has yet to convict her of any of those charges. Hasina's supporters say the charges against her are politically motivated.

In December, the tribunal banned the broadcasting of Hasina's statements.

Noting that some media outlets, defying the law and court orders, broadcast a speech of Hasina on Thursday, the statement said, "At this crucial moment in our nation's history, we cannot take the risk of creating any unnecessary confusion".

"It is important to remember that Sheikh Hasina fled Bangladesh after being accused of ordering the massacre of hundreds of peaceful protesters during the July uprising," it said.

Referring to preparations for holding a free and fair election, it said that the interim government is working to guide Bangladesh towards a future built on justice, accountability, and democratic integrity. (PTI)

Pakistan has more mosques and madrassas compared to factories, says economic census

ISLAMABAD, Aug 22: There are over 6,00,000 mosques and 36,000 religious seminaries in Pakistan as compared to 23,000 factories, according to the country's first ever economic census report.

The report comes at a time when the cash-strapped country continues to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund for the second review of the USD 7 billion bailout package. The data related to the economic sector was obtained as part of the Population and Housing Census, 2023 but its details were released on Thursday, The Express Tribune said.

The objectives of the economic census are to provide a complete and detailed picture of the structure and characteristics of the economy and to collect information on the nature of activity, size, employment, and ownership of establishments, it said. The detailed report, released by Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, showed that there are 23,000 factories and at least 6,43,000 small production units. The data revealed that out of a total of 40 million permanent units in Pakistan, there were about 7.2 million employment structures where 25.4 million people were working as of 2023. Out of a total workforce of 25.4 million, the largest is engaged in the services sector, accounting for 45 per cent or 11.3 million, according to the report.

This is followed by the social sector with 30 per cent or 7.6 million workers while the production sector employed only 22 per cent of the total workforce.

"The services sector employs almost double the workforce than those in the production sector, debunking the myth that industry is the country's main job-creating sector," said a government official. (PTI)

NRI industrialist Lord Swraj Paul passes away in London; Modi condoles

LONDON/NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Leading NRI industrialist Lord Swraj Paul passed away in London on Thursday evening, leaving behind a legacy in entrepreneurship and philanthropy. He was 94.

Lord Paul, founder of UK-based Caparo Group of industries, had been taken ill and hospitalised recently, where he passed away surrounded by members of his family.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish at the death of Paul, and said his support for the UK's close ties with India will always be remembered.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of Shri Swaraj Paul Ji. His contributions to industry, philanthropy and public service in the UK, and his unwavering support for closer ties with India will always be remembered," Modi said. Lord Paul breathed his last on Thursday evening, his family sources said.

Born to Pyare Lal, who ran a small foundry used to make steel goods, including buckets and other farming equipment, Lord Paul was exposed to business early in his life much before he went on to establish UK-based Caparo Group, a diversified businesses entity with interests predominantly in design, manufacture, marketing and distribution of value-added steel and niche engineering products.

Born on February 18, 1931, he completed high school education at Jalandhar and Bachelors in Science from

Punjab University in 1949. Then he went to the US to pursue his bachelors & masters degrees in mechanical engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

After completing his studies at MIT, he returned to India to join the family business, Apeejay Surrendra Group -- one of India's oldest business conglomerates.

But as fate would have it, he relocated to the UK in 1966 in pursuit of treatment for his daughter Ambika, who was suffering from leukaemia. Unfortunately, she died aged four.

Later, he set up the Ambika Paul Foundation as a charitable trust that went on to donate millions to promote the well-being of children and young people all over the world through education and health initiatives.

The Ambika Paul Children's Zoo in London is one of the major beneficiaries of the foundation.

"The London Zoo is where she was always the happiest," recalled Lord Paul last month, during the annual commemoration he hosted at the Ambika Paul Children's Zoo in London – one of the major beneficiaries of the foundation.

After he lost his son Angad Paul in 2015 and his wife Aruna in 2022, he went on to undertake similar philanthropic endeavours in their memory.

"This hall is a tribute to my wonderful wife whom I miss very much; we never had an argument during our 65 years of marriage," said Lord Paul, when he inaugurated the Lady Aruna Swraj Paul Hall at the historic Indian Gymkhana Club in London in February 2023. A regular in the annual 'Sunday Times Rich List', this year he was ranked 81st with an estimated wealth of GBP 2 billion, largely derived from the steel and engineering multinational Caparo Group. Headquartered in London, Caparo operates internationally from over 40 sites, with operations based in the UK, North America, India, and the Middle East. His son, Akash Paul, is Chairman of Caparo India and Director of the Caparo Group.

Last year, in his capacity as the Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton, Lord Paul awarded an honorary doctorate to Akash Paul for services to business administration.

"Perhaps, I am the only graduate to get a degree from his own father, independently approved by the University Board, of course, I may add," said Akash Paul, who was accompanied by wife Nisha and son Arush at the ceremony held at the London Zoo.

An active member of the Indian diaspora in the UK, Swraj Paul maintained his daily routine of attending the House of Lords despite his frailty in recent months.

"We pray for the departed soul. May the noble Lord rest in peace," said Lord Rami Ranger, his colleague in the Upper House of Parliament.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday expressed deep sorrow over Paul's demise.

Banerjee described Lord Paul as a "business tycoon, philanthropist and an icon of the global Indian diaspora with deep Kolkata connections". (PTI)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

DIRECTORATE-CUM-ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,

PWD, (R&B), HILLS, ASSAM, DIPHU.

NO.ACEH/(G)/07/2025-2026/20, Dated Diphu, the 22nd August, 2025.

NOTIFICATION

In Pursuant to the Govt. Notification vide eCF No.624667/14, Dated 04-08-2025 and KAAC's approval No.KAAC/PWD-205/Miscellaneous(Pt-I)/2022-23/6205, Dtd.22-08-2025, the office of the Additional Chief Engineer, PWD(R&B) Hills, Assam, Diphu is hereby Re-designated the Post as Director -Cum- Additional Chief Engineer, PWD, (R&B) Hills, Assam, Diphu and the Office as Directorate -Cum- Additional Chief Engineer, PWD,(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu respectively with immediate effect.

Henceforth, all officials communication to this office may be addressed as Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer, PWD(R&B) Hills, Assam, Diphu for the post and Directorate-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer, PWD(R&B) Hills, Assam, Diphu for the Office.

Sd/-
Director-Cum-Addl. Chief Engineer,
PWD(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.

Memo No. NO.ACEH/(G)/07/2025-2026/20 -A, Dated Diphu, the 22nd August, 2025.

SHORT e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE:

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PHE),

DIPHU RURAL W/S DIVISION, DIPHU.

SHORT e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE/INVITATION FOR BIDS
(IFB) NIT No. 3 OF 2025-26

On behalf of the Governor of Assam, Bids are invited on line through e-Procurement system against (IFB) NIT No. 3 OF 2025-26 of Diphu Rural W/S Division from the eligible registered contractor (Class -3 and above category) having valid trading license/ NOC from Karbi Autonomous Council under Public Health Engineering Deptt., Assam, in two Part viz., Part-1: Technical Bid and Part-II: Financial Bid, for the work" Water supply arrangement for work, Upgradation of existing sub Centre to Primary Health Centre At Koilamati under Chowkihola BPHC (Under Bokajan LAC) in Karbi Anglong District." The detail Bid Document is available in the web portal www.assamtenders.gov.in and can be viewed from 24/08/25 up to 12.00 Hr. of 17/09/25 Bid is to be submitted through online and in no case manual bid shall be entertained.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Diphu Rural W/S Division

Memo No. FEY PHE/DLR/R/TND-5/2025-26/873-81 Dated 22/8/2025

Page 7 Aug 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 21:39 Page 1

Governor proposes institutionalised training centre for indigenous faiths in Arunachal

Governor urges priests to blend tradition with scientific reasoning, stresses documentation and sustainable living

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 22: Indigenous priests, led by Nangram Kani, called on the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt General KT Parnaik, (Retd), at Raj Bhavan here on Friday and engaged in a wide-ranging discussion on the preservation and promotion of indigenous culture and traditions.

According to an official statement, the Governor interacted at length with the visiting priests, listening to their experiences and concerns, and gaining insights into the challenges they encounter in protecting age-old practices amid the rapid pace of modernisation.

He acknowledged the significant role played by indigenous priests in upholding the spiritual and cultural fabric of Arunachal Pradesh, describing them as "custodians of tribal wisdom and spiritual heritage, entrusted with the god-gifted responsibility of carrying forward the cultural legacy."

The Governor advised the priests to remain steadfast in safeguarding their traditions, while also adapting to the needs of contemporary society.

He stressed that rituals should not only be rooted in tradition but also carry scientific reasoning and relevance, ensuring that they continue to serve society in a positive and constructive manner.

Highlighting the importance of systematic preservation, the Governor underscored the need for careful documentation of indigenous rituals, oral traditions, and cultural practices so that future generations can inherit the richness of their heritage.

He observed that such efforts would not only strengthen the identity of tribal communities but also provide a valuable cultural resource in the face of rapid social and technological changes.

As part of his suggestions, the Governor proposed the establishment of an institutionalised training and teaching centre dedicated to indigenous faiths in Arunachal Pradesh.

He said such a centre would serve as a structured platform for imparting sacred knowledge, training future generations of priests, and sustaining indigenous practices in a more organised and sustainable way.

This, he noted, would ensure that tribal rituals, values, and spiritual traditions are preserved with authenticity while being accessible to younger members of the community.

The Governor further encouraged the priests to inspire their people to continue living in harmony with nature, protecting forests, flora, and fauna, and promoting a way of life that reflects deep respect for the environment.

He emphasised that this approach to living, which is embedded in indigenous traditions, aligns closely with modern concerns for ecological balance and sustainability.

He also reminded the priests that their guidance and advice must always aim to strengthen unity, foster peace, and encourage sustainable living in society.

By doing so, he said, the values enshrined in indigenous faiths would continue to serve as a source of strength, pride, and identity for the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

The official statement described the meeting as an important step in reinforcing the role of indigenous faiths in the cultural life of the state.

It also highlighted the Governor's call for blending tradition with scientific thought and modern approaches, ensuring that indigenous practices remain relevant and continue to benefit future generations.

Khandu pitches 'SPICE' formula for stronger panchayats

ITANAGAR, Aug 22: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Friday announced a comprehensive reform agenda for strengthening panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) while unveiling the state's new sustainable, participatory, inclusive, comprehensive and empowerment (SPICE) formula.

Taking to social media, Khandu said the government is committed to empowering grassroots democracy 'like never before', ensuring that village-level institutions take the lead in shaping local development.

Under this reform framework, the chief minister informed in a post on X that the state government has devolved all 29 subjects listed in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution to panchayats, giving them wider authority to plan and implement development schemes at the community level.

Highlighting the scale of empowerment, Khandu noted that budget allocations for PRIs have risen by 308 per cent in the past four years, signalling a strong financial commitment to rural governance.

In addition, 10 per cent of the state's tax revenue has been earmarked exclusively for panchayati raj institutions, enabling them to function with greater autonomy and efficiency, he said.

"Grassroots democracy has been strengthened for real development," Khandu said, underlining his government's vision to make panchayats the cornerstone of participatory governance in the state.

According to officials here, the SPICE model reflects a shift towards decentralised governance in the frontier state, where local bodies are being positioned as drivers of social, economic, and infrastructural transformation. *(PTI)*

Army, Bharti Airtel ink MoU to strengthen telecommunication

ITANAGAR, Aug 22: The Indian Army's Dao Division and Bharti Airtel signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance mobile communication infrastructure in the forward areas of Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley and Anjaw districts, a defence official said on Friday.

He said the initiative will improve cellular network coverage and ensure reliable communication facilities, benefitting both the locals and deployed troops.

"The agreement marks a major step in bridging the digital divide in these strategically important yet geographically remote regions," Defence PRO Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

The partnership will "not only strengthen security and communication for troops safeguarding the nation's borders but also empower local communities through access to better network services, the official said.

He said it will also support various facets of development like education, healthcare, e-governance and entrepreneurship in the frontier district.

The Dibang Valley and Dau Delai Valley in Anjaw, owing to their challenging terrain and remoteness, have historically faced constraints in connectivity.

The joint effort reflects the resolve to overcome infrastructural limitations, provide modern amenities to local residents and enhance operational communication capabilities for the armed forces, he said.

Officials from Bharti Airtel highlighted their commitment to expanding tele-connectivity to the remotest corners of the country, aligning with the vision of Digital India, he added. *(PTI)*

Secretary RWD reviews progress of PMGSY, VVP and SASCI projects

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, Aug 22: A special review meeting of the Rural Works Department (RWD) to assess and monitor the progress of ongoing PMGSY, VVP and SASCI projects under Pasighat, Kaying and Yingkiong divisions was held at the office of the Superintending Engineer, RWD, Pasighat Circle, on Friday.

According to an official statement, the meeting was chaired by RWD Secretary PN Thungon in the presence of Er M Chiram, SE, RWD, Pasighat Circle, with the participation of all field officials and contractors or their representatives connected with the projects.

During the review, the Secretary took note of the delays in PMGSY-I and III works and emphasised the need to complete these projects before March 2026.

He also took written and assented assurances from the contractors and firms for their timely completion, while placing the responsibility of proper supervision on the field officials. The statement further said that the progress of VVP and SASCI projects, which are still within the stipulated construction period, was also reviewed.

The Secretary urged stakeholders to accelerate the pace of work and laid special stress on completing school infrastructure projects before the beginning of the next academic session.

The review meeting, the statement added, served as a constructive platform for government officials and contractors to discuss project-related issues, finalise consented timelines for completion, and work out solutions to expedite execution.

Minor girl rescued from child labour, woman arrested

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, Aug 22: The Women Police Station, Pasighat, has registered a case of child exploitation after rescuing an eight-year-old girl who had been engaged as a caretaker at a residence, according to an official statement.

The case was registered on August 17 following a telephonic complaint.

Acting promptly, the Protection Officer (DCPU) and District Child Protection Officer (DCPO), along with the police team and witnesses, raided the premises, rescued the child, and apprehended the accused, identified as Toli Pertin of PP Apartment, Pasighat.

Police informed superior officers and the Magistrate before the operation.

The rescued child was given immediate medical attention at Bakin Pertin General Hospital, Pasighat, and later placed in a Child Care Institution as directed by the Child Welfare Committee.

Efforts are being made to trace her parents.

A case (WPS 17/25 dated 17/08/2025) has been registered under Section 118(2) BNS read with Section 14 of the Child Labour Act and Section 75 of the JJ Act.

The accused has been arrested, and further investigation is underway.

Police have reiterated their commitment to ensuring child safety and taking strict action against all forms of child exploitation and abuse.

Injured police constable rescued by Army in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Aug 22: Troops of the Indian Army's Gajraj Corps rescued an injured police constable from the remote RR Hill region in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district, a defence official said on Friday.

Defence PRO Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said as soon as the army received information, an operation was launched in the late hours of August 20-21.

Braving dense forests and challenging terrain at night, the Army team reached the location, administered essential first aid and medical care, and evacuated the injured to a hospital in Assam's Tezpur for advanced treatment.

"This prompt and coordinated humanitarian effort not only saved a precious life but also highlighted the spirit of synergy between the army, police, and civil administration," the official said.

According to a police source, the injured constable has been identified as Sange Phuntso, working at the West Kameng Superintendent of Police (SP) office.

He, along with other officials, were carrying out geotagging work at the RR Hill Region when they lost their way and fell off a cliff and suffered a skull fracture, Bhalukpong police station officer in-charge Thumgon Tali said.

He said the constable is admitted to a hospital in Tezpur, Assam and is out of danger. *(PTI)*

SCERT Itanagar conducts extensive orientation for teachers on tribal, third languages

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 22: In a significant step towards strengthening multilingual education in Arunachal Pradesh, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Itanagar, has successfully conducted an extensive orientation programme for teachers on tribal and third languages.

The initiative is in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which lays emphasis on the promotion of mother tongue and regional languages in school education, alongside encouraging multilingualism to enrich classroom learning.

According to an official statement, the orientation programme was conducted over a period of more than three months, beginning on May 9 and concluding on August 22, 2025.

A total of 696 teachers representing different districts of the state participated in the training, which was organised in 17 batches.

Each batch received five days of intensive training, designed to ensure comprehensive coverage of key aspects of teaching and effective classroom implementation.

The statement further informed that the orientation was held in collaboration with

Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), who played a vital role in conducting the sessions in their respective languages.

This partnership not only provided pedagogical support but also brought in rich cultural insights, thereby strengthening the foundation of multilingual education in the state. Teachers were given hands-on training and guidance on teaching methods that would make learning in tribal languages more engaging and accessible for students.

The training covered a wide spectrum of tribal languages spoken across Arunachal Pradesh.

These included Nyishi, Tagin, Galo, Apatani, Tangsa, Wancho, Aka (Hrusso), Kaman Mishmi, Taraon Mishmi, Singpho, Idu Mishmi, Adi, Tai Khamti, and Tutsa.

By providing training in such a diverse range of languages, the programme is expected to ensure that children studying in schools across different regions will have the opportunity to learn in their mother tongue.

The initiative, as highlighted in the statement, reflects the state government's commitment to preserving and promoting the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh.

Officials emphasised that empowering teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach tribal and third languages will help students remain connected to their roots while fostering a sense of pride in their cultural identity.

Speaking at the event, Toko Babu (APCS), Deputy Commissioner of ICR and Director, SCERT, remarked that the orientation programme would pave the way for effective classroom teaching of tribal languages as formal subjects.

He added that this would significantly contribute towards the preservation of indigenous languages and their transmission to younger generations, ensuring that they do not fade with time.

"The training will help teachers carry forward the essence of our indigenous languages and ensure that students not only learn academically but also feel the cultural pride of their heritage. This is a forward-looking step for the future of education in Arunachal Pradesh," the Director said.

The official statement further underlined that the orientation marks an important milestone in aligning classroom practices in the state with the broader vision of NEP 2020.

The policy advocates for multilingual education as a tool to not only improve academic performance and comprehension among students but also to celebrate India's cultural and linguistic diversity.

By incorporating tribal and third languages into mainstream education, the state is contributing to a more inclusive and culturally rich educational framework.

The SCERT Itanagar's efforts, supported by CBOs and education officials, are expected to bring long-term benefits for both students and teachers.

Teachers, having undergone this intensive training, are now better prepared to introduce tribal languages in their classrooms with confidence, ensuring that children grow up with both linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness.

With this initiative, Arunachal Pradesh has taken a decisive step towards safeguarding its vast linguistic legacy and promoting education that is both meaningful and rooted in the state's cultural ethos.

Page 8 Aug 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 20:01 Page 1

Rahul Gandhi welcomes SC's revised directions on stray dogs, calls it 'progressive step'

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday welcomed the Supreme Court's revised directions on stray dogs and said it marks a progressive step towards balancing animal welfare and public safety. The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha also said the approach is both compassionate and rooted in scientific reasoning.

The top court on Friday modified its August 11 direction prohibiting the release of stray dogs from dog shelters in Delhi-NCR, and said the picked up canines should be sterilised, vaccinated and released back in the same area.

A three-judge special bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath, however, said municipal authorities shall continue to comply with the direction asking them to start picking up and rounding stray dogs from all localities of Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida, Faridabad and Gurugram.

The apex court said the August 11 direction prohibiting the release of picked up stray dogs shall be kept in abeyance for the time being.

In a post on X, Gandhi said, "I welcome the Supreme Court's revised directions on stray dogs, as it marks a progressive step toward balancing animal welfare and public safety." "The approach is both compassionate and rooted in scientific reasoning," he said. The Supreme Court bench, also comprising Justices Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria, said, "The dogs that are picked up shall be sterilised, dewormed, vaccinated and released back in the same area from which they were picked up." The bench clarified that this relocation shall not apply to dogs infected with rabies or suspected to be infected with rabies, and those that display aggressive behaviour. It said such dogs shall be sterilised and immunised, but under no circumstances should they be released back into the streets. *(PTI)*

PM Modi flays INDIA bloc for opposing SIR, 130th Constitution Amendment Bill

'Have seen a regrettable situation in which people in seats of power have been running governments from jail, signing files from behind bars'

GAYAJI (BIHAR), Aug 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday charged the INDIA bloc with opposing moves aimed at rooting out corruption in higher echelons of power and steps taken to tackle "threat" posed to the nation's demography from "infiltrators".

The PM made indirect references to the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, introduced by his government earlier this week, and the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, currently being carried out in Bihar by the Election Commission, at a rally in Gayaji.

"We have seen a regrettable situation in which people in seats of power have been running governments from jail, signing files from behind bars, tearing to shreds constitutional propriety," said Modi, in an apparent reference to former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Proudly claiming that there was "no taint of corruption" on his 11-year-old government, the PM drew a contrast with the previous Congress regimes, which saw many scams coming to the fore, and the RJD, the corruption of which, while in power in Bihar, "is known even to the man on the street".

"So, we decided to bring in a law that provides for dismissing a corrupt chief minister, or even the Prime Minister, if he or she spends 30 days in jail. A lowly clerk, if he is jailed for a short period, is placed under suspension. But when we brought in a stringent law, the

RJD, the Congress and the Left were livid. They are angry because they are scared of facing punishment for their own sins," Modi alleged.

"The Congress and RJD, while in power, filled up their coffers with public money. For this purpose, they would make projects linger on endlessly. In contrast, I am inaugurating a bridge today for which I had laid the foundation stone barely a few years ago," he said.

"There is one more threat -- that of infiltrators (ghuspaithiye) that our nation faces, which I also spoke about in my Independence Day speech. They cannot be allowed to partake of resources of our country. I have, therefore, called for a demography mission. But the Congress and the RJD want to protect these infiltrators for the sake of their politics of vote bank," Modi alleged.

The allusion was to the SIR, one of the stated objectives of which has been to remove "illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar" from the electoral rolls.

The EC, which has ordered the exercise in Bihar ahead of assembly polls, has made it clear that SIR will be undertaken across the country in due course.

However, the INDIA bloc has been alleging that the exercise in Bihar was aimed at "helping" the BJP-led NDA in assembly polls through wrongful deletion of names of voters.

A statewide 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' on the issue is also being taken out in the state by Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, Tejashwi Yadav, the INDIA bloc's face in Bihar, and other alliance partners.

The PM also charged the Congress with having been insensitive towards Bihar, alleging "one of its chief ministers had famously told a public rally that he would not allow immigrants from the state to set foot on the soil of his state".

"And the RJD, their alliance partner, seemed to be in deep slumber, unable to protest against such an insult," said PM, of the party which is the BJP's principal rival in Bihar.

Describing Operation Sindoor as "a pledge I took on the soil of Bihar", the PM said, "Now, the message is loud and clear that no terrorist can escape after striking anywhere on Indian soil. Our missiles will hunt them down to the deepest recesses of the earth (patal lok)".

"Pakistan tried to retaliate, but none of its missiles could hit us. We blew away their missiles like pieces of straw (tinke ki tarah uda diya)," said Modi, who had vowed to avenge Pahalgam terror attack at a rally in Madhubani district of north Bihar.

The function was marked by the launch of development projects worth more than Rs 13,000 crore, in the presence of dignitaries like Bihar Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, and Union minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, who is also the local MP.

The PM reached the venue in an open vehicle, in a style that has marked his visits to Bihar for the past several months. He waved at the crowds from atop the vehicle, flanked by Kumar and Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary.

Modi began his speech with a few lines in the local dialect Magahi, and described Gayaji as "the land of Lord Buddha and Lord Vishnu", in an obvious reference to the Vishnupad temple and the nearby international Buddhist pilgrim town of Bodh Gaya. *(PTI)*

Bihar SIR: SC allows excluded voters to submit claims with Aadhaar, other 11 prescribed docs

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to allow excluded voters to submit claims through online mode besides making physical submissions in the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise of electoral roll in poll-bound Bihar.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi allowed claim forms to be submitted along with Aadhaar card number and any one of the 11 acceptable documents in the SIR.

Expressing surprise over political parties not coming forward in filing objections related to 65 lakh excluded voters, the top court directed the chief electoral officer of Bihar to implead them in the court proceedings.

"All the political parties shall file the status report by the next date of hearing on the claim form they had facilitated in filing by excluded voters," the bench said as it posted the matter for September 8.

The bench directed the election officials to furnish an acknowledgement receipt to the booth level agents of the political parties, who submit the claim forms of excluded voters physically.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the poll panel, urged the court to give the ECI a 15-day window to show there was no exclusion.

"The political parties are making hue and cry and things are not bad. Repose faith in us and give us some more time. We will be able to show you there are no exclusions," Dwivedi said.

The ECI informed the bench that around 85,000 individual voters who were excluded in draft rolls had submitted their claim forms and over 2 lakh new voters had come forward to register their names in the electoral rolls under the SIR exercise in the state.

On August 14, the top court directed the poll panel to publish by August 19 details of the 65 lakh voters excluded from the draft electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar to enhance "transparency" in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters' list and allow Aadhaar as an acceptable document for identity proof.

Observing that the EC should put at rest the "narrative being built" against it, the bench had also ordered that the details should include reasons for their non-inclusion during the ongoing SIR exercise. "Transparency will create voter confidence."

The revision of the voters' list in Bihar--the first since 2003--has sparked a huge political row. The SIR's findings have reduced the total number of 7.9 crore registered voters in Bihar, from before the exercise, to 7.24 crore. *(PTI)*

'ECI discredited, its G2 puppeteers decisively defeated': Congress after SC directive on SIR issue

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Welcoming the Supreme Court directive on the Bihar SIR issue, the Congress on Friday said democracy has survived a "brutal assault" from the Election Commission of India (ECI) and claimed that the poll body stands "totally exposed and discredited".

The opposition party said the Supreme Court has laid down guardrails to make the revision more inclusive by including political parties in the process, and alleged that so far, the ECI's approach has been "obstructionist and contrary to the interests of the voters".

The Congress' assertion came after the Supreme Court directed the ECI to allow excluded voters to submit claims through online mode besides making physical submissions in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise of electoral roll in poll-bound Bihar.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi allowed claim forms to be submitted along with Aadhaar card number and any one of the 11 acceptable documents in the SIR.

Expressing surprise over political parties not coming forward in filing objections related to 65 lakh excluded voters, the top court directed the chief electoral officer of Bihar to implead them in the court proceedings.

Congress general secretary incharge communications Jairam Ramesh said the party welcomes the Supreme Court directive on the Bihar SIR issue.

"Democracy has survived a brutal assault from the Election Commission of India (ECI)," he claimed.

On August 14th, the Supreme Court had intervened to set aside the ECI's decision to withhold the list of deleted voters, he said on X.

The Supreme Court had directed that the list of deleted voters must be published along with the reasons for such deletions, he pointed out.

On August 14th, the Supreme Court had also directed the ECI to accept Aadhar cards as proof of identity for those deleted, Ramesh said, adding that today it reaffirmed Aadhar as a valid ID that the ECI must accept. *(PTI)*

ED raids Karnataka MLA, others in 'illegal' betting case

BENGALURU, Aug 22: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday conducted searches in multiple states as part of an alleged illegal betting-linked money laundering case against Karnataka Congress MLA K C Veerendra 'Puppy', his brother and some others, official sources said. Veerendra, 50, is a legislator from the Chitradurga assembly seat. There was no immediate reaction from the MLA on the ED action that came on the last day of the state assembly session. At least 30 locations in Chitradurga district, Bengaluru and Hubballi in Karnataka, Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Mumbai and Goa were covered under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said. Five casinos in Goa named Puppy's Casino Gold, Ocean Rivers Casino, Puppy's Casino Pride, Ocean 7 Casino and Big Daddy Casino were also raided, they said. The ED sources said the searches are being conducted in a case related to "illegal" online and offline betting. Veerendra, according to the sources, is accused of running online betting sites like King567, Raja567, Puppy's003, Rathna Gaming etc. and his brother K C Thippeswamy is alleged to be "operating" three business entities from Dubai named Diamond Softech, TRS Technologies and Prime9Technologies. *(PTI)*

Dog lovers, NGOs to deposit money for moving court, amount to be used for creating infra: SC

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The Supreme Court on Friday asked "dog lovers" and NGOs, which moved against the order of permanent relocation of strays in Delhi-NCR, to deposit Rs 25,000 and Rs 2 lakh, respectively, within a week for being heard in the matter.

A three-judge special bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath said the money should be utilised for creating infrastructure and facilities for stray dogs under the aegis of the respective municipal bodies.

"Each individual dog lover and each NGO that have approached this court shall deposit a sum of Rs 25,000 and Rs two lakh respectively with the registry of this court within a period of seven days, failing which they shall not be allowed to appear in the matter any further," the bench, also comprising Justices Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria, said.

Many NGOs and individual persons moved the apex court seeking a stay of some of the directions passed on August 11 by a two-judge bench of the top court.

On Friday, the three-judge bench delivered its order in a suo motu case initiated on July 28 over a media report on stray dog bites leading to rabies, particularly among children, in the national capital.

The bench said desirous animal lovers shall be free to move application to the concerned municipal bodies for adoption of stray dogs upon which the identified canine shall be tagged and given in adoption to the applicant. *(PTI)*

SRIMANTA SANKARADEVA UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
(A State University of the Govt. of Assam)
Narakasur Hilltop, Bhangagarh, Guwahati-781032, Assam
Phone:06026177313 E-mail: ssuhs_assam@yahoo.in Website: www.ssuhs.in

No. SSUHS/25/2025/5838

ADMISSION NOTICE

(Admission into B.Sc. Nursing course in the Govt. Nursing Colleges of Assam for the academic session 2025-26)

In partial modification of earlier Educational Notice No. SSUHS/25/2025/5558, dated 08-08-2025, provisional list of candidates for admission into B.Sc. Nursing course in the Govt. Nursing Colleges of Assam for the academic session 2025-26 shall be published on 28-08-2025 and will be available in the University website www.ssuhs.in

Further, admission shall be held on **5th & 6th September, 2025** at the respective Colleges

All the provisionally selected candidates are hereby directed to report to the respective colleges on the aforementioned dates for completing necessary formalities including document verification, payment of admission fees etc.

Sd/-
Registrar
Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences

DIPR /D/HLT/132/23-Aug-25

Very happy that India, China moving forward on discussing boundary question: Naravane

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Former Army chief Gen M M Naravane (retd) has said that it is "fortuitous" that India-China ties are "on the mend" with a number of initiatives announced at political, diplomatic and military levels for the improvement of "our engagements and relations" going forward.

In his address at an event here on Thursday evening, he also said, "We are hopeful that China too will reciprocate our goodwill as we move ahead."

His remarks come amid a major thaw in China-India ties. India and China on Tuesday unveiled a series of measures for a "stable, cooperative and forward-looking" relationship that included jointly maintaining peace along the frontier, reopening border trade, promoting investment flows, and resuming direct flight connectivity at the earliest.

The announcements aimed at realising the "full" development potential of the two Asian giants came amid growing estrangement in ties between India and the US over President Donald Trump's policies on trade and tariffs.

"It's not that the current momentum of change and interaction that is taking place between India and China is something that has been forced upon us due to some events. We always wanted good relations with China," Gen Naravane (retd) said.

He also expressed happiness that India and China are "moving forward" on discussing the boundary question.

"It is a boundary and not a border, and like in a boundary, it is open to negotiations... a certain amount of give and take is possible," the former Army chief said.

On Tuesday, India and China listed the measures in a joint document after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held wide-ranging talks earlier this week with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, besides meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"It is fortuitous that over the last couple of weeks, our relations with China are on the mend, a number of initiatives have been announced at political, diplomatic and military levels so that our engagements and relations improve as we go forward," Naravane said.

Wang paid a two-day visit to India, and his trip has largely been seen as part of ongoing efforts by the two neighbours to rebuild their relationship after it came under severe strain following the deadly Galwan Valley clashes in 2020.

Gen Naravane said post-2020, "a large amount of forces are arrayed on either side of the Line of Actual Control" and recalled that the external affairs minister had cautioned about the presence of such a large number of troops along the LAC.

"Definitely, not a situation in our common interest. We need to move forward and try to resolve it as soon as possible," he said.

The former Army chief asserted that it was his "hope for the future that our relations will improve". The two most populous nations of the world, not seeing eye to eye, do not bode well," he added.

In his address, Gen Naravane (retd) also underlined the historic ties between the two countries. "We were cooperating together for so many centuries... Post-independence, we didn't quite see eye to eye on certain issues, leading to the 1962 war, which strained relations thereafter."

"If you look at the civilisational timeline, the last 60-70 years are but a very small blip on this entire timeline.

"These kinds of ups and downs in the relationship between the two countries are bound to occur; nothing abnormal about it. Nevertheless, this blip in the relations cannot be just set aside or brushed under the carpet. It is an important and emotive issue between the two countries, and the sooner we settle it, the better it will be for the world at large," the former Army chief said.

Gen Naravane was appointed as the 28th Chief of Army Staff in December 2019 and superannuated in April 2022 after four decades of illustrious and meritorious service.

On the India-China boundary question, he mentioned the Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question, signed in 2005. *(PTI)*

No:KDB/BTC/6th ASFC/NIT/2025-26/1522 *Dated: 21/08/2025*

Short Notice Inviting Tender

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty-Five Paisa) only with a validity period of 180 (One Hundred Eighty) days, which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the APWD's printed F-2 forms are invited from the registered contractors of class-II and class-I (A, B &C) category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC, according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the following works under 6th Finance Commission Fund for the year 2024-25 during 2025-26. The Tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2.00 P.M. on 12.09.2025 and will be opened on the same date & place at 2.30 P.M.

Name of Work	Estimated Amount	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender paper	Time of Completion
Construction of sand gravelling road from Banduguri to Bangalpara village	19,00,000/-	Rs. 19000.00 (1% for ST, SC & OBC) & Rs. 380000/- (2% for General)	570/-	3 Months

Details NIT may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent from 23.08.2025 to 12.08.2025 in the office of the undersigned on payment of cost of Tender paper in the form of demand draft/Banker Cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledged in favour of Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar, payable at Kokrajhar.

Sd/-Block Development Officer
Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2845

No.EE/MSL-11/NIT/2017-18/ *Date 22/08/2025*

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & paise twenty five only. With a validity period of 180 (one hundred eighty) days, which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the printed F-2 form are invited from the registered Contractors of Class-III and above category under PWD (Roads Department Assam and Bodoland Territorial Council) according to their eligibilty for submitting tenders for the work as stated below. The tenders will be recieved by the undersigned up to 2.00PM on 30/08/2025 and will be opened on the same date & place at 2.15 P.M.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approximate Tender Value	(Earnest Money Deposit)	Cost of Tender Paper	Time of Completion of work
1	Construction of RCC Slab Culvert 4.00m Span on Mazgari road	Rs. 18,00,000.00	(2% for Gen) & (1% for Reserved Category)	Rs. 500.00	2 (two) Month from the date of issue of F.W.O.

Details NIT may be seen in all working days in the office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent up to 4.30 PM on all working days on 26/08/2025 & 27/08/2025 in the office of the undersigned on submission an application with payment in the form of Bank Draft duly pledged to the undersigned.

N. B. :-

1. Date of receiving application for Tender documents : - 26/08/2025 & 27/08/2025.
2. Date of issue of Tender Paper : - 28/08/2025 (up to 4.30 PM)
3. Date of receiving of Tender Paper 29/08/2025 (up to 2.00 PM)
4. Date of opening of Tender Paper 30/08/2025 (at 2.15 PM)
5. Place of opening Tender Paper : - Office of the E.E, PWD Mushalpur (R&B) Division, Mushalpur.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Mushalpur PWD (R&B) Division,
Mushalpur

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2789

Page 9 NE Aug 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 18:58 Page 1

Assam Rifles, customs seize methamphetamine worth ₹2 cr

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Aug 22: In a major breakthrough in the fight against drug trafficking, the Assam Rifles in a joint operation with the Customs Department seized a huge consignment of methamphetamine tablets in Tripura's Khowai district on Thursday late night.

Acting on specific intelligence, the joint team intercepted a Maruti Suzuki WagonR (registration number TR 04 F 0698) and, upon a thorough search, recovered two large packets containing 20,000 methamphetamine tablets weighing 2 kg.

The market value of the seized narcotics is estimated to be around Rs 2 crore. The driver of the vehicle along with three others were apprehended during the operation.

The seized contraband and the detainees have been handed over to the Customs Department for further investigation and legal proceedings.

Assam Rifles officials said the force, in close coordination with other enforcement agencies, is determined to curb illegal activities and ensure peace and security in the region.

NSSB cancels recruitment to 61 ANM/FHW posts

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 22: The Nagaland Staff Selection Board (NSSB) has cancelled the recruitment process for appointment to 61 posts of auxiliary nurse midwife/female health worker (ANM/FHW) in the state health and family welfare department.

The NSSB, in a notification on Friday, said the recruitment process has been cancelled following a directive from the Gauhati High Court, Kohima bench, via letter no. W.P. (C) 122/2024/979-80 dated August 20, 2025.

The board directed the health and family department to consider bringing necessary amendments to the Nagaland Nursing Services Rules, 1988, to provide the education/eligibility criteria for appointment to the posts of ANM/FHW in an unambiguous manner within 45 days from the date of the high court order.

It said on completion of the necessary amendments within the prescribed 45 days, the health and family welfare department will make a requisition to the NSSB within 15 days, strictly complying with the provisions of Regulations 14 of the NSSB Regulations 2020.

The NSSB said it will issue necessary advertisement for the same within 15 days after receipt of the aforesaid requisition from the department.

"In compliance with the aforesaid order of the high court, the Nagaland Staff Selection Board has notified that the examination conducted for item no. 4, ANM/FHW post, as advertised under advertisement no. NSSB-1/CTSE 2023 dated 15th December 2023 and written examination conducted on 24th February 2024 stand cancelled with immediate effect," the notification said.

India's defence now self-reliant with cutting-edge drone technology: Tripura CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Aug 22: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday said that due to the continuous efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country's military sector is now self-reliant and enriched with state-of-the-art combat technology. He said that the use of modern drone technology has increased significantly, especially in war situations and in combating terrorism.

Saha said this while attending the joint drone exercise of the Indian Army and Assam Rifles at the Assam Rifles Maidan.

"This is really a matter of joy. We want our country and state to remain protected. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Defence Minister have always said that our nation is protected—and this was proved in Operation Sindoor. We saw how in just 25 minutes, the camps of terrorists were destroyed," said Saha.

He said that such initiatives are also necessary in Tripura, as similar measures are being taken in every state.

"Technology has advanced. In the coming days, we will be protected under this technology. We have seen various types of drones. For safety reasons, firing did not take place here; however, demonstrations were held. We also saw an anti-drone defence system that can seize, destroy, or capture drones used by terrorists or enemies. We saw drones capable of carrying explosive materials and firing weapons. Such demonstrations are very necessary for Tripura. Today's exercise has proved that we are prepared, protected, and secured, and it has also built confidence among the people," said Saha.

Saha also conveyed his thanks to the Assam Rifles and said they have been working tirelessly to provide protection and security to the North East and Tripura.

"They have shown how we can destroy terrorists or enemies using new technology," he added.

People to decide whether Congress returns to power or not: Okram Ibobi Singh

IMPHAL, Aug 22: Manipur CLP leader Okram Ibobi Singh on Friday said that whether Congress returns to power in any part of the country is to be decided by the people and not by a handful of leaders and workers of the BJP.

Singh made the statement at the sidelines of the 9th death anniversary observation of former chief minister Rishang Keishing held at Congress Bhavan in Imphal.

Replying to media queries on BJP's campaign of "Congress Mukt Bharat", Singh told reporters, "In a democracy where freedom of expression exists, anyone, including the BJP, can say what comes to their mind. However, the BJP is not going to decide whether Congress returns to power or not. To us Congress, whether we return to power in Manipur or any other part of the country has to be decided by the people and not by a handful of BJP leaders."

The former three-time chief minister said, "that during the last parliamentary elections in the state, Congress won the two Lok Sabha seats in the state. That was decided by the people and not by the BJP. The saffron party should not forget that."

Singh also lauded Rishang Keishing for being a visionary and liberal leader who believed in the integrity of the state.

He said, "Keishing believed that the integrity of Manipur cannot be compromised or broken under any circumstances.

Earlier, during the observation programme at Congress Bhavan, Congress leaders, including state unit president K Meghachandra, paid floral tributes to the portrait of Keishing. *(PTI)*

Drugs worth over ₹ 75 crore seized in Mizoram, 8 arrested

The special operation was planned and launched on Thursday based on specific intelligence developed by BSF

AIZAWL, Aug 22: In a major drug haul, huge quantities of Methamphetamine tablets and heroin worth over Rs 75 crore were seized and eight people arrested in Mizoram in a special joint operation launched by BSF, NCB and Mizoram Excise and Narcotics department, the paramilitary force said in a statement on Friday.

The special operation was planned and launched on Thursday based on specific intelligence developed by BSF, it said.

The joint team intercepted four suspected vehicles on the Aizawl–Champhai highway (NH-6), between Keifang and Seling villages, approximately 60 km from Aizawl.

During the search, three plastic bags containing 50 packets filled with about 50 kg (5 lakh tablets) of methamphetamine (Yaba) were seized, the statement said.

In addition, three soap cases containing 36 gm of heroin were also seized, it said.

The combined value of the seized narcotics is estimated at over Rs75 crore, it said.

Eight people have been arrested and four vehicles used for transporting the contrabands were seized during the special joint operation, it said.

This major success highlights the synergy and seamless coordination between BSF, NCB, and the Excise and Narcotics department, whose joint efforts ensured the disruption of a significant narcotics trafficking attempt along the vulnerable Mizoram–Myanmar corridor, the statement claimed.

The operation reaffirmed the resolute determination of security and enforcement agencies to combat the menace of drugs, safeguard society, and protect the youth from falling prey to narcotics smuggling networks, it said.

The BSF, in close collaboration with sister agencies, reiterates its unwavering commitment to the war on drugs and assures that such coordinated actions will continue with greater intensity to deliver decisive blows against organised drug trafficking syndicates operating in the region, the statement added. *(PTI)*

Drug abuse biggest threat to Mizoram: CM Lalduhoma

AIZAWL, Aug 22: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Friday said drug abuse is the biggest threat to the state and called for collective efforts to fight the menace. The CM said narcotics are one of the main factors for the spread of HIV/AIDS in the state.

"Drug abuse remains the biggest threat to us. The menace should be fought collectively. When we launch massive combat against drug abuse, it means we are preventing HIV from spreading further, besides doing a great job for physical health and spiritual salvation," Lalduhoma said while addressing the conference of Mizoram Police Service Association (MPSA) here. He lauded the contributions of Mizoram Police Service (MPS) officers in combating drugs and making the state one of the most peaceful in the country.

Lalduhoma said his government has been fighting against corruption since its start and strengthened the state's anti-corruption ombudsman, 'Lok Ayukta', by setting up an inquiry wing manned by three MPS officers.

The government has also recently recruited 256 constables, which is known to be one of the fairest and transparent recruitments ever in the state, he claimed. Expressing concern over a report about an increase in deaths of policemen, the CM urged police officers to take good care of their health.

He also urged policemen to keep themselves updated and remain well-versed with the new laws. Lalduhoma further encouraged police officers to continue with their efforts to bring peace and development in the state. Home Minister K. Sapdanga also attended the event held at the police headquarters. *(PTI)*

Raja Raghuvanshi murder

Meghalaya Police to file chargesheet by August-end

SHILLONG, Aug 22: Meghalaya Police will file its chargesheet by August-end against prime accused Sonam Raghuvanshi, Raj Kushwaha and five others in the May 23 Sohra murder of Indore businessman Raja Raghuvanshi, well within the three-month deadline from their June arrest, officials said on Friday.

All five accused are currently in judicial custody.

Additional Public Prosecutor Tushar Chandra told PTI that the investigation is almost complete and the chargesheet will be filed within this month.

He added that the accused will be produced before the court again on either August 27 or 28.

Besides Sonam and Raj Kushwaha, police have also arrested three alleged henchmen — Anand Singh Kurmi, Akash Rajput and Vishal Singh Chauhan — for their role in the crime.

Three other co-accused, property owner L Tomar, property dealer Silome James and security guard Balbir Ahirwar, have been granted bail, officials said.

The murder of Raja Raghuvanshi had triggered widespread outrage, with the police terming it one of the most gruesome killings in recent times in the hill state. *(PTI)*

SU cancels student's admission following his derogatory remarks on Nepali language

GANGTOK, Aug 22: The Sikkim University (SU) cancelled the provisional admission of an M Com student over "gross misconduct" after he allegedly made derogatory remarks against the Nepali language, officials of the institution said on Friday.

The action was taken on Thursday after a disciplinary committee probed a complaint lodged by the Sikkim University Students Association (SUSA) and some faculty members, alleging that Raj Shekhar Yadav, a student from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, allegedly made derogatory remarks against the Nepali language in a WhatsApp group.

SU Vice Chancellor Santanu Kumar Swain took note of the disciplinary committee report and ordered the revocation of Yadav's admission, they said.

Yadav was arrested by Sikkim Police and booked under various sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (BNS) last week.

SU's disciplinary committee, in its inquiry report, said it found the student guilty of indiscipline and violating the university's code of conduct by posting objectionable, indecent and derogatory contents on the departmental WhatsApp group between August 14 and 16 relating to disrespect to national days of importance (celebration of Independence Day) and his personal disregard of the Nepali language and community at large.

"On careful consideration of the inquiry report with recommendations submitted by the disciplinary committee, the Vice Chancellor, in exercise of the powers conferred under Statute 29 (4) of the Sikkim University Act and Ordinance OC-12, hereby cancels the provisional admission granted to Raj Shekar Yadav in Sikkim University with immediate effect," SU Registrar Professor Laxuman Sharma said. *(PTI)*

Manipur police chief reviews law and order in two districts

IMPHAL, Aug 22: Manipur DGP Rajiv Singh reviewed the law and order situation in Tengnoupal and Thoubal districts, police said on Friday.

"Singh visited Tengnoupal and Thoubal districts on Thursday to review law and order situation, interact with officers, and boost the morale of the forces," an official said.

Singh first visited Moreh PS, where he interacted with police and commando personnel stationed in the border town and motivated them.

He also interacted with representatives of some civil society organisations (CSOs) there. Later, Singh visited Tengnoupal police station and met police personnel.

"He encouraged the personnel to carry on the good work on the law-and-order front and also in the fight against drugs," the official added.Singh also held a meeting with officials of Assam Rifles and discussed the steps and measures taken up related to the security scenario of the district and also on border fencing, sources said. *(PTI)*

RENOVATION OF OFFICE OF DRM (P) SECTION

E-Tender Notice No.: LMG/Engg/60 of 2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Brief Description of Item:** Renovation of office of the DRM (P) section and officer's chamber at Lumding under the jurisdiction of ADEN/II/Lumding. **Tender Value:** ₹94,99,966.56/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹1,90,000/-. **Date & Time of closing of tender: 15:00** hrs. of **15-09-2025 & opening at 15:00** hrs. of **16-09-2025.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto **15.00** hrs. of **15-09-2025** in website **www.ireps.gov.in**

DRM (W), Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

RENOVATION OF FLOOR OF OLD BOGIE REPAIR SHOP IN TINSUKIA DIVISION

Tender Notice No.: TSK/Engg/48 of 2025, Dated: 20-08-2025; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Item No. 1**; **Brief Description of Item :** At Tinsukia Division - Renovation of floor of Old Bogie Repair Shop at Dibrugarh Workshop in connection of work Integrated solution for high LHB bogie disassembly and assembly line with industry 4.0 IOT Enabled. **Tender Value:** ₹1,13,18,191/-; **Earnest Money**: ₹2,06,600/-; Date & time of **closing** of tender at **15:00** hrs. and **opening** at **16:00** hrs. on **11-09-2025**. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available up to **15:00** hrs. on **11-09-2025** in the website **www.ireps.gov.in**

DRM (W), Tinsukia

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

Mangosteen, Rambutan, Avocado cultivation started in Tripura: Agriculture Minister

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Aug 22: The Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare Department of Tripura has started cultivating exotic fruits like mangosteen, rambutan, and avocado to boost the income of farmers in the state.

This was informed by Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare Minister Ratan Lal Nath.

On Friday the Minister said that if such fruits can be produced successfully at the Nagicherra Horticulture Research Centre, then they can be cultivated across Tripura.

"You can see the production by watching the tree. Mangosteen is very costly, along with avocado which is good for sugar patients. These fruits were not cultivated here earlier, but now we have started. We have planted a new variety of fruit tree named mangosteen. One of our officials went to Karnataka and brought two saplings, which were planted here. We are also planning to start cultivation of kiwi, blueberry, and blackberry. We also started cultivating Rambutan which is already available in red and yellow varieties as seasonal fruits. At first, we started cultivating these fruits at the Nagicherra Research Centre to check whether they suit our environment and weather. If suitable, only then will we encourage our farmers to cultivate them for their benefit," said the minister.

He also informed that 46 hectares of land are currently being used for avocado cultivation in the state.

The Agriculture Minister further said that in Tripura, a total of 23,746 farmers cultivate potatoes on 7,622 hectares of land.

"Potato have huge demand in the state as well as in other states. Earlier, our farmers used to purchase seeds from Maharajganj Bazar in Agartala, West Bengal, and Punjab. Another source was True Potato Seed from the Nagicherra Research Centre, which is very costly. We have now introduced a new process through ARC, which started in 2023–24 on 36 kani of land. Potatoes cultivated there were distributed to farmers. In 2024–25, we provided seeds to 410 farmers for 128 kani of land, and this year we will provide seeds for 2,087 kani of land, with 250 kani earmarked for organic potato cultivation. Our target is to become self-reliant in potato seed production by 2028–29," the minister said.

Nagaland, Assam CMs agree on joint action in Disputed Area Belt

KOHIMA, Aug 22: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu and his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma have agreed that all future activities, including plantation work, in the Disputed Area Belt (DAB) will be carried out jointly by both states.

An official statement issued by the office of the Nagaland chief secretary on Thursday said that the decision was taken following discussions between the two leaders in the wake of fresh tensions along the inter-state boundary.

The governments of Nagaland and Assam had recently undertaken a joint eviction drive to remove illegal immigrants from the DAB, it stated.

However, subsequent plantation activities initiated by Assam in the area had led to friction, prompting urgent dialogue at the highest level, the statement added.

The DAB has been a long-standing flashpoint between the two states. It stretches across several sectors along the 512-km Assam-Nagaland boundary, where claims and counterclaims over land have often led to clashes, tensions, and intermittent violence.

By resolving to take up all future activities in the DAB collectively, the two governments have reaffirmed their commitment to peace, mutual trust, and cooperation in the sensitive border region, the statement maintained.

In Guwahati, Sarma on Thursday dismissed reports of attempted encroachment by Naga people on land in Golaghat district where an eviction drive was undertaken recently, and said the Nagaland government will join a massive plantation drive in the area later this week. *(PTI)*

E-AUCTION FOR AWARDING MULTI PURPOSE STALLS UNIT

E-auction for awarding MPS units at Simaluguri Jn., Dibrugarh Town, Bhojo & Naharkatiya Railway station of Tinsukia Division.Details are as under ; **Auction Catalogue No.:** TSK-MPS-04; **Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots) : 11:00** hrs. on **05-09-2025**; **Auction Close Date / Time : 12:20** hrs. on **05-09-2025**; **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee; **Trips/Days:** 1826.

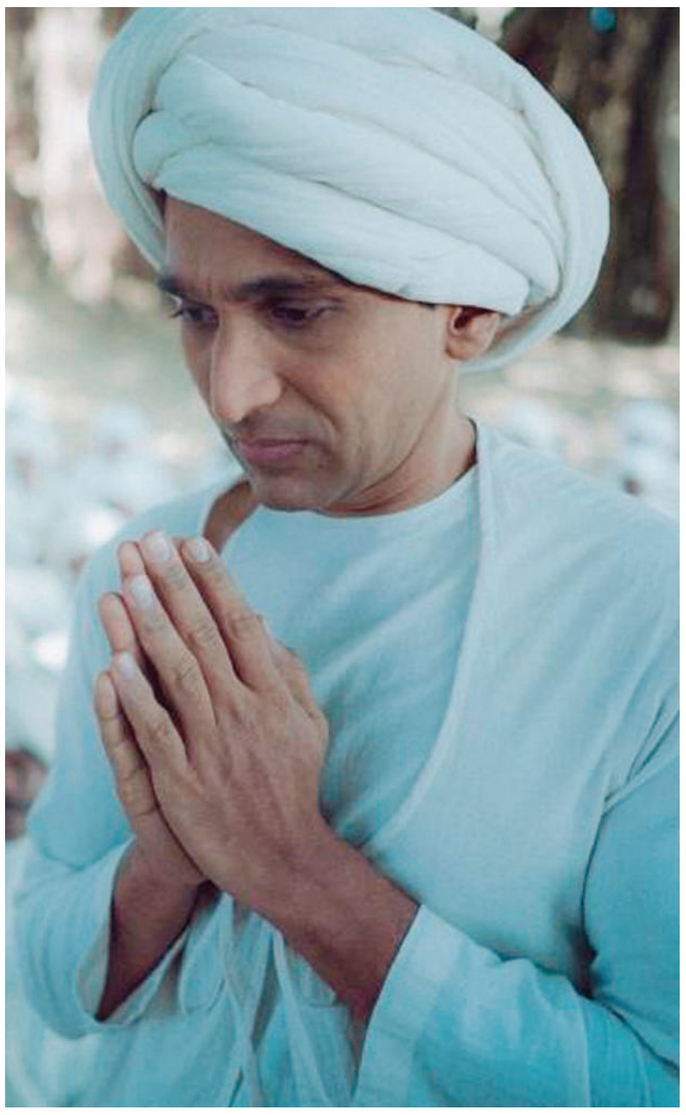
Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	MPS-TSK-DBRT-MPS -75-25-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Stall no 19 indicated in sketch plan, stall size (8 ft. X 4ft. =32 sq. ft)
AA/2	MPS-TSK-SLGR-MPS -78-25-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	MPS stall no.1 at PF-1 (indicated in Sketch plan), Size : 8X4= 32 sq.feet.
AA/3	MPS-TSK-BOJ-MPS-81-25-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	MPS stall at PF-1 (indicated in sketch plan), Size : 8X4= 32sq. feet.
AA/4	MPS-TSK-SLGR-MPS-79-25-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	MPS stall no.2 at PF-1(indicated in Sketch plan), Size : 8X4= 32 sq.feet.
AA/5	MPS-TSK-NHK-MPS-77 -25-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	MPS stall no 1, at PF- 1 (indicated in sketch plan), Size : 8x4 = 32 sq.feet
AA/6	MPS-TSK-SLGR-MPS -80-25-2 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	MPS stall no.4 at PF-2 (indicated in Sketch plan), Size : 8X4= 32 sq.feet.

The auction catalogue has already been uploaded on 19-08-2025 through IREPS website.

Divisional Railway Manager (C), Tinsukia

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

Page 10 August 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 19:44 Page 1



Big moment for India: Pratik Gandhi on TIFF premiere of 'Gandhi' series

MUMBAI, Aug 22: Actor Pratik Gandhi is excited about the world premiere of his much-anticipated series, "Gandhi" at the prestigious Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) next month and says the show is crafted in India for a global audience.

The series, directed by Hansal Mehta, delves into the life of Mahatma Gandhi and the influential figures that contributed to India's struggle for independence.

"TIFF is a big big moment, not only for me or for the team but for the whole country because it's the first ever Indian series selected there at TIFF. We all talk about India as a soft power. So, it (show) is made in India for the globe, the first ever series on Gandhi, and I'm very proud of it," Pratik, known for his roles in "Scam 1992", "Madgaon Express", and "Saare Jahan Se Accha", told PTI in an interview.

Spanning from 1888 to 1947, the show's first season will focus on Gandhi's formative years from 1888 to 1915. The subsequent seasons will delve into his journey from 1915 to 1932 and then 1932 to 1947.

The 45-year-old actor is hopeful that the "human" aspects of Gandhi depicted in the show will resonate universally.

"His human quality is going to be highlighted in the show. (It) will resonate with everybody across the globe, generations, and age groups. Also, that (side of) Gandhi (which we are showing in the series) we don't know, nobody knows."

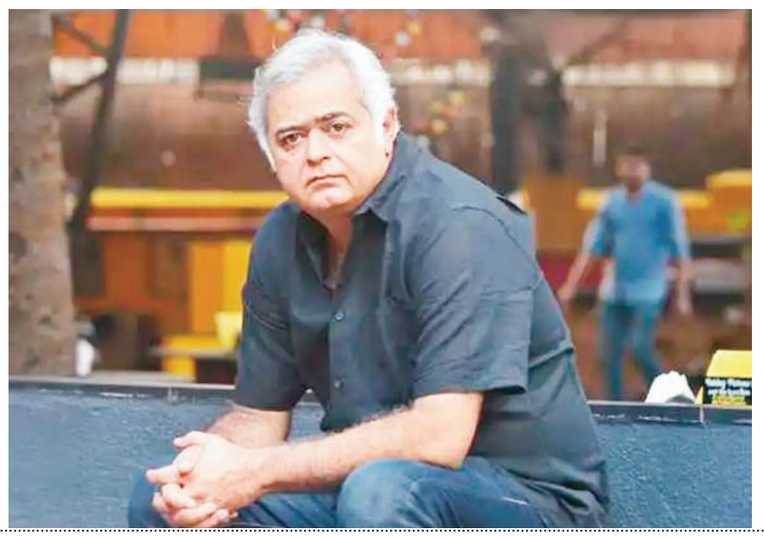
Growing up, the actor said he had a unique connection to his surname, 'Gandhi' one that he didn't fully appreciate until he played Gandhi, first in a play and later in Mehta's series.

"I was born with the surname Gandhi. In school people used to tease me, like they would say, 'Gandhi ji, and Baapu', when I was in pre-primary school. I hated that.

"My father once told me that you don't know the power of this surname, you don't know who they are talking about, once you read, once you grow up you will understand who this person was. I thought he was just trying to make me feel good," Pratik added.

Pratik said he must have done more than 500 shows of Gujarati play "Mohan No Masalo" in the past one decade... "I had no clue that I was somewhere preparing for this to happen (the series)," he added.

The show also features Gandhi's actor wife Bhamini Oza as Kasturba Gandhi and Harry Potter star Tom Felton as Josiah Oldfield. Produced by Applause Entertainment, "Gandhi" is most likely to be released by December. (PTI)



'Nishaanchi' came out of very personal and instinctive space: Anurag Kashyap

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap says his upcoming movie "Nishaanchi" is a return to the raw, instinctive style of filmmaking that first defined his cinematic voice.

The filmmaker, known for "Black Friday", "Gangs of Wasseypur" and "Mukkabaaz", said the idea for "Nishaanchi" came to him nearly a decade ago. "'Nishaanchi' was born out of a very personal and instinctive space. I wrote the film back in 2016, right after Mukkabaaz. There was an urgency to return to my older, more raw style of filmmaking, working with newer talent and staying closer to the ground," Kashyap said in a statement.

The crime drama follows the intertwined lives of twin brothers Babloo and Dabloo, set against the backdrop of the Hindi heartland.

It features debutant Aaishvary Thackray in a double role along with Vedika Pinto, Monika Panwar, Kumud Mishra, and Mohd. Zeeshan Ayyub.

The story, the director recalled, stemmed from an idea about a mother and her twins that had been with him for a while. "At the time, I found myself wondering: what if I consciously wrote a story that could be mounted on a bigger scale?... So, I began writing it, and within three to four days, the first draft of 'Nishaanchi' was ready. From there, I started exploring ways to make it larger in scale and vision," Kashyap said. The film's journey from script to screen was, however, anything but straightforward, he said. "It wasn't until I met Aaishvary that the film found its footing again. I casually handed him the script in 2020 or 2021. He instantly connected with the story—he was laughing and thoroughly engaged."

When he came back to me, I told him upfront: this role demands immense preparation and commitment, and we wouldn't begin until he was fully ready. That's how 'Nishaanchi' finally came back to life.

"I met Vedika Pinto in 2022, and everything began to fall into place. She and Aaishvary spent a significant amount of time together in Kanpur, attending multiple workshops, absorbing the environment, and working on their language and chemistry. It was only once I felt they were truly ready that I began pitching the film. Interestingly, the project found its momentum in the most unexpected way," Kashyap added

Produced by Flip Films and Jar Pictures, the Amazon MGM Studios India project is scheduled to release theatrically across the country on September 19. (PTI)

NOTED PUNJABI ACTOR JASWINDER BHALLA PASSES AWAY

CHANDIGARH, Aug 22: Renowned Punjabi actor Jaswinder Bhalla on Friday morning died at a private hospital in Mohali where he was admitted following a brain haemorrhage. He was 65.

Bhalla breathed his last at 4:35 am at the Fortis Hospital.

His friend Bal Mukand Sharma said Bhalla was admitted to the hospital two days ago. He was not keeping well for some time, Sharma added.

In a statement, Fortis Hospital said Bhalla was brought to the hospital's emergency on August 20 with acute brain haemorrhage.

"He was in a critical condition on admission. He was under the care of the Neurosurgery team and managed on ventilator and cardio supportive drugs for 2 days. In spite of best clinical care and all resuscitative efforts, due to the severity of the illness, he passed away today at 04:35 am," said the statement. Bhalla's last rites will take place in Mohali on Saturday.

A popular comedian and character actor, Bhalla was known for his roles in Punjabi films such as "Carry on Jatta", "Mahaul Theek Hai", "Gaddi Jandi Eh Challangan Mardi", "Jatt Airways", and "Jatt & Juliet 2". Many political leaders across party lines condoled his death, remembering him for his contribution to public life. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann mourned Bhalla's death in a post on X. "The sudden departure of Jaswinder Bhalla Ji from this world is extremely sorrowful. The heart is saddened by the silence of the jingle of Chhankatian. May Waheguru grant him a place at His feet. Chacha Chatar will always reside in our hearts," Mann wrote.

Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring also condoled Bhalla's demise.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of Jaswinder Bhalla ji. A proud Punjabi voice around the world, his contribution and love for the community will always be remembered. Heartfelt condolences to his family & admirers," Warring said on X. (PTI)

Lawyer objects to 'Jolly LLB 3'; court issues summons to producer, Akshay, Arshad Warsi

PUNE, Aug 22: A Pune court has issued summons to the producer of "Jolly LLB 3" along with its actors Akshay Kumar and Arshad Warsi in response to a petition which claims that the film portrays lawyers and judges in a poor light.

Civil Court judge J G Pawar on August 18 issued summons to director Subhash Kapoor, `Arun Bhatia' and Warsi, seeking their replies by October 28.

While Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar's real name is Rajiv Bhatia, the petitioner said it was mistakenly mentioned as 'Arun Bhatia'.

Advocate Wajid Khan, who has filed the suit, said the film's trailer, released recently, maligns the legal system, lawyers and judges.

"We have sought a restraining order against the film's release. The court issued summons to the filmmaker and two actors," Khan told reporters.

Kumar's official name was mentioned as `Arun Bhatia' in the suit by mistake, and summons was issued in the same name, the lawyer clarified.

"However, while sending the summons by correspondence, we sent it in the name of Akshay Kumar to his address. We are also filing an application in the court to rectify the name," he said.

"Jolly LLB 3" is a sequel of "Jolly LLB" and "Jolly LLB 2". It is scheduled to be released in September. (PTI)

Applause Entertainment aims to make more theatrical films, teams up with Imtiaz Ali & Kabir Khan

MUMBAI, Aug 22: After making impactful shows for OTT in "Scam 1992", "Criminal Justice" and "Black Warrant", content studio Applause Entertainment is now planning to expand its theatrical releases by collaborating with acclaimed directors like Imtiaz Ali and Kabir Khan for a romantic and sports-drama, respectively.

Applause Entertainment completed eight years in business in August and Sameer Nair, the managing director, is happy with the performance of the company's recent shows like Vikramaditya Motwane's "Black Warrant", Nagesh Kukunoor's "The Hunt: The Rajiv Gandhi Assassination", and season four of Pankaj Tripathi-led "Criminal Justice".

Nair said the studio has 60 OTT shows to its credit and five to six films including Vidya Balan-starrer "Do Aur Do Pyaar", "Zwigato" featuring Kapil Sharma, and Tahira Kashyap Khurrana's directorial venture "Sharmajee Ki Beti". "We would like to be regarded as one of India's largest content producers with regard to series, and would like to become one of India's largest film studios. For which we need to work hard, develop materials, work with the right talent," Nair told PTI in an interview.

"We've a lot of subsequent seasons coming up of all the shows we have done. Our big plan now is to foray into movies, and to get into theatrical movies then go to streaming. About all the movies we do apart from the series, our business model operates on invest and reinvest, so we keep reinvesting into the business," he added. Applause Entertainment is engaging with a lot of directors and actors, and at the moment the studio has three to four films in the pipeline in both Hindi and a Tamil movie, "Bison".

"We are going to do Imtiaz Ali's next movie, we are doing two movies with Kabir Khan, a big Tamil movie comes out in Diwali, called 'Bison' by Mari Selvaraj and Pa Ranjith (who is producing it). Imtiaz always tells gut-wrenching stories from the heart, like a love story so that's what that will be doing. It has Diljit (Dosanjh), Vedang (Raina), Sharvari, and others," Nair said. "Kabir is working on two things which we've not yet announced but we are currently working on. It will be how Kabir makes (his films). Kabir is a wonderful storyteller, one is a sports movie, it is based on a true story, it's different sports."

The studio is also gearing up for the subsequent seasons for their hit series including "Black Warrant", "Criminal Justice", "Scam", and "Undekhi".

"We've done a beautiful show with Nitya Mehra which has got the lead girl of 'Saaiyara', Aneet Padda. She is the lead in that as well. We've done a documentary on Salman Khan, which is now in the final stages of finishing. So, hopefully by the year end, we will see that," Nair added.

Among the standout achievements for Applause Entertainment are shows like "Criminal Justice", "Scam", and "Undekhi".

"'Criminal Justice' is the first show that we had made and released and it's the first show in Indian streaming that's gone to its fourth season. So, that's a real favourite for us. 'Scam' was one of our biggest hits shows and it put Applause on the map and made us big at that time.

"Another show is, 'Undekhi', one of our nice small sleeper hits that's gone on to become a really big brand. This year we've had a good run with 'Black Warrant', the fourth season 'Criminal Justice' and 'The Hunt'."

The third season of "Scam", Nair said, will focus on maverick businessman Subrata Roy.

"He (Subrata Roy) is an incredibly interesting character and personality. He came and the way he built up his company and did all of that... So, it's that kind of story. These stories are not scandalous or sensational as much as celebratory stories and also cautionary tales," Nair said.

Nair acknowledged the underwhelming reception to Vir Das's show "Hasmukh", and Ajay Devgn-led "Rudra".

"The show has great potential. We were disappointed it didn't do well. Maybe because the expectation of people from Vir was of an international comedian and suddenly seeing him as a 'dehati', and speaking in good Hindi was distinct," he said, adding that they had grand plans for subsequent seasons. "Rudra", he said, did well. Ajay was terrific. Until recently when 'Criminal Justice' overtook it, it has always been the most viewed show. It's just that numbers didn't work out. I don't think the economics worked out," he said. (PTI)

Page 11 Aug 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 19:08 Page 1

Cape Town's Newlands to host next SA20 final

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 22: The final of the upcoming SA20 league will be held at the Newlands in Cape Town with the venues at Durban, Centurion and Johannesburg getting key playoff matches, the tournament organisers said on Friday.

The fourth season of the league starts on December 26.

Durban will host a playoff match for the first time in SA20 history when the two best teams of the competition meet in Qualifier 1 on January 21.

The Highveld will play host to two crunch playoff matches, with Centurion setting the stage for the Eliminator on January 22 and the Wanderers in Johannesburg staging the decider of the second finalist with Qualifier 2 on January 23.

All SA20 champions have been crowned in front of a capacity crowd, with the three successive finals selling out in record time.

SA20 League Commissioner, Graeme Smith, expects similar fanfare for the box office tickets.

"SA20 Season 4 is shaping up to be an incredibly exciting summer of cricket, kicking off on Boxing Day and running through the holiday period," Smith said.

"Last year Newlands sold out all five matches at the venue and with the final taking place on a Sunday, it sets up an incredible afternoon with great weather, entertainment and a lively atmosphere to crown our Season 4 champions."

The former South African captain added, "Durban will host a playoff for the first time and we're hoping this will excite the fans, especially because the two best teams of the competition will be playing in that Qualifier 1.

"We're also excited to go back to Centurion and Wanderers on the Thursday and Friday nights, it's always key to have the venues close together because the matches are a day apart."

The auction for the fourth season will be held on September 9, when the six franchises will finalise their 19-player squads. The event promises high stakes bidding and entertainment, with star Proteas and international players going under the hammer.

"The fans have been at the heart of our success over the past three seasons," Smith said. "I think with the league taking place during the majority of the holiday season we will see a lot of interest around the country." (PTI)

Ngidi's 5-wicket haul leads South Africa to series-clinching win against Australia

MACKAY (AUSTRALIA), Aug 22: Fast bowler Lungi Ngidi grabbed five wickets to set up South Africa's series-clinching 84-run win against Australia in the second one-day international on Friday.

Ngidi's haul of 5-42 helped see Australia bowled out for 193 with more than 12 overs to spare as Mitchell Marsh's team got dismissed for less than 200 runs for the fourth successive ODI at home.

Half centuries from Matthew Breetzke (88) and Tristan Stubbs (74) had earlier led South Africa to 277 all out after stand-in captain Aiden Markram won the toss and elected to bat.

Regular skipper Temba Bavuma was rested as part of his workload management and Cricket South Africa said he will be available to lead the side in the last game of the series on Sunday.

Bavuma sustained a hamstring injury during the World Test Championship final victory over Australia at Lord's in June, but recovered in time to lead the side in the ODI series opener against Australia.

For the second successive time in the three-match series, Australia's batters put up a below-par performance after losing the first game by 98 runs at Cairns.

In the absence of injured Kagiso Rabada, who was ruled out of the series with an injury, the South Africa pacers jolted Australia's top order with Ngidi finding the outside edge of Marnus Labuschagne in his second over.

Nandre Burger also made an early impact when Travis Head (6) holed out at mid-on. The Australian batters continued to struggle against short deliveries when skipper Marsh also fell inside the batting powerplay and was caught at mid-on as the home team slumped to 38-3.

Josh Inglis (87) and Cameron Green (35) shared a 67-run stand and tried to put the chase on track, but not before Inglis got a lucky escape when Tony de Zorzi couldn't hold on to a sharp catch at short covers.

Left-arm spinner Senuran Muthusamy broke the stand in the 23rd over when he held on to a smart low return catch to dismiss Green and Alex Carey was smartly caught by Dewald Brevis at point as Australia slipped to 133-5.

Ngidi then returned to tear through the lower order. He ended Inglis' aggressive knock, which featured 10 fours and two sixes, when he had him caught behind and went on to claim three more wickets to seal the series for the Proteas.

Earlier, Rickelton and Stubbs shared an 89-run fourth-wicket stand after Xavier Bartlett removed Ryan Rickelton for eight while Markram chipped an easy catch to square mid-wicket and was out without scoring.

Breetzke scored his fourth successive half century while Stubbs breached the fifty-run mark for the first time in his 16 ODIs to rebuild South Africa shaky start.

Breetzke was denied his second ODI century when he was caught at deep mid-wicket off Nathan Ellis and Brevis also perished for just 1 while trying to pull Ellis in his next over.

Despite the fall of two quick wickets, South Africa looked set to cross the 300-run mark when it reached 233-5 at the end of 40th over. However, it lost four wickets for 31 runs within six overs and slipped to 264-9 in the 46th over. Wiaan Mulder made a quickfire 26 off 21 balls and Keshav Maharaj scored 22 not out before South Africa got bowled out with five balls to spare when No. 11 Ngidi was clean bowled by Josh Hazlewood. (AP)

Rower Arjun Lal Jat aims for LA28 after battling back injury for two years

SRINAGAR, Aug 22: Rower Arjun Lal Jat sports a huge 'Tokyo 2020' tattoo on his right arm, and his dream is to compete at LA28 and get another indelible ink impression just below the one he proudly flaunts on his biceps.

But for that to happen, Jat will have to return to peak fitness after spending nearly two years recovering from a debilitating lower-back injury, which forced one of the most recognisable faces in the water sports circuit to miss the 2024 Paris Olympics qualifiers.

The injury has left a deep scar in Jat's mind and the Hangzhou Asian Games silver medallist wants to regain competitive fitness. For that he has chosen the Khelo India Water Sports Festival (KIWSF) to test himself for the first time in two years. "I suffered a back injury before the Paris Olympic qualifiers in South Korea, which put me off the radar for more than one and a half years.

"Gradually, I am returning to practice. I have come here (at the KIWSF) to compete in single sculls, which will give me the confidence to participate in the National Championships in December, where I will either compete in single or double sculls," said the Rajasthan rower, who along with Arvind Singh finished 11th in men's lightweight double sculls – the highest-ever position achieved by Indian rowers in the Olympics.

The 28-year-old has started training in the Yamuna river in Delhi and is hopeful of winning a medal in the national championships, which will help him regain his place in the national camp after two years.

"I returned to the Rajputana Rifles centre in Delhi from the Army Nodal Unit in Pune. In Delhi, I train on the the Sonia Vihar side of the Wazirabad Bridge in the Yamuna. I stay at the Army's Supply Platoon near the Vishwavidyalaya area from where it is easy for me to travel to Wazirabad," said Jat, a two-time Asian Championship gold medallist. "I remember the day when I felt pain in my lower back when our team was training in China for the Olympic qualifiers... after the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023, this (KIWSF) is the first competition I have come for." Jat didn't take the help of a full-time physio, and instead relied on his instincts to overcome the injury. "I did not take the help of an expert physio or a doctor to recover from the injury. I only took some advice from a BSF physio and I followed some exercises prescribed by him. I am fine now. The issue was with the lower back muscles, which has been overcome."

Jat not just lost his spot in the national camp but he was also downgraded in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) scheme. The 'core' group athlete is now in the TOPS developmental side and hopes a medal at the Nationals will get him into the mainstream again.

"The government has supported me a lot. They have kept me in the TOPS Developmental group, not the 'core' group. But I want to return to the elite level as quickly as possible. I had to start the buildup to LA2028 somewhere. Here at the KIWSF, I will test my endurance and how much workload my body can take.

"The nationals are scheduled in December where I will know my progress. If I get a medal at the nationals, I will straightaway get my place in the national camp," says Jat as he keeps looking at the tattoo on his arm.

"This tattoo, I got after the Tokyo Olympics. I like it, so just like that I got in on my right arm. If I am able to compete at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028, another tattoo will figure prominently below this one," declared Jat, who enjoys a superstar status here among youngsters aspiring to become like him.

"Yes, you can say I am somewhat of a superstar here among youngsters; they do ask for selfies. Everyone recognises me here," said the Subedar, who comes from a village near Shahpura area near Jaipur.

Jat is not setting any targets for now, as all that will happen only after he is back in the national camp.

Asked about Asian Games 2026, and he said: "Well, my first step is to get the national medal; that's all I'm targeting. The competition and the competitors have grown since I suffered the injury. The country has progressed really fast in water sports."

He also wants to once again pair with his partner Arvind.

"We can renew our doubles partnership in future provided I get into the national camp. Arvind is in the Army Nodal Unit in Pune. He too has a back problem but nowhere close to the injury I suffered. In rowing, back injury is quite common," he said.

National coach Ismail Baig believed Jat will have to work hard to get back into the national camp.

"He has been out of the camp for more than one and a half years. Before that he was with me for 7-8 years. He played the Asian championships, the Asian Games and the Tokyo Olympics. Arjun and Arvind took India to the next level by finishing 11th in the Olympics, India's highest position so far. "But past is past and present is present. Unfortunately, he (Jat) suffered an injury and there was a two-year gap. He has to prove himself in the coming nationals to get back into the camp. He does have regular conversations with me and I keep advising him, but he has to do the hard work," said the veteran India coach. (PTI)

In the US Open's qualifying tournament, the smaller sportswear brands can shine

NEW YORK, Aug 22: Tennis apparel sponsorship is a big business. It is also one that, among the top players, is dominated by a small group of industry titans.

Brands like Nike, Adidas and Asics provide the outfits for most of the top 100, with their recognizable logos splashed across the shirts and skirts of Grand Slam favorites. But if one looks beyond that upper echelon and into the U.S. Open's qualifying tournament – where lower-ranked players compete for spots in the main draw – there's a world of local startups and small clothing businesses making their way into the booming tennis business.

For many players in the qualifying tournament, their apparel sponsors are companies local to their home country. These companies often specifically seek out their countrymen.

"It's key to sponsor and help our Swiss players," said Laura Tolub, the chief operating officer of Fourteen Company. Fourteen is a small sportswear brand based in Geneva, Switzerland, that sponsors a couple of Swiss players in the qualifying draw. "It doesn't mean we're only sponsoring Swiss players, but it's important to us to … be there for them." That country connection is often important on the player's side, too. Swiss player Marc-Andrea Hüsler, ranked 228th, won his second round qualifying match Thursday afternoon in Fourteen apparel. "It's a Swiss brand, so I wanted to do something with the Swiss if possible," he said about his decision to join the brand two years ago. "They were new and they were building up."

They've built into a tight-knit community, according to Tolub.

"(Some players) want to have the feeling they are part of a family, which Fourteen is," she said. "It's more of a family than a big brand." Arianne Hartono went a similar route. She is sponsored by The Indian Maharadja, a Dutch company known for its hockey clothing and based out of Nieuwkuijk, a small town of about 5,000 people.

"They were a very small startup, like three, four years ago," Hartono said. "They approached me through social media, they just came at me and said, Hey, we're a small company, we want to start coming into tennis.'"

She agreed, and their spiral logo was on full display as the Dutch player, ranked 158th, made her way into the third round of the qualifying tournament with a tight victory Thursday afternoon.

Other qualifiers look for the right fit beyond country lines. Argentine Marco Trungelliti, ranked No. 183rd, found one with personal ties. His match clothes are made by a small upstart in Mexico called Lega, an apparel brand that's run by "a friend of a friend," who the Argentine said he has become quite close with through their time working together. His shirts have been getting attention from keen-eyed fans – at the French Open, his top had a large Eiffel Tower design, and now in the U.S. Open's qualifying rounds, it's a Statue of Liberty. "It's a complete new run," he said of the New York City shirt, which was designed and manufactured by Lega specifically for his U.S. Open matches.

"I'm not a designer at all, but I had some opinions in there," he said after winning his second round qualifying match. "But this one was completely on (the Lega designer), and I loved it." (AP)

Legendary Pakistan drag flicker Abbas will not travel to India with Malaysian team for Asia Cup

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Pakistan's legendary drag flicker Sohail Abbas, who is Malaysia's assistant coach, has decided against travelling with the hockey team for Asia Cup in India but insisted that his decision is unrelated to the Pakistani team's absence from the tournament. The Asia Cup men's hockey tournament will be held in Rajgir, Bihar from August 29 to September 7. The competition offers a direct qualification spot for next year's World Cup, scheduled in the Netherlands and Belgium.

"I am not coming for the Asia Cup, but there are some other personal reasons behind it," Abbas, widely regarded as the 'King of the Drag Flick', told PTI Bhasha from Karachi.

After retiring from international hockey in 2012, Abbas kept a low profile. He took up his first coaching role as an assistant coach for penalty corners with the Malaysia national team in October 2024.

When asked if his decision was influenced by Pakistan not participating in the tournament, the 48-year-old veteran—who has played in four World Cups (Utrecht 1998, Kuala Lumpur 2002, Mönchengladbach 2006, and Delhi 2010) and three Olympics (Athens 2000, Sydney 2004, and London 2012)—said, "No, there is nothing like that. Even before this, I did not go with the team to Australia and China." Pakistan's participation in the Asia Cup had been uncertain due to the military confrontation with India following the Pahalgam terror attack in April.

While the Indian government had agreed to provide visas to Pakistani players for the tournament, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) declined to allow their players to travel, citing security concerns. Bangladesh has since replaced Pakistan in this eight-team tournament.

The Sports Minstry recently outlined its policy towards bilateral sporting engagement with Pakistan, saying it will neither host nor travel to Pakistan for bilateral events but won't stop its teams from competing in multi-nation tournaments.

Abbas, who has played 311 international matches for Pakistan and scored a record 21 hat-tricks, made his international debut against India in Peshawar in February 1998. He last played in India during the 2010 Delhi World Cup, where his team finished 12th.

He expressed admiration for the Indian hockey team's performance, which includes consecutive Olympic bronze medals. "The team is doing well, and the drag flickers are also good," he said.

When asked what advice he would give to Indian captain and experienced drag flicker Harmanpreet Singh, Abbas said, "He is playing very well, and it is good to see his performance improving continuously. I would advise him to stay on the same track and keep working hard like this."

However, when asked about the India-Pakistan hockey rivalry, he declined to comment. (PTI)

Russell Henley birdies last 3 holes for a 61 to lead Tour Championship over Scheffler

ATLANTA, Aug 22: Russell Henley hardly missed a putt. Scottie Scheffler hardly missed a fairway. They led a parade of players who seized on the soft conditions at East Lake to begin the race for the Tour Championship and the season-ending FedEx Cup title.

Henley one-putted six of his last seven holes and made three birdie putts from 40 feet or longer and, with three straight birdies at the end, had a 9-under 61 to build a two-shot lead over the world's No. 1 player.

Scheffler didn't miss a beat from last week — really the last five months — and finished with a 25-foot par save on the 16th and two birdies for a 63. That's his lowest round by two shots in his six appearances at East Lake.

The entertainment came from Rory McIlroy, who bladed a bunker shot on the par-5 18th hole over the green and off the grandstands, and then back onto the green. He made an 18-foot putt for a most unlikely birdie.

Scheffler was rooting hard for McIlroy, not so much for the birdie but so they could avoid a length ruling to finish. Seconds after Scheffler holed his 4-foot birdie putt, the horn sounded to stop play because of approaching storms that led to East Lake being evacuated. Left behind was a leaderboard filled with red numbers in a tournament that has a $40 million purse in official money for the top 30 players, all of them with an equal chance. Only two players were over par.

Rain hammered East Lake on Wednesday — and again after the

first round ended — leaving the course soft enough that players could lift, clean and place their golf balls in the short grass.

"I felt like with it being lift, clean and place and somewhat soft compared to last year when the greens were brand new, it was a little bit softer, so it was just a little bit more gettable," Henley said.

There was also that no-so-small matter of putting. Henley already has a great reputation with the putter, and on this day he holed some 207 feet worth of putts.

"Probably the most I've ever made," he said.

Three of the five players who got in at 64 was enough to wonder which cup was on their minds. Justin Thomas, Collin Morikawa and Patrick Cantlay all finished outside the top six who qualified for the Ryder Cup and have to wait on being one of six captain's picks.

All three are seen as likely picks.

"I don't think you're ever comfortable until you get that call and you're on the team," Morikawa said. "Look, I hope I've done enough. We'll have to wait and see. But I think, yeah, my focus right now is to try and go out and win this golf tournament. I think if I do that, then hopefully that's enough, and we'll see how everything plays out."

Scheffler is coming off his fifth victory of the season last week at the BMW Championship and didn't miss a step. All that slowed him was some swirling wind as the storm approached, making it a little tougher to get close for birdie chances with a wedge in hand.

The only fairway he missed — except for No. 18, in which the ball rolled through the middle into the first cut — was at the 16th, and that left him in his biggest predicament. From the rough he went down a deep swale to the right, the one place he knew to avoid.

"I knew going down there right of 16 was a huge penalty. We had talked about it in the practice rounds," he said. "And our job was just to get the ball back on the green, which I did, and it was nice to hole that long putt.

But it was a reminder of how key it was to keep the ball in play.

"I missed one (fairway) on 16 and all of a sudden I'm almost playing for bogey," he said. "It's pretty important around this place."

Tommy Fleetwood, who keeps giving himself chances at his first win on the PGA Tour, also was at 66, along with BMW Championship runner-up Robert MacIntyre, who is ready for a return to Scotland given how hot has been in Memphis, Baltimore and Atlanta.

"I wear as much sun cream as I possibly can. I look like Casper the Ghost out there, to be honest. I get a lot of shouts about my sun cream," MacIntyre said.

It beats the shouts he got last week at Caves Valley when he lost a four-shot lead to Scheffler in the final round and was hearing from the pro-American crowd along the way. MacIntyre was as upset about how he handled the crowd as he was his golf, but figures it will be a great teaching moment for him at Bethpage Black for the Ryder Cup next month.

"There's a couple of things that I know that I'm going to change, but do you know what it's really going to help me for? Bethpage," he said. "I'm always going to be fiery, I'm always going to yell, swear, yell, get angry. (AP)

Three East Bengal players join national camp for CAFA Nations Cup

BENGALURU, Aug 22: The East Bengal trio of Anwar Ali, Naorem Mahesh Singh, and Jeakson Singh Thounaojam on Friday joined the national camp for the CAFA Nations Cup, taking the total strength of players at the disposal of newly-appointed head coach Khalid Jamil to 28. The trio joined the national camp after East Bengal lost their Durand Cup semifinal match on Wednesday.

"Anwar Ali, Naorem Mahesh Singh, and Jeakson Singh Thounaojam have joined the Indian senior men's national team squad ahead of their CAFA Nations Cup 2025 campaign today," the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said on Friday. Mohun Bagan Super Giant refused to release their seven players -- Anirudh Thapa, Deepak Tangri, Lalengmawia Ralte, Liston Colaco, Manvir Singh, Sahal Abdul Samad, Vishal Kaith -- on the ground that it was not mandatory to do that since the tournament was not being held in the FIFA international window.

The Kolkata giants did not release their players despite bowing out of the Durand Cup on August 17. Jamil had named 35 players for the national camp which began here with 22 of them on August 16. Jamshedpur FC players Manvir Singh and Albino Gomes - who were in the original 35 - as well as new addition Muhammed Uvais from Punjab FC joined the camp on Monday. (PTI)

Page 12 aUG 23_Normal Pages 22-08-2025 19:26 Page 1

Selection Panel Churning: Sharath to replace Naidu as juniors' chief

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Former Tamil Nadu batter S Sharath is set to move from senior to the junior selection committee of the BCCI, replacing chairman Thilak Naidu as the Board invited applications for slots that are expected to fall vacant across different panels.

The current men's selection committee, which recently picked the squads for next month's Asia Cup, is currently headed by former India pacer Ajit Agarkar and comprises SS Das, Subroto Banerjee, Ajay Ratra, and Sharath.

Naidu, a former Karnataka stumper, who has been at the helm for less than three years, is expected to vacate his position as the BCCI looks for one post in the junior selection panel. The other members of the panel are Krishan Mohan, Ranadeb Bose, Pathik Patel and HS Sodhi.

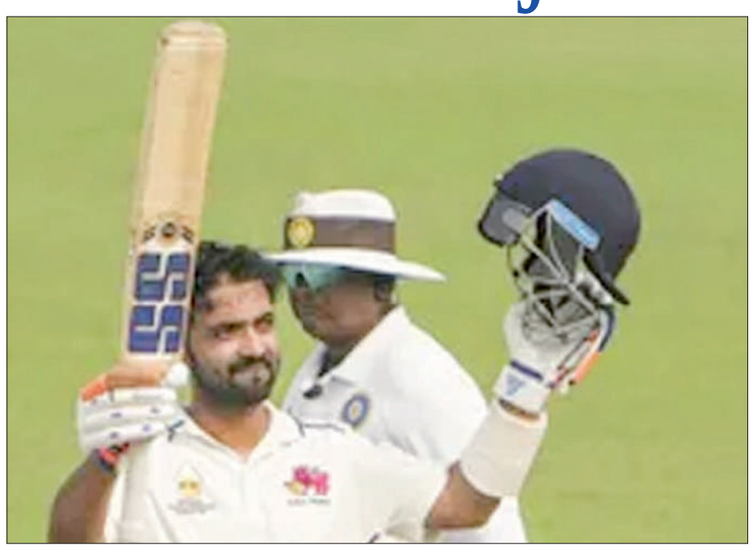
The BCCI on Friday invited applications to fill two vacancies in the five-member senior men's national selection committee, as well as four positions in the women's panel.

The eligibility criteria remained unchanged from previous years. Applicants must have played either a minimum of seven Test matches or 30 first-class games.

Alternatively, candidates with experience in at least 10 One Day Internationals (ODIs) and 20 first-class matches will also be considered.

The development comes as part of a broader reshuffle, with at least one more selector -- either Banerjee or Das -- likely to be replaced.

Both Banerjee and Das have also not completed their three-year terms, making their potential exit a matter of speculation within the



cricketing fraternity.

What has prompted the changes in the junior selection committee before the completion of the full tenure remains unclear.

It is understood that Naidu's performance as chairman is not up to scratch as per people in the know of things in the BCCI corridors.

Sharath, who previously served in the junior selection setup, had played a significant role in identifying young talent and is now poised to return to the fold.

"Sharath has been a fantastic junior national chairman and the 2022 batch won the Under 19 World Cup. He has one year left in his tenure and his expertise in junior cricket will be of great help," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"During Sharath's tenure as chairman, there was equitable distribution of tours for selectors, which changed once Naidu came into the picture," another source said.

Meanwhile, former India spinner Pragyan Ojha, hailing from Hyderabad, is understood to be interested in a role in the junior panel.

Should the selector from the Central Zone be replaced, a few names are believed to be under consideration, although no final decision has been taken. The 2007 T20 World Cup-winning left-arm pacer RP Singh, who won the Ranji Trophy for both UP and Gujarat, could be an interesting choice if he chooses to apply for the job.

In the event of a change in the East Zone representation, there appears to be limited strong contenders at this point.

The zonal representation on paper has been done away with but the convention is still followed by and large by the BCCI.

Players like Wriddhiman Saha, Manoj Tiwary, and Ashok Dinda haven't completed five years since retirement and aren't eligible.

Why there has been a need for a second change just few months before the T20 World Cup is a question that's being asked in the BCCI circles.

"The contracts of selectors are renewed annually. We have not yet identified which selectors will be replaced, but that process will be undertaken soon," a BCCI official told PTI.

The BCCI has also opened applications for four positions on the women's national selection committee. The current panel comprises Neetu David (Chairperson), Renu Margrate, Arati Vaidya, Kalpana Venkatachar, and Shyama Dey Shaw.

Shaw, who joined the committee in January 2023, is the only one who will be retained in the committee.

On Tuesday, the panel met to pick the squad for the ODI World Cup at home, starting next month.

The last date to submit all applications is September 10. *(PTI)*

Elavenil Valarivan strikes 10m air rifle gold in Asian Shooting Championship

SHYMKENT (KAZAKHSTAN), Aug 22: Indian shooter Elavenil Valarivan clinched the gold medal in women's 10m air rifle competition of the 16th Asian Championships here on Friday with a characteristically composed performance in the final.

The 26-year-old from Tamil Nadu, who has won multiple gold medals in World Cups, shot a score of 253.6 to finish on top in the final and claim her second gold in the continental showpiece, the first coming way back in 2019 in Taiwan when she was honing her skills under the tutelage of Olympic medallist shooter Gagan Narang at his Gun for Glory Academy.

The silver went to China's Xinlu Peng with a score of 253, while Korea's Eunji Kwon (231.2) took home the bronze.

This was Valarivan's first individual podium finish in the ongoing event having won a silver and bronze in the team events previously.

Another Indian in the fray, Mehuli Ghosh, signed off in fourth position after scoring 208.9 in the eight-shooter final.

Valarivan had qualified eighth for the final with a score of 630.7. Ghosh had originally finished 10th in the event with a score of 630.3 but made the final as two other higher-placed Indians -- Arya Borse (633.2) and Sonam Maskar (630.5) -- stepped aside since they were competing only for ranking points.

Valarivan's medal was only the second senior individual gold for India in the continental showpiece, where the country is topping the charts thanks to a strong showing by its junior shooters.

Anantjeet Singh Naruka had claimed India's first senior gold in the men's skeet event. Double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker had won the bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol competition.

The trio of Shambhavi Shravan, Hrudya Shri Kondur and Isha Anil won the gold medal in the team gold in the women's junior 10m air rifle competition with a combined total of 1896.2, which is a junior world and Asian record.

The teams from China and South Korea bagged the silver and bronze respectively.

One of India's most consistent woman rifle shooters for some years now, Valarivan has time and again proven her mettle against the best in the world be it in the World Cup, the season-ending World Cup Finals, or the Asian Championship.

Currently ranked 11th, she is now set to storm into the top-10 which is not an uncharted territory for the Indian ace, having once achieved the world number one ranking in her category.

Known for her unwavering focus and mental fortitude under pressure, Valarivan is now aiming for glory at next year's Asian Games but before that, she will want to do well at the ISSF World Championships, where she has a tea, bronze but no individual honours.

Besides the Olympics, the Worlds and Asian Games are some of the events in which Valarivan is yet to taste success in the individual events. *(PTI)*

Wushu team selection process for 2026 Asian Games begins

SRINAGAR, Aug 22: The selection process for the 2026 Asian Games in Japan began here on Friday, with nearly 200 athletes from across the country taking part in the three-day Sanda (combat) event trials.

As per the selection policy, the technical committee of Wushu Association of India (WAI) will shortlist eight athletes across seven categories (5 men + 2 women). Ranking tournaments will then be conducted every two months until June 2026, the deadline for final entries. The final Asian Games squad will be decided on the basis of performance in the ranking tournaments and other competitions. The three-day wushu selection trials for the Asian Games commenced at the Sher-e-Kashmir Indoor Sports Complex, with Minister of State for Sports Raksha Nikhil Khadse inaugurating it.

Nearly 200 athletes from across the country are participating in the Sanda (combat) event trials. The Taolu (routine) selection trials will be held in Imphal from August 25 to 27.

Khadse congratulated the Wushu Association of J&K for successfully hosting the trials with the support of the J&K Sports Council. She emphasised that J&K is an ideal hub for martial arts training, particularly wushu, and stressed the need to establish a High-Performance Centre for the sport in the region, according a release from WAI.

The weigh-in ceremony and draw of lots were completed this morning, while the bouts will begin on Saturday and continue for the next two days. *(PTI)*

Mumbai replaces Bengaluru as venue for women's ODI World Cup

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: In a significant last-minute change, the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday announced that Mumbai will replace Bengaluru as one of the five host cities for next month's Women's ODI World Cup, citing "unforeseen circumstances".

The decision comes after the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru failed to secure the required administrative and security clearances, rendering it ineligible to host matches in the tournament starting September 30.

The DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai will now host up to five fixtures including the tournament opener, a semifinal and potentially the final on November 2.

"While unforeseen circumstances required us to adjust the schedule and replace a venue, we are pleased to now have a line-up of five world-class venues that will showcase the very best of the women's game," ICC Chairman Jay Shah said in a statement.

"The stage is set, and I am confident this tournament will capture imaginations and inspire a new generation of fans," he added.

The decision to drop Bengaluru comes in the wake of a tragic stampede on June 4, during Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL victory celebrations outside the stadium, which claimed the lives of 11 fans.

Since the incident, no matches have been held at the stadium. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) eventually instructed the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) to obtain the necessary security clearances for the World Cup.

However, the state unit was unable to do so in the prescribed time frame after an inquiry into the stampede declared that the design and structure of the venue was "unsuitable and unsafe for mass gathering". As per the ICC guidelines, the host association needs to hand over the venue to the global governing body 30 days prior to the tournament's start, and no other matches should be held at the stadium in that period.

The Greenfield Stadium in Karyavattom, Thiruvananthapuram, was initially considered as a replacement venue before Navi Mumbai was finalised.

The ICC Women's ODI World Cup is returning to India after a 12-year hiatus, marking a pivotal moment for the sport. Shah emphasised Navi Mumbai's growing reputation as a hub for women's cricket.

"Navi Mumbai has emerged as a genuine home for women's cricket in recent years. The support it has received during international fixtures and the Women's Premier League has been remarkable, creating an atmosphere that elevates the players and inspires fans.

"I am certain that the same energy will define the big matches of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup as it returns to India after 12 years," Shah said.

Alongside Navi Mumbai, the other confirmed venues for the eight-team tournament include Guwahati, Indore, Visakhapatnam, and Colombo. *(PTI)*

Bist, Joshitha lead India A's strong comeback against Australia A

BRISBANE, Aug 22: Middle-order batter Raghvi Bist hit a fighting 93 while tailender VJ Joshitha (51) produced a fine half-century to script India A's comeback in the one-off Women's unofficial Test as the visitors posted a competitive 299 before reducing Australia A to 158 for 5 on the second day of the game, here Friday.

India A were in a spot of bother after being reduced to 93 for 5 on the rain-truncated first day.

But Bist, who was on overnight 26, first shared 64 runs with Radha Yadav (33) for the sixth wicket and then stitched a 75-run stand with Minnu Mani (28) to take India out of trouble.

Bist admirably batted with the tail and decorated her 153-ball knock with 16 boundaries before being dismissed just seven runs short of a fine century. She was cleaned up by medium pacer Maitlan Brown in the 63rd over of India's innings.

Mani too was soon cleaned up by Brown.

But Joshitha and Titas Sadhu (23) didn't give up and shared valuable 75 runs for the ninth wicket to take India A close to the 300-run mark. Joshitha was bowled by off-spinner Lilly Mills. She found the fence seven times during her 72-ball stay.

Medium pacers Georgia Prestwidge (3/37) and Brown (3/65) shared six wickets between them for Australia A.

In reply, Australia A were struggling at 158 for 5 in 43 overs.

Medium pacer Saima Thakor (2/21) and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav (2/40) picked up two wickets each for India A, while Sadhu (1/27) accounted for the other Australian batter.

Skipper Tahila Wilson made 49 and along with Rachel Trenaman (21) added 46 runs for the opening stand.

At stumps, wicketkeeper Nicole Faltum (30 not out) and Sianna Ginger (24 not out) were at the crease.

Australia A still trail India A by 141 runs with two days play still remaining.

Brief Scores:

India Women's A: 299 all out in 89.1 overs (Raghvi Bist 93, VJ Joshitha 51; Georgia Prestwidge 3/37, Maitlan Brown 3/65).

Australia Women's A: 158 for 5 in 43 overs (Tahila Wilson 49, Nicole Faltum 30 not out; Saima Thakor 2/21, Radha Yadav 2/40). *(PTI)*

BCCI invites applications for 2 men's selectors and 4 women's selection committee members

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The BCCI on Friday invited applications to fill two vacancies in the five-member senior men's national selection committee, as well as four positions in the women's panel.

The eligibility criteria remained unchanged from previous years. Applicants must have played either a minimum of seven Test matches or 30 first-class games.

Alternatively, candidates with experience in at least 10 One Day Internationals (ODIs) and 20 first-class matches will also be considered.

"The contracts of selectors are renewed annually. We have not yet identified which selectors will be replaced, but that process will be undertaken soon," a BCCI official told PTI.

The current men's selection committee, which recently picked the squads for next month's Asia Cup, is currently headed by former India pacer Ajit Agarkar and comprises SS Das, Subroto Banerjee, Ajay Ratra, and S Sharath.

The Board also invited applications to fill the position of a member on the men's junior cricket selection committee, responsible for selecting age-group teams (up to Under-22) for camps, tours, and tournaments.

This role is likely to be that of the chief selector.

The BCCI has also opened applications for four positions on the women's national selection committee. The current panel comprises Neetu David (Chairperson), Renu Margrate, Arati Vaidya, Kalpana Venkatachar, and Shyama Dey Shaw.

It is reliably learnt that Shaw is the only one who will be retained in the committee.

On Tuesday, the panel met to pick the squad for the ODI World Cup at home, starting next month.

The last date to submit all applications is September 10. *(PTI)*

India can win Asia Cup under Suryakumar's fearless captaincy: Sehwag

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Former India opener Virender Sehwag has backed the current T20I team to win the upcoming Asia Cup under Suryakumar Yadav's "fearless captaincy".

The continental tournament will be held in the UAE from September 9 to 28.

India, who won the inaugural edition of the tournament in the T20 format in 2016, are grouped with traditional rivals Pakistan, Oman and hosts UAE in Group A. Group B comprises Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

"This Indian team has the right mix of youth and experience, and under Surya's fearless leadership, they can dominate Asia once again. His attacking mindset suits the T20 format perfectly, and if the team plays with the same intent, I have no doubt India can lift the trophy," Sehwag said.

He was speaking as part of broadcaster Sony Sports Network's 'RagRagMeinBharat' campaign for the upcoming tournament.

"This campaign beautifully brings alive the heartbeat of Indian cricket. No matter which part of the country you belong to, when India plays, emotions unite us. I could feel that same passion in the film, and it's this connect that makes cricket so powerful."

Suryakumar will lead a 15-member Indian squad in the Asia Cup with Test skipper Shubman Gill being his deputy.

All the matches will be held in two venues - Dubai and Abu Dhabi. *(PTI)*

BWF says shuttlecock shortage not a 'crisis' yet, urges manufacturers to fix supply chain

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Badminton World Federation (BWF) Secretary-General Thomas Lund said the ongoing shuttlecock shortage has not yet reached a "crisis level", but stressed that manufacturers must resolve supply chain issues and accelerate the roll-out of advanced synthetic options for players worldwide.

Prices of imported feather shuttles have more than doubled in the past year due to raw material crunch in China. A recent report in French newspaper L'Equipe attributed the shortage to changing food habits in China, with preference shifting to pork over duck and goose meat and a global rise in badminton's popularity.

"We are aware of the global supply chain challenges and subsequent increases in feathered shuttlecock prices impacting badminton communities around the world," Lund said in an email interview to PTI.

"And while we are naturally concerned by this barrier, in our dialogue with the large-scale manufacturers and their assessment of the situation, we don't believe this is at a crisis level yet," he added. The shortage has already prompted India's top stakeholders to admit that the sport can no longer depend solely on goose and duck feathers, with national chief coach Pullela Gopichand sounding the alarm.

BWF reiterated its long-term commitment to synthetics but said the onus was on manufacturers to sort out the supply chain issue.

"The Badminton World Federation (BWF) is 100 percent committed to investing in and developing synthetic shuttlecocks for future sustainability of the sport and to ensure long-term accessibility for continued generations of players. We have been committed to this project for over the last 10 years," Lund said.

"....in saying this, BWF is not a shuttlecock manufacturer itself, and therefore the onus must still be on the shuttlecock producers to address these supply chain challenges and to also fast-track more advanced synthetic options," he said.

To address sustainability and supply concerns, BWF has been experimenting with synthetic shuttlecocks for quite some time.

"Our testing and trialling programmes for production and introduction of competition and social use synthetic shuttlecocks in collaboration with the manufacturers remains in place and is firmly part of our sustainability strategies for the future," Lund said.

"This is an ongoing process ... several manufacturers have already gone to market with their social use synthetic shuttlecocks, and the products have been well received. More work is being done by the BWF and manufacturers on competition-approved shuttlecocks. *(PTI)*

Durand Cup champions to take home ₹1.21 crore in prize money

KOLKATA, Aug 22: The winners of the 134th edition of the Durand Cup will walk away with a prize money of ₹ 1.21 crore, the highest champion's purse in the 137-year history of Asia's oldest football tournament.

The Durand Cup Organising Committee (DCOC) announced it on the eve the grand finale on Saturday, when defending champions NorthEast United FC clash with debutants Diamond Harbour FC at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK).

Earlier this year, the DCOC had announced a 250 percent increase in prize money – raising the pool from ₹ 1.2 crore in the previous edition to a tournament-record ₹ 3 crore this season.

The tournament kicked off on July 23 with 24 teams across six groups playing in five cities – Jamshedpur, Imphal, Kokrajhar, Shillong and Kolkata.

Eight teams progressed to the knockouts. *(PTI)*

Printed, published and owned by Rameswar Chauhan & Printed at Echo Printing Press, Printing unit of The Echo of India, AK Deb Road, Katabari, Gorchuk, Guwahati- 781035 and Published at Near office of the DFO (East) Div., Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam.782460, Guwahati Office Phone - 0361 2220018, Diphu Office Phone - 272106, Fax- 272106, e.mail: hillstimes@gmail.com, thehillstimesnamsai@gmail.com and ads.hillstimes@gmail.com (only for advertisement)
Associate Editor- Nilomoni Borah **Editor - Rameswar Chauhan**