

R. Ojha Mayong Famous

Piles, Pain, Paralysis, Cytica, Children Devoid Mothers Treatment, Quarrel of Husband and Wife, Asthama, Gabandhoni Tabij, Rajmohini Tabij, Powerful
N.B.: Any kind of problem please contact:
 8723867921



26 YEARS OF DEDICATED JOURNALISM

www.thehillstimes.in

THE HILLS TIMES

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

Voice of the hills people

Vol .No. II Issue No. 151

RNI-ASSEN/2023/86488

GUWAHATI, MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025

PAGES 8

PRICE ₹ 8

1,000 bighas of land reclaimed on Day 6

Eviction drive enters Nambor South Reserve Forest • Over 350 households evicted

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: The ongoing eviction drive launched by the Assam Forest Department — in close coordination with the Golaghat district administration, Assam Police, Central Reserve Police Force and the Government of Nagaland — has entered the adjoining Nambor South Reserve Forest with operations on the sixth day targeting encroached pockets in Gelajan and 3 No. Rajapukhuri.

According to an official statement, more than 350 households were evicted and nearly 1,000 bighas of forestland reclaimed during the day-long operation that began early in the morning and was executed without any resistance.

The eviction was carried out amid a tight security net and extensive preparation by the civil and forest administration to prevent any untoward incident.

The present phase marks a shift from the Rengma Reserve Forest, where the first phase of the drive concluded on Saturday, to the adjoining tracts of the Nambor South Reserve Forest — a key protected forest under growing threat from illegal encroachment.

Officials said today's operation reflects the State government's resolve to safeguard Assam's dwindling forest cover and restore



ecologically fragile areas that have been under pressure from human settlements.

Senior officials overseeing the drive included special chief secretary MK Yadav, Golaghat deputy commissioner Pulak Mahanta, superintendent of police Rajen Singh, and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF).

They monitored the operation on the ground to ensure that the eviction was conducted lawfully and peacefully.

The large contingent of personnel from the forest forces, district administration and security agencies began the eviction early in the morning using mechanised support to dismantle illegal houses and clear temporary structures.

By evening, significant areas

previously under squatter occupation were vacated and sealed.

Official sources said that the reclaimed land would be fenced off and steps are being initiated to prevent re-encroachment.

The ongoing eviction operation, which began earlier this week, is part of a wide-ranging ecological restoration initiative undertaken by the Assam government to free encroached reserve forests across the State.

According to the Forest Department, the campaign aims to reclaim several thousand bighas of protected land in a phased manner and revive habitats critical to wildlife conservation.

With progress made today in the Nambor South Reserve Forest, authorities (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Himanta fires 'anti-national' salvo at Rahul

Priyanka willing to visit Dhubri: Gaurav

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is anti-national and only supports the Muslims of Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an election campaign meeting in Bodoland Territorial Region, Sarma also claimed that the Congress does not respect icons of Assam, like the Kamakhya temple and Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva.

"Rahul Gandhi is an anti-India person. He is only with Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims. He is not with Indian Hindus, not even with Indian Muslims. Rahul Gandhi is an anti-national personality," Sarma alleged.

He, however, did not elaborate on the reasons for branding Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, as "anti-national".

Asked about Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi's planned visit to



Assam, Sarma said he has no objection to it.

"I have no objection to Priyanka Gandhi coming to Assam. However, Assam's Self Help Groups' women members are 100 times more advanced than Priyanka Gandhi. Assamese women, especially those in SHGs, will defeat Priyanka Gandhi in every aspect.

"She won't be able to join a competition with them. Our

women prepare laaru, pitha (traditional Assamese sweets), do farming in paddy fields, and send children to schools and colleges. How can Priyanka Gandhi compete with our women?" he questioned.

Earlier in the day, Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi said that party MP Priyanka Gandhi has expressed willingness to visit Assam, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

IMD predicts very heavy rainfall in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall with thunder and lightning across various parts of Guwahati city over the next 2-3 days, according to an official release.

The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said the weather pattern suggests that thunderstorms with lightning and gusty wind with wind speed of 40 to 50 kmph is very likely at the isolated places of the city in the coming days.

"This may aggravate waterlogging, slow vehicular movement and increase the risk of localised landslides in vulnerable pockets," it said in a release.

ASDMA said that the IMD has predicted the likelihood of heavy to very heavy rainfall to occur with 7-11 cm in 24 hours rainfall accompanied by thunder and lightning, is (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

We will continue eviction drives across Assam : Himanta

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: In a politically charged visit to the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) on Sunday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma delivered a strong message on eviction, reiterating his government's firm stance on evictions, stating, "We will evict those who need to be evicted. And to those who deserve land rights, we will issue land pataas."

Addressing public gatherings across Tamulpur district, Sarma said that when people stand with the BJP, there will be no evictions—a comment that subtly linked political allegiance with administrative protection.

In a region marked by longstanding land disputes and ethnic tensions, the statement signals a tough law-and-order approach while offering reassurances to BJP supporters.

The chief minister also made a high-stakes promise to resolve the contentious D-voter issue within

three months — a subject that has triggered anxiety among communities in BTR and lower Assam.

In a bid to broaden the BJP's appeal among youth, women, and economically vulnerable groups, chief minister Sarma unveiled a set of welfare initiatives during his visit to the Bodoland Territorial Region.

These include ₹250 financial assistance for cooking gas under the Orunodoi scheme, a ₹300 monthly cash transfer for all Class 10 students starting in October, and a firm assurance of transparent, merit-based job recruitment—specifically targeting Kokrajhar, a district often plagued by allegations of corruption in hiring.

The announcements, timed ahead of the BTC elections, appear aimed at strengthening the party's grassroots connect and expanding its voter base across key demographics.

These moves appear strategically timed to expand the BJP's base

ahead of the polls.

Sarma positioned the restoration of peace in BTR as a hallmark of his tenure.

"Since I became Chief Minister, there hasn't been a single bullet fired, no ethnic conflict. The fear and distrust are gone," he said, drawing a sharp contrast with the region's turbulent past.

While stating that the BJP maintains cordial relations with allies United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF), Sarma's appeal to voters was pointed.

"We have no conflict with UPPL or BPF, but this time, vote for the Lotus," he urged, suggesting the BJP's ambition to go solo and dominate the BTC elections — a tactic the party has employed in other regions to reduce dependency on regional partners.

In a key electoral update, the chief minister confirmed that BTC elections will (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Man dies after being 'beaten up' by BSF personnel

SILCHAR, Aug 3: A 30-year-old man died after allegedly being thrashed by a few Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in Assam's Cachar district, triggering protests by locals, an official said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Friday night near the India-Bangladesh border in Katigorah, and the man succumbed to his injuries at a hospital on Saturday, he said.

It has led to public protests in front of the local Circle Office, demanding strict action against the culprits.

"An allegation against BSF was raised that a youth, identified as Nirmol Namasudra, of Amtoli village in the border area, died on Saturday after being severely beaten up by a few BSF jawans a day ago. The BSF personnel took him to a local hospital on Friday night," an official said.

As the man suffered grievous injuries, he was sent to Silchar Medical College and Hospital and later died there, he added.

"Although the administration took some steps to control the situation in Katigorah, tension prevailed with locals assembling at the Circle Office and demanding the arrest of the BSF personnel," the official said. He, however, said that no (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Peace and development in Bodoland is our top priority: CM

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: CM Sarma Pledges Peace and Development During BTR Visit

Tamulpur, Aug 3: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday asserted that the development in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) along with harbouring peace is the top priority of the state government.

Sarma, during a day-long tour of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) today, reaffirmed his government's commitment to preserving peace and accelerating development in the region.

Covering three council constituencies—26 No. Darangajuli, 27 No. Nagriajuli, and 29 No. Shuklai-Serfang in Tamulpur district—Sarma interacted with BJP party workers and addressed multiple public gatherings.

During his speeches, the Chief Minister highlighted the region's transformation over the past five years.

"Since I assumed office, not a single bullet has been fired in the BTR. There have been no communal clashes. The fear that once gripped this region has vanished," Sarma said. "We have delivered

peace in the last five years; now we must deliver development in the next five."

Underscoring his vision of inclusive governance, the CM asserted that every resident of the BTR must be treated with dignity. "There are no second-class citizens here. Everyone is a first-class citizen and must be treated as such," he told the gathering, urging people to bolster BJP's presence in Kokrajhar for sustained progress.



Sarma also emphasized administrative achievements under his tenure, noting that Tamulpur, which was carved out as a district under his leadership, will soon receive full official status.

On cross-border issues, the Chief Minister addressed concerns regarding accidents involving Bhutanese vehicles. "If a Bhutanese vehicle is involved in an accident, our citizens must be compensated. Their rights will be protected," he assured.

Touching on the sensitive issue of illegal immigration, Sarma said his government would continue eviction drives against suspected illegal settlers while safeguarding the rights of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Govt looks to push legislative agenda amid parl deadlock

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: The government is likely to push on Monday the passage of a key sports bill in the Lok Sabha, amid a continuing deadlock in Parliament as the Opposition's united demand for a discussion on SIR failed to draw a positive response from the ruling alliance.

The Lower House has listed the National Sports Governance Bill, which envisages greater transparency in the functioning of sports bodies, for consideration and passage.

The Rajya Sabha has listed for passage on Monday a resolution from Home Minister Amit Shah on the extension of the President's rule in Manipur by another six months with effect from August 13.

Except for a two-day discussion on the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor in both the Houses, parliamentary proceedings have been all but a washout since



the Monsoon session began on July 21 as the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar has ignited vociferous protests from opposition parties.

The INDIA bloc, which has in previous sessions often spoken in different voices, has joined ranks over the issue, alleging the Election Commission's exercise is aimed at

removing voters sympathetic to its agenda and boosting the prospects of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance.

The EC has said it will roll out the exercise nationally to "protect" the integrity of electoral rolls to ensure that only eligible voters are allowed to cast votes. The Leader of Opposition in the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

With 876 species, state needs more protected areas and grassroots-led conservation to curb habitat loss and hunting, says Anwaruddin Choudhury

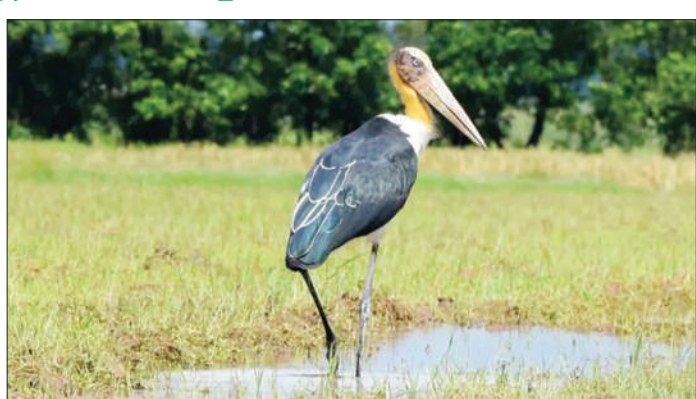
Planned strategy vital to protect Assam's birds: Ornithologist

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: Assam, with over 876 bird species including 290 migratory varieties, needs a planned conservation strategy to safeguard its rich avian diversity, renowned ornithologist Anwaruddin Choudhury said.

Highlighting Assam's remarkable avian life, Choudhury told PTI that the state, despite being 130 times smaller than the European continent, hosts nearly as many bird species (876 compared to Europe's 930), and the number rises to 982 when sub-species are included.

He pointed out that so far, 12 'critically endangered', 10 'endangered', 31 'vulnerable', 50 'near threatened', and nine 'restricted range' species have been recorded in the state.

The main conservation issues in



Assam are habitat loss and hunting, along with poaching, he pointed out. "The felling of trees, shifting cultivation, clearance of forests for settlements and cultivation, mining for oil, coal, limestone and setting up of

hydro-electric projects have resulted in habitat loss," he said.

Currently, the existing protected area network covers 3,658 sq km or 4.6 per cent of the state's land and "this should be extended wherever

possible", the ornithologist said.

There should be a planned conservation strategy, and it is recommended that some more protected areas be formed, he said.

"Smaller conservation reserves and community-run sanctuaries should be established in the sacred groves, village forests and in smaller reserved forests with the help of villagers," Choudhury said.

Besides, in the protected areas, there is a need for better control of poaching and shifting cultivation, while environmental awareness should be increased in the villages surrounding these areas.

"Adequate protection to the existing protected areas, and stricter enforcement of the Wildlife (Protection) Act are also recommended, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

UNC reasserts Naga sovereignty on Framework Accord anniversary

SENAPATI, Aug 3: Recalling the signing of the historic Framework Agreement between the Government of India and the NSCN (IM) in New Delhi on August 3, 2015, the United Naga Council (UNC) on Sunday urged all stakeholders to remain committed to the "fundamental principles" of the accord and reminded the Centre to uphold its commitment to "shared sovereignty".

In a statement issued on the 10th anniversary of the agreement, the UNC said the pact was based on the Government of India's recognition of the "unique history and position of the Nagas".

By "unique history", the UNC explained, it was acknowledged that the Nagas have a history of independence — having never been part of the Union of India or Burma (Myanmar), nor subjugated by conquest or conquest.



By "unique position", it meant that the situation in Nagalim is political in nature and not a mere law-and-order problem, it added.

Quoting from the Framework Agreement, the UNC underlined that "both sides understood each other's positions and are cognisant of the universal democratic principle that sovereignty lies with the people".

It asserted that the sovereignty of Nagalim lies with the Naga people and that the concept of shared sovereignty implies sovereign powers would be shared by the Indian people and the Naga people as defined in the competencies agreed upon.

Recognising the distinct national identity of the Nagas, the statement said the Framework Agreement proposed an enduring, inclusive and new relationship of peaceful co-existence between the two entities.

"Inclusive" here embraces all Nagas wherever they are, including all political groups, while "new relationship" signifies a bond based on the Agreement, the UNC explained.

"Co-existence", it added, means harmonious living of the Indian people and the Naga people as two entities. On pending issues such as the Naga national flag and constitution, the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Govt notifies new vegetable oil regulation order to enhance transparency, oversight

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: The government has notified a new framework for the edible oil industry, imposing stricter registration and reporting requirements on producers to enhance transparency and oversight, according to an official release.

The 2025 Vegetable Oil Products, Production and Availability (VOPPA) Regulation Order, notified on August 1 by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, amends the Vegetable Oil Products Production and Availability (Regulation) Order, 2011, under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

Under the new framework, producers will face stricter registration and reporting requirements. They must apply for registration certificates through the Directorate of Sugar and Vegetable Oils in New Delhi, providing details such as factory location and production capacity as outlined in Schedule-I.

The amended order mandates monthly reports by the 15th of each month, detailing oil usage, production, sales and stocks to ensure better supply chain tracking



and maintain availability of cooking oils at fair prices.

The amendment also strengthens enforcement mechanisms. The Director is empowered to inspect factories, demand information and seize stocks if false reporting is suspected. Non-compliance with orders is explicitly prohibited, with producers required to follow all directives.

These measures aim to prevent hoarding or misrepresentation and protect consumers from supply disruptions.

The amendment introduces clearer definitions for key terms including "Producer," "Vegetable Oil," and "Director (Directorate of Sugar and Vegetable Oils)," aligning them with the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, and the Collection of Statistics Act, 2008.

It removes outdated references like "de-oiled meal or edible flour" and scraps Schedule-III and Paragraph 13 to simplify regulations. The term "Clause" has been replaced with "paragraph" throughout, while "Chief Director" has

been updated to "Director" for consistency.

Welcoming the move, the Indian Vegetable Producers' Association (IVPA) said a key concern flagged by the government is the lack of consistent and comprehensive data across the industry, which limits effective policymaking.

"The organised sector, which maintains robust compliance standards, is well-equipped to provide data under the amended framework. However, the challenge lies in the highly fragmented unorganised sector, which comprises thousands of small mills and processing units, making data collection more complex," IVPA said in a statement.

The association believes data quality and completeness will improve over time, supporting the shared objectives of policymakers, farmers, consumers and the industry. The 2025 Amendment Order represents a step toward greater transparency and accountability in the vegetable oil industry through streamlined regulations and enhanced oversight to stabilise supply of this essential commodity. (PTI)

Manipal Hospitals seeks CCI nod to buy Sahyadri Hospitals in ₹6,400 cr deal

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: Healthcare major Manipal Hospitals has sought approval from the fair trade regulator CCI to acquire Pune-based Sahyadri Hospitals from global investor Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board in a deal pegged at around ₹ 6,400 crore.

The companies did not share the deal size, but industry sources estimate the transaction to be in the range of ₹ 6,200-6,400 crore. "The proposed transaction envisages the acquisition of up to 100 per cent shareholding by the acquirer (Manipal Hospitals Pvt Ltd) in the target (Sahyadri Hospitals Pvt Ltd) in multiple tranches," according to a notice filed with the Competition Commission of India (CCI). Manipal Hospitals and Sahyadri Hospitals said the "proposed transaction does not have any impact on any relevant market in India, let alone any appreciable adverse effect on competition (AAEC), and therefore, the definition of the relevant product and geographic market may ultimately be left open.

In any event, in order to aid and assist the CCI in its assessment". Last month, Manipal Hospitals announced that it had inked definitive agreements with Ontario Teachers' for the acquisition. The Bengaluru-based healthcare major said the acquisition of Sahyadri Hospitals will bring Manipal's total bed count to about 12,000, making it one of India's largest hospital networks. The acquisition will add 11 hospitals to Manipal's network across Pune, Nashik, Ahilya Nagar and Karad, increasing its total number of hospitals to 49, it added. Through this acquisition, Manipal said it will expand its presence in western India, in line with its strategy to augment its pan-India footprint. "With the strong partnership of our valued stakeholders like Temasek and our other investors, we are excited to grow our operations and bring Manipal's trusted brand of quality healthcare to many more patients," Manipal Health Enterprises MD and CEO Dilip Jose said. (PTI)

Nippon India mutual fund opens Leh branch to boost border inclusion

LEH, Aug 3: In a bid to deepen financial inclusion, Nippon Life India Asset Management Ltd has opened a branch in Leh and is looking to expand its presence in border areas, its CEO Sundeeep Sikka said.

With this, Nippon Life India Asset Management (NAM India) - promoted by Japan's Nippon Life Insurance Company -- becomes the only asset management company in the country to establish a physical presence in such a high-altitude region.

This marks NAM India's 167th branch and its presence in 266 pin codes across the country.

Explaining the reason for opening the branch, Sikka said Ladakh, a Union Territory known for its breathtaking landscapes, has seen a surge in tourism and economic activity in recent years. However, the region's financial landscape remains relatively underdeveloped, with limited access to a diverse range of investment products.

The average assets under management (AUM) in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh stood at ₹ 10,844 crore as of June 2025, accounting for less than 0.14 per cent of India's total mutual fund assets. In contrast, India's overall mutual fund AUM reached a staggering ₹ 74.80 lakh crore during the same period.

"With a presence in Leh, Ladakh, Nippon India Mutual Fund aims to bridge the financial literacy gap, develop a healthy mutual fund ecosystem and offer local residents the opportunity to participate in the Indian capital markets," Sikka said.

The company plans to open more branches in India's border regions that often face limited access to formal financial services, the chief executive said.

However, he did not specify a timeline for the rollout of additional branches. At present, Nippon India Mutual Fund is present in all districts and 97 per cent of PIN codes across India. When asked about the challenges of operating in such regions, Sikka pointed out that while many residents have a decent income, there is a clear lack of awareness about formal investment avenues. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Planned strategy vital to

particularly outside the protected areas to prevent large-scale trapping of migratory waterfowl and also poisoning of birds," the ornithologist said.

Burning of tall grasses, practised in the protected areas as part of conservation management, should be completed by January to avoid damage to the breeding of grassland birds, while plantation of trees in the grassland by forest and soil conservation departments should not be done, he said.

Choudhury also said priority must be given to further research to monitor population and movement of threatened and near-threatened species such as the white-winged wood duck, white-bellied Heron, spot-billed Pelican, Bengal Florican, Brown Hornbill and others.

Assam has the largest known population of the Bengal Florican, White-winged Wood Duck, Black-breasted Parrotbill, Swamp Francolin, Lesser Adjutant and Greater Adjutant in the world, but most of these are endangered, the retired bureaucrat said.

Of the total species, 290 are long-distance migrants and for the bulk, Assam is their winter abode with the most conspicuous visitors being the waterfowls, especially ducks and waders, found around rivers and waterbodies, he said.

Most of the long-distance migrants to the state and other parts of the Northeast are from the northern latitudes, especially from China (Tibet, Manchuria and other areas), Mongolia and Russia (chiefly Siberia).

"The richness and diversity in bird species is due to the fact that Northeast India is the meeting place of three zoogeographic sub-regions -- the Indo-Chinese, Himalayan and Indian -- within the framework of the Oriental or Indo-Malayan Zoogeographic region," he pointed out.

Besides, Assam is part of two global biodiversity 'hotspots' -- Himalaya and Indo-Burma -- and also part of two endemic bird areas -- Eastern Himalaya and the Assam plains, he said.

Choudhury, whose books are considered the bedrock of ornithology in the Northeast, has authored more than 30 books on the subject, with most related to birds found in the different states of the region. His latest, 'A Pocket Guide to the Birds of Assam', was released last month.

He was the first to compile a book titled 'Checklist of the Birds of Assam' in 1990, followed by a more detailed 'The Birds of Assam' in 2000 and the latest this year.

"The latest book seeks to provide an updated checklist of birds with a brief description of all the species found in the state, presented in simple language coupled with scientific authenticity for both popular reading and technical reference," he said. The ultimate aim of the book, however, is to generate awareness and interest in bird study and conservation with more young people pursuing ornithology and protection of the avian population, Choudhury added. (PTI)

UNC reasserts Naga

UNC said these are universally acknowledged as constituent parts of sovereignty.

"There is no ambiguity about it," the organisation stated, asserting that the Government of India should stop "buying time through talks" and instead "walk the talk" to ensure lasting peace and stability in the sub-continent.

The UNC called upon all Naga people and stakeholders to remain vigilant and united in upholding the spirit of the Framework Agreement as negotiations move forward. (NNN)

Patricide shocker in Dibrugarh

morning, eight days after the crime, Dibrugarh Superintendent of Police Rakesh Reddy informed.

Investigators say the teenage daughter was in a relationship with Buragohain and, along with her mother, had allegedly hired him and his minor accomplice to carry out the murder.

According to the police, the mother-daughter duo paid the accused a large amount of money and handed over gold jewellery as part of the deal. The jewellery has since been recovered.

"They tried to pass it off as a robbery to mislead investigators, but their statements were inconsistent and forensic evidence revealed their involvement," SP Reddy said.

The incident has shocked the otherwise quiet locality where Gogoi was regarded as a respected businessman. News of the arrests triggered protests in Barbaruah, with angry locals demanding exemplary punishment for all involved in the alleged conspiracy.

The motive behind the killing is yet to be officially ascertained.

"The investigation is still underway. We are questioning the accused to determine the exact reason behind the murder," the SP added.

Govt looks to push

Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, has accused the EC of "vote chori" (stealing votes) and has been fiercely critical of the poll body. The EC had in a statement on Saturday rejected Gandhi's allegations as "baseless", "unsubstantiated" and "misleading".

With the government paying little heed to the demand for a discussion on SIR in Parliament, the Opposition has been unsparing in its protest in Parliament, forcing repeated adjournments.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has maintained that it is for the Chair of the two Houses to decide on the Opposition's demand in accordance with the rules.

However, he also recently cited a ruling by Balam Jakhar, a veteran Congress leader who was the Lok Sabha Speaker between 1980 and 1989, that the House cannot debate the functioning of a constitutional body like the EC to suggest the government's disapproval of the Opposition's demand.

A key government functionary said that if disruptions continue to block its agenda in Parliament, then it will push for the passage of its key bills despite the din.

Rijiju had said on Friday that SIR is part of the Election Commission's mandate. "This is not the first time the EC is doing it. Whether Parliament can discuss the EC's administrative work or not is for the Chair to decide in accordance with rules," he added.

He noted that a minister related to the issue in discussion generally replies to the concerns raised by members, and wondered who could do so in the case of the Election Commission, a constitutionally autonomous body.

What is not favoured by rules and convention cannot be discussed, he had said.

Another bill that is listed for consideration and passage in the Lok Sabha is the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill. (PTI)

Peace and development in

genuine residents. "The peace that we've achieved in the BTR will not only be protected but strengthened," he added.

Sarma's visit comes ahead of key political developments in the region, where the BJP seeks to consolidate its position through promises of equitable development and lasting stability.

Man dies after being

complaint has been filed by the family of the deceased and no case has been registered yet. The Border Security Force could not be reached for comment on the allegation. (PTI)

Three Bangladeshis trying

India-Bangladesh border, and the other two are at Dawki in Meghalaya and Akhaura in Tripura.

There is another ICP in the region at Darranga in Assam along India-Bhutan border. Assam Police had earlier said that the state force and BSF would do everything possible to prevent any attempt by non-Indians to enter the country from Bangladesh as per the law after a political turmoil hit the neighbouring nation last year.

However, all Indian passport holders would be allowed to return from trouble-hit Bangladesh through the entry point in the state. (PTI)

We will continue eviction

be held before Durga Puja in early October, setting the stage for a high-stakes political contest in the region. As the BJP sharpens its narrative of peace, stability, and direct benefit schemes, Sarma's tour underscores the party's determination to consolidate power in BTR — with or without its current allies.

IMD predicts very heavy

expected across various parts of the Guwahati city in the coming 2-3 days.

"The city authorities are closely monitoring the situation and emergency response systems are being kept on alert. In view of the situation, ASDMA requests all the people of Guwahati to take all necessary precautions and remain vigilant," it added.

Daily commuters and long-distance travellers are requested to plan their routines accordingly, avoiding unnecessary movement during periods of intense rainfall.

"Residents in low-lying and hillside areas should stay alert for any signs of flooding or landslides. The public is also urged to stay tuned to official weather updates and follow advisories issued by local authorities to ensure safety during this prolonged spell of rain," ASDMA said. (PTI)

1,000 bighas of land

indicated that the operations will continue in the coming days to cover remaining pockets still under illegal occupation.

The drive, officials asserted, underscores the State's uncompromising stand on protection of its forest resources and its commitment to ensuring long-term environmental sustainability.

Himanta fires 'anti-national'

especially Dhubri, where she had campaigned during the last Lok Sabha elections.

Reacting to it, Sarma claimed, "They consider Dhubri as Assam. There is no issue in visiting Dhubri. But first one should talk about visiting Kamakhya, Batadrava, Charaideo Moidam and Rang Ghar, and then to Dhubri also."

He also alleged, "They (Congress leaders) don't have faith in Maa Kamakhya, Mahapurush Sankardeva, and do not recognise Charaideo and Rang Ghar. They recognise only a section of religious minorities living in Dhubri. They don't understand the love of any other people."

Stressing that he has absolutely no problem with Gandhi visiting Dhubri, Sarma claimed that Assamese people of other areas "do not have any interest" in seeing the Congress leader.

"There is no problem in going to Dhubri, but she should visit other areas. However, I feel it is not the time to visit other places. Who will come to see Priyanka Gandhi? Assamese people have no interest in seeing Priyanka Gandhi," he claimed. (PTI)

NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from MOHAMMED SALMAN AFTAR HUSSAIN to MD SALMAN AFTAR HUSSAIN by swearing a notarial affidavit at Srimanta Sankardevnagar Hojai(Assam)

NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from MOHAMMED SUHYL AFTAR HUSSAIN to MD SUHYL AFTAR HUSSAIN by swearing a notarial affidavit at Srimanta Sankardevnagar Hojai(Assam)

LOST

I, Miss Sarita Chauhan daughter of Shiwchand Chauhan resident of Bogorighat No-2, Kheroni, West Karbi Anglong lost my original HSLC Registration bearing No. 15/RV/0896/011469/10 Under Kheroni police station.

LOST

I, Miss Baby Chauhan daughter of Debendar Chauhan resident of Cherapather No-2 Kheroni, West Karbi Anglong lost my original HSLC Registration bearing No. 33/RV/0102/466964/21 under Kheroni police station.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Tulsi Kanta Daulaguphu S/O Thaisu Ram Daulaguphu, R/O: Vill- Dakhin Kumarakata, P.O. Kumarakata, P.S. Hojai, Dist- Hojai, Assam do hereby solemnly affirm via an affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Lumding on 22-07-2025 that Tulsi Kanta Daulaguphu and Shunadhan Barman are the names of one and same person i.e me.

LOST

I, Sri Manoj Kr. Borah S/o Lt. Gopal Ch. Borah Rosendra Nagar, Milan Nagar Chariali hereby declare that original sale deed No. 1102 Dt.- 14-07-1998 is issued by Sub Register Jorhat, executed in favour of Smt. Pronoti Devi former whom I purchased the land, has been lost from my custody while marketing near Garali, Jorhat-1. I found please contact-

Manoj Kr. Borah
Jorhat - 1
Ph. No. - 7002338698

PNB poised to touch landmark ₹30 trn total business by FY26 end: MD

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: Punjab National Bank (PNB) is well poised to touch the milestone of ₹ 30 trillion total business by the end of the current financial year and the country's second biggest lender has the right strategy in place to achieve it, the bank's MD and CEO Ashok Chandra said.

Total business of PNB rose by 11.6 per cent to ₹ 27.19 crore at the end of the first quarter of the current financial year. PNB is closely followed by Bank of Baroda with total business of ₹ 26.43 lakh crore while Canara Bank at ₹ 25.64 trillion at the end of June 30, 2025.

"We have a target of ₹ 29.56 lakh crore for the current financial year. We may do better than our target and can touch ₹ 30 trillion by March next year but let me add that we are very mindful that whatever the top line we are going to build, it should add profit to my bank," he told PTI.

In an interview, Chandra emphasised that PNB is very conscious of the operating profit and even in the first quarter itself the bank has recorded the highest ever operating profit of ₹ 7,081 crore.

"Whether it is deposit mobilisation or the corporate loan book, everything should add to the bottom line of the bank. So that is the reason now, bulk deposits have been brought down and the corporate deposits have curtailed to a great extent," he said.

Sharing the strategy to achieve the goal, Chandra said, the bank

targets minimum 11-12 per cent credit growth and 9-10 per cent deposit growth in FY26.

"We have a good pipeline of corporate loan book of Rs 1.29 lakh crore, which is in various stages of disbursement. There has been muted growth in the past, as there was a low-yielding advanced corporate loan book. We have shed that. Now, we are very mindful that whatever loan book we are going to build, it should make a good contribution to operating profit," he said. Chandra expressed confidence that there will be at least a double digit from Q2 onwards as far as the corporate loan segment is concerned.

He also highlighted that the lender is very aggressive in corporate lending and has provided confidence to corporate borrowers that decisions will be taken within a time period of 15 days.

"Anything which comes to the head office, within 15 days, we are going to communicate the decision. This has given a lot of confidence to the corporates," he said.

The bank is also aggressive as far as project finance is concerned, he said, adding, "We have created a dedicated cell which is headed by a General Manager for the project financing. MSME, he said, the bank has grown at 17-18 per cent and that growth will continue, while core retail loans, like housing, vehicle and education loans, these three sectors would also continue to grow at 17 per cent. (PTI)

IT hiring nearly flat for 6-7 quarters; no Q2 recovery seen: Quess Corp

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: Hiring in the IT services sector has remained stagnant over the past six to seven quarters, with no active demand likely to pick up in the second quarter either, a top official from staffing firm Quess Corp has said.

Quess Corp ED and CEO Guruprasad Srinivasan told PTI that demand for technology talents is coming from global capability centres and non-IT companies.

"At least for the last six to seven quarters. And we are also not seeing very active demand coming in, even in Q2 as well. So, IT services being a bit muted or dehydrating happening, there has been no impact on Quess," he said. He added that 73 per cent of staffing demand for the company comes from non-IT and GCCs, where demand for the technology talent pool is high. "Skills for AI, cloud, and cybersecurity kind of profile are high in demand. On average, the wage in itself is about ₹ 1.25 lakhs. It's a high margin for us. When it comes to margin, it's about 15 to 18 per cent," Srinivasan noted.

Quess Corp has posted a 4 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax at ₹ 51 crore compared to ₹ 49 crore it recorded in the year-ago period, driven by growth in the professional staffing segment.

The company's general staffing and overseas business remained almost flat on a year-over-year basis,

while digital platform business revenue declined by more than half.

Srinivasan said the mix of the company has improved with an increase in professional staffing, which is a high-margin segment for the company.

There have been signs of recovery in general staffing, with strong momentum in the June quarter, he added. In the June 2025 quarter, the general staffing segment of the company reported a revenue of ₹ 3,122 crore, flat year-on-year and down marginally quarter-on-quarter amid a challenging operating environment.

"June 2025 was the first month since December 2024 that we saw an uptick across headcount, new demand, open mandates and fulfillments. Overall, in the quarter, we had net adds of 2,000, where we also experienced a decline in April. However, we saw a recovery in the later part of the quarter by adding 6,500 numbers in the month of June itself," he said.

Srinivasan said that the majority of new additions this quarter came from manufacturing, followed by banking, financial, consumer retail and telecom consumer, while retail and telecom saw a marginal decline. "Professional staffing maintained its momentum from the previous year, posting its best quarterly performance in over 15 years with revenue of ₹ 244 crore. (PTI)

'Evictions are politically motivated', Ripun Bora slams BJP Govt

Bora accuses BJP of jungle raj, divisive bulldozer politics

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: Senior Congress leader Ripun Bora launched a blistering attack on the BJP-led Assam government on Sunday, accusing it of widespread governance failures, politically motivated evictions, and deepening communal divisions ahead of the upcoming elections.

Speaking to reporters here, Bora alleged that the state was slipping into lawlessness and rampant corruption under the leadership of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

"Assam is currently under loot and jungle raj," he said, claiming that members of the ruling cabinet have amassed "mountain-like" personal wealth since assuming office.

Bora sharply criticized the government's record on education, citing alarming dropout figures.

"From 2021 to the present, over two lakh students have left school. Is this the development the BJP boasts about?" he asked, pointing to education as one of the sectors most neglected by the current administration.

The Congress leader also condemned the ongoing eviction drives, terming them a pre-



election spectacle aimed at displacing indigenous communities.

He claimed that over 55,000 bighas of land belonging to khilonja (indigenous) people have been cleared under the guise of development.

"This is not just about evictions. It's bul-

dozer raj targeting the land and livelihood of Assam's sons of the soil," he said, alleging that the policy is being selectively enforced to serve the BJP's electoral agenda.

Accusing the BJP of failing to fulfil its promise to detect and deport illegal immigrants, Bora demanded the release of a white

paper detailing the number of Bangladeshis actually expelled from Assam since 2016.

"The people have a right to know the truth," he said.

On the issue of communal polarisation, Bora charged the ruling party with using religion as a tool to divide voters and distract from real concerns.

"The BJP's election strategy is built on creating religious rifts. Meanwhile, issues like unemployment, education, and land rights are being sidelined," he asserted.

He also slammed the state government for allegedly burying the Biplab Kumar Sharma Committee report on illegal immigration.

"The report was discarded like garbage. It never even reached the Union Home Minister. What are they trying to hide?" he asked.

Concluding his remarks, Bora appealed to voters to reject the BJP in the upcoming elections, urging them to give the Congress a mandate to restore governance and justice.

"To save Assam from this destructive path, a Congress government must be formed on the 26th. Only then can we bring back dignity, equity, and fairness," he said.

Minister reviews rollout of subsidised ration scheme in Kokrajhar



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 3: Assam Food, Public Distribution & Consumer Affairs Minister Kaushik Rai on Sunday reviewed the progress of schemes under his department in Kokrajhar during a visit to the Bodoland Territorial Region.

The minister attended a Fair Price Shop (FPS) Sammelan and awareness meeting organised by the FPD&CA Department of Bodoland Territorial Council at the Bodofa Cultural Complex, Chandamari, to brief stakeholders about the new subsidised ration scheme to be launched from October.

Addressing FPS vendors and co-operative societies, Rai informed that ration card holders will be provided masoor dal, sugar and salt at heavily subsidised rates of Rs 69, Rs 38 and Rs 10 per kg per month respectively under the initiative led by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The scheme will be introduced in two phases across the state—initially in 10 districts from October,

followed by the remaining 25 including Kokrajhar in November.

NAFED has been engaged as the supplier, with Assam State Warehousing Corporation and Gaon Panchayat-Level Cooperative Societies to handle delivery up to fair price shops.

FPS owners will be required to display commodity prices at their premises and are barred from selling the subsidised items in the open market, the minister said.

MLA Lawrence Islay called for strict village-level monitoring to ensure benefits reach all eligible NFSA families, while Kokrajhar DC Masanda M Pertin stressed co-ordinated implementation.

Later, Rai chaired a district-level review meeting at the DC's office to assess time-bound activities of the department and streamline the public distribution system ahead of the scheme's rollout.

Senior officials including ADC Wadiul Islam, BTC Joint Secretary (FPD&CA) Ractim Buragohain and CHD Madan Talukdar were also present.

NFR upgrades tennis facilities to boost sports culture

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: In a bid to strengthen its sporting infrastructure, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has renovated two outdoor lawn tennis courts at the NFR Sports Association (NFRSA) complex in Maligaon.

The upgrade was formally inaugurated on July 30 by NFR General Manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, according to an official statement. The new courts have been upgraded to international standards with a cushioned, latex acrylic resin-based surface designed for improved player safety, UV protection and competitive play.

Together with an existing indoor court, the facility will serve as a comprehensive training platform for players enrolled at the NFRSA Lawn Tennis Academy where around 50 students are receiving regular coaching.

The academy has previously produced medal-winning players at national-level tournaments.

Apart from tennis, NFRSA runs over a dozen sports academies including athletics, boxing, swimming, cricket, football and archery, coaching more than 2,000 athletes through certified trainers.

KA to host 'Sampoomaata Samman Samaarohi' and 'Aakanksha Haat'

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 3: The Karbi Anglong district administration will organise a week-long 'Sampoomaata Samman Samaarohi' and 'Aakanksha Haat' from August 7 to 11 at Langkung Habe Memorial Town Hall, Diphu, as part of the NITI Aayog's Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP).

The 'Sampoomaata Samman Samaarohi' will recognise the district's performance and saturation of key development indicators under the ABP, while the 'Aakanksha Haat' will exhibit products made by Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from aspirational blocks.

The haat is being organised in collaboration with the Agriculture Department and other line departments and will promote locally crafted products for wider market visibility and income generation.

The district administration has urged all departments to publicise the events through print, electronic and social media. Media organisations have also been invited to provide detailed coverage, including photography and videography.

Members of the public have been requested to participate in large numbers and witness the district's development initiatives under the ABP.

KAAC to launch AC bus service between Diphu and Guwahati

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Aug 3: The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) will formally inaugurate a new air-conditioned bus service between Diphu and Guwahati on August 6 to boost public transport connectivity in the hill district.

According to an official statement, the service will be flagged off at 12 noon at the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) in Diphu's 5th Mile area by KAAC Chief Executive Member Tuliram Ronghang.

The bus service is expected to provide a safer and more comfortable travel option for students, patients, professionals and daily commuters travelling to Guwahati.

Executive Member in-charge of Trans-

port Bili Mohon Khaglary, Diphu MP Amarsing Tisso, Howraghat MLA Darsing Ronghang, Diphu MLA Bidya Sing Englang, KAAC Chairman Raju Tisso, Deputy Chairman Avijit Kro and other senior KAAC officials will be present on the occasion.

Passenger amenities including stalls and a canteen will also be inaugurated at the ISBT to improve commuter convenience.

The initiative reflects KAAC's push towards citizen-oriented services aimed at improving accessibility, transportation and socio-economic linkages between Karbi Anglong and Assam's capital region.



Torch procession in Sivasagar seeks deportation of illegal migrants

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 3: A joint torchlight procession was organised in Sivasagar on Saturday evening by several organisations demanding the eviction and deportation of suspected illegal Bangladeshi migrants from Upper Assam.

Members of Jatiya Sangrami Sena, Asom; Jatiya Ahom Gana Mancha; Sangrami Yuva Parishad; All Tai Ahom Students' Union (ATASU); Tai Ahom Yuva Parishad; SC Students' Union; Jatiya Sangrami Mahila Parishad and Koch Rajbongshi Students' Union marched through the town rais-

ing slogans against alleged Bangladeshis 'Miyas'.

The protest comes in the wake of the government's eviction drives in Uriamghat and other areas.

The organisations demanded eviction of all illegal migrants from government land and threatened to reignite an anti-Bangladeshi movement in Upper Assam if their demands were not met.

The leaders also warned suspected migrants to leave Upper Assam districts.

Meanwhile, workers of BirChilarai Sena and All Koch Rajbongshi Students' Union re-

portedly began door-to-door checks in rented houses in and around Sivasagar town to identify suspected Bangladeshis.

In a press release, leaders Sangkarjyoti Dutta and Tinku Asom warned alleged migrants to leave Upper Assam within a week or face consequences, stating that "Assam is for Assamese people, and not for Miyas".

Chitu Baruah of Sangrami Yuva Parishad alleged that the district administration had earlier not extended help in evicting suspected illegal settlers, but added that this time the agitators would not stop until the migrants were removed from the district.

New gateway of Dhing College inaugurated by Minister Keshab Mahanta

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 3: The newly built main gateway of Dhing College — one of the oldest educational institutions in Nagaon district established in 1965 and currently celebrating its Diamond Jubilee — was inaugurated on Saturday by Assam Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Keshab Mahanta.

The function was attended by Nagaon-Batadroba MLA Rupak Sarma, Deputy Commissioner Devashish Sarma, former minister Gautam Bora, Dhing College principal Dr Biman Hazarika, Gopinath Dev Goswami Commerce College principal Dr Mriganka Saikia and Dhing Circle Officer Sourav Das along with faculty members, students and other dignitaries.

As part of the celebration, the Deputy Commissioner also visited a painting and pearl exhibition organised on the campus by the Assam Pearl Development Cooperative Society Ltd.

Bike rally held in Nagaon to promote road safety awareness

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 3: The Nagaon district administration on Sunday organised a bike rally to spread awareness on road safety, traffic rules, and accident prevention. The event was conducted under the District Road Safety Committee in collaboration with Motorhead United MC Assam and the Nagaon IMFL Retailer Association. Flagged off from the Deputy Commissioner's office, the rally covered Nagaon town, Jakhalabandha and Bagori before returning to Nagaon.

Minister for Revenue and Disaster Management Keshab Mahanta, local MLA Rupak Sarma, Deputy Commissioner Devashish Sarma and Superintendent of Police Swapnil Deka were present at the rally.

At Jakhalabandha bus stand, Mahanta underscored the importance of road safety as a collective social responsibility and spoke on steps taken by the government to improve road infrastructure and enforce traffic regulations. DC Devashish Sarma appealed to the public to strictly adhere to traffic rules for their own safety.

As part of the programme, essential equipment was handed over to forest staff of Kaziranga National Park's Bagori, Burhapahar and Ghorakhati ranges to support wildlife protection.

Another awareness meeting was held at Kuthari Tinali — a road accident-prone zone — focusing on speed control and cautious driving.

Morigaon Zila Brahman Samaj honours meritorious students

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Aug 3: The Morigaon Zila Brahman Samaj on Sunday felicitated five meritorious students who excelled in the HSLC and HS examinations at a function held at Morigaon Sewa Ashram and Atithisala here.

The event was organised by the Morigaon Nagar Prathamik Brahman Samaj. The programme began with the hoisting of the flag by MZBS president Ruhit Goswami, followed by smriti-tarpan performed by vice-president Jatin Sarma.

Bharat Sarma lit the ceremonial lamp. A chorus composed by writer Pradeep Parasar and rendered by women of the Sewa Ashram committee marked the cultural start of the proceedings. Dr Namrata Kasyap presented a Borget, while another devotional number was performed by the women's group.

The felicitation ceremony was attended by writer Parasar, MASS chief advisor Bubumoni Goswami, social worker Pulin Sarma, and other members of the samaj.

Kokrajhar marks National Handloom Day

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 3: National Handloom Day 2025 was observed in Kokrajhar on Sunday with a day-long programme at the BRAWFED complex in Shyamgaon to celebrate the rich handloom heritage of the region.

The event was organised by the Handloom & Textiles department of the Bodoland Territorial Council in association with the Union Ministry of Textiles under the theme "My Handloom, My Pride".

Among those present were MCLA and BRAWFED chairman Reorea Narziary, BTR Handloom director-in-charge Hiranya Devi, Kokrajhar Municipal Board chairperson Pratibha Brahma, and BRAWFED managing director Ractim Buragohain. Speakers highlighted the cultural and economic significance of handloom in Bodoland and reiterated the government's commitment to encouraging traditional weaving and empowering local artisans.

ATASU factions differ over Sivasagar bandh call

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 3: Two factions of the All Tai Ahom Students' Union (ATASU) on Sunday took divergent stands over a bandh called in Sivasagar on Monday.

In the morning, the Milan Borgohain-led faction announced a 5 am to 5 pm Sivasagar bandh at a press meet opposing the state government's reported decision to elect a Scheduled Tribe candidate as president of the Jila Parishad.

The faction contended that the post should go to an Ahom, claiming that the community accounts for over 70 per cent of the district's population.

Lookin' Within: A memoir of healing, hope, and a new Bodoland

By: Zahid Ahmed Tapadar

In *Lookin' Within: My Reflections*, Pramod Boro, CEM of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), offers a deeply introspective and timely memoir that goes beyond the genre of political autobiography. This is not just the story of a leader's rise; it is the parallel journey of a land and its people—moving from decades of conflict and marginalisation toward a vision of peace, resilience, and inclusive progress.

The book begins in the fields of Souraguri, where Boro was born into a humble farming family. His childhood was shaped by hardship, systemic neglect, and limited access to education and healthcare. Early personal tragedies—like his sister's near-death due to medical apathy and his mother's repeated struggles with failing health systems—left an indelible impact. These experiences, recounted with honesty and quiet strength, form the emotional and ethical core of his life's journey.

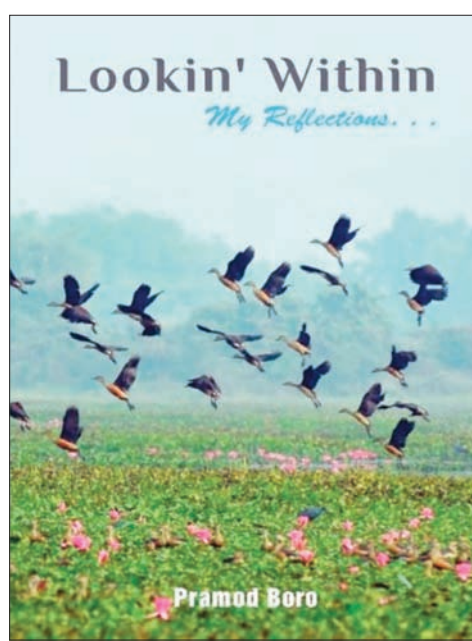
From these roots, Boro's rise as a student leader with the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) forms the second arc of the memoir. His account of grassroots mobilisation—especially the innovative school motivation camps that reignited education in backward areas—highlights how leadership built on community listening and collective action can leave a lasting legacy. His path eventually

leads to the political realm, culminating in his pivotal role in the historic Bodo Peace Accord of 2020.

The signing of the Accord marked a decisive moment, and the memoir treats it with the significance it deserves. For Boro, peace is not the end of struggle—it is the beginning of a new responsibility. He outlines how his administration approached this responsibility with vision and urgency, through a governance model focused on healing, dignity, and people-centric policies.

As CEM of BTR, Boro outlines how his government began shaping a new era—what he calls a "Peaceful, Smart, and Green Bodoland." His philosophy of governance is not abstract. It is grounded in concrete, people-centred initiatives aimed at reversing years of neglect. He describes how governance becomes meaningful when it emerges from lived realities—whether it's reforming education through the Bodoland School Adoption Programme and Super-50 coaching, ensuring land security through Mission Bwiswmuthi, or reintegrating former insurgents through Fin Rwdwmkhang Bithangki (Bloom Again Mission).

The memoir also speaks of Bodoland's growing place in India's developmental framework. Boro draws connections between his regional vision and national missions like Viksit Bharat@2047. His re-



lections on policy, peace, and transformation are framed not just as administrative reports but as values-based responses to people's aspirations. The

voice that emerges is one of quiet conviction and service, not political grandstanding.

What makes this book particularly compelling is its philosophical depth. Pramod Boro's worldview is shaped by his reverence for Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of nonviolence, and Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma, the father figure of the Bodo movement. Their legacies inform his belief in leadership as seva—service with humility, courage, and moral clarity.

The memoir also touches on wider regional and global themes. From India's outreach to Bhutan to the changing narrative of the Northeast, Boro situates Bodoland within a broader vision of peace-building and regional cooperation. His thoughts on emotional education, youth leadership, and the need to teach peace in schools suggest that the book is as much a blueprint for the future as it is a reflection on the past.

In tone and style, the writing is reflective and accessible. Personal memories blend seamlessly with policy insights, creating a reading experience that is both moving and informative. The book does not avoid hard truths, nor does it dwell on them unnecessarily. It is ultimately a story of healing—not only for the author but for a people and their land.

At its core, *Lookin' Within* is not merely a col-

lection of recollections. It is a visionary document—a blueprint for a beautiful and prosperous Bodoland, where peace is institutionalised, youth lead with purpose, and all communities rise together. Pramod Boro's vision stands on the pillars of equity, sustainability, cultural pride, and participatory governance. By responding directly to people's aspirations—not from above, but from within—he invites every citizen to take part in the co-creation of a better future.

Though rooted in the Bodo homeland, the memoir offers universal lessons on justice, leadership, and the transformative power of hope. It reminds us that true peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of dialogue, trust, and equal opportunity. *Lookin' Within* is, in the truest sense, a people's memoir written through the lens of a leader who dared to dream differently.

In essence, readers may say this memoir is not just the story of a leader—it is the reflection of a people, their trials, their transformations, and their trust in a better future. *Lookin' Within* is an invitation to dream anew, to govern with heart, and to walk together—toward peace, purpose, and progress.

This book is a must-read for peacebuilders, policymakers, educators, political science students, and anyone who believes in people-led change.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

If we open a quarrel between past and present, we shall find that we have lost the future. -Winston Churchill

Kuki-Zo peace initiative

Is the leadership of the Kuki-Zos, who inhabit the Hills of Manipur, trying to gauge the views of different sections of their communities as a prelude to formulating a new strategy? Is it a quest of the Kuki-Zo top brass to see that intra-community unity emerges stronger than now and that the state government and New Delhi take serious note of their persisting concerns and demands? These questions have lately come to the fore as the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), an umbrella outfit, has begun a public consultation exercise by which KZC is seeking the opinion of their community people on "sensitive and pressing issues arising from the ongoing [ethnic] conflict with the majoritarian Meitei community". KZC held the first exercise on July 29 at Kangpokpi. A KZC statement issued after the meeting at Kangpokpi noted that there was enthusiastic participation by a large number of people in the intense deliberations which lasted three hours and concluded with adoption of "important resolutions". The resolutions will not be brought in public domain right now as the intention is to broaden the consultative process. KZC firmly believes that "critical decisions must reflect the collective voice of the entire Kuki-Zo community".

So, the Kangpokpi initiative is to be followed with public consultations in other places where the Kuki-Zos numerically matter and a mechanism may be devised to gather the opinion of the community people in places where they are in minority. The views and opinions will form the basis for a comprehensive, consolidated resolution which will be shared with the public. The plan suggests the top leadership is eager to see that whatever be the situation at a given point in time, Kuki-Zos must firmly back all decisions of the KZC executive for realizing the community's demands within a timeframe that is to be set in advance. The top brass, on their part, is to make sure that each and every Kuki-Zo tribe is respected, given their due place and position in all spheres - social, churches, NGOs and development projects launched by the government. The church is an influential factor in the Kuki-Zo community, given the fact that their population is overwhelmingly Christian.

Also, taking cognizance of the fact that people in general have harbour some doubts and suspicions about the two warring sides, involvement of churches, intellectuals and scholars has to be ensured in the interest of transparency whenever critical moves are made. This assessment derives from talks IPA has had with a cross-section of Manipur politics watchers.

Trump says India is dead-what do the facts say?

Most of these maintain the contrast between Trump's provocative label and India's actual economic trajectory. Let me know if you'd like a variation with a more scholarly or dramatic flair! On July 30, United States President Donald Trump once again ignited global headlines, this time by slapping a 25% tariff on Indian exports and threatening a vague yet pointed "penalty" for New Delhi's continued purchases of military equipment and energy from Russia. A day later, in his signature bombastic style, Trump declared on social media that he didn't care if India and Russia "take their dead economies down together." The provocation was vintage Trump—caustic, performative, and calculated. Yet, despite the hyperbole, his words stirred an overdue conversation: What is the actual state of India's economy? Is it really "dead," or is this another instance of trade war theatre obscuring deeper truths?

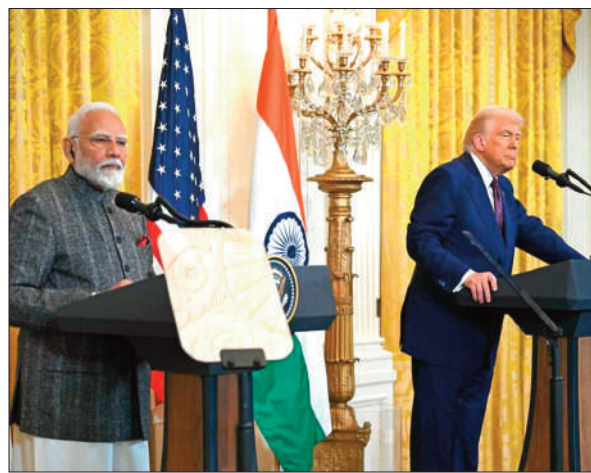
Predictably, the rhetorical salvo triggered polarized reactions in India. Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, known for his sharp critiques of the Modi government, was quick to endorse Trump's claim. "Yes, he is right," Gandhi said, adding, "The whole world knows that India is a dead economy and that the BJP has killed it." On the other side of the aisle, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal mounted a vigorous defense in Parliament. "India has transformed from being one of the 'fragile five' to the fastest-growing major economy in the world," Goyal asserted, noting that the nation has climbed from the 11th to the 5th largest global economy within a decade and now contributes 16% of global growth.

Both positions, though rooted in real anxieties or achievements, fall short of providing the nuance this debate requires. India is not a "dead" economy—far from it. But nor is it the gleaming growth engine that government statements often claim it to be. Rather, India is a complex paradox: a rapidly expanding economy weighed down by internal contradictions, institutional bottlenecks, and social fault lines that continue to stunt its long-term potential.

To evaluate Trump's claim, one must begin with the most basic indicator of economic vitality—growth. A dead economy, by definition, lacks it. Data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stretching over the past three decades dispels the hyperbole. Since 1995, India has grown nearly twelvefold, making it one of the fastest-growing major economies globally, second only to China. In contrast, the United States economy has quadrupled in the same period, the UK has grown less than threefold, and Germany has not even doubled its 1995 size. Japan's economy, tellingly, is smaller today than it was thirty years ago—a stagnation that starkly contradicts Trump's characterization of his allies as thriving and rivals as "dead."

Moreover, when measured relative to the United States, only three countries—China, India, and Russia—have increased their share of global economic weight. India, which was less than 5% the size of the US economy in 1995, now hovers around 14%. Meanwhile, America's traditional allies—Germany, Japan, and the UK—have all shrunk in proportion. This shift underscores that India is not only alive but gaining ground in a changing world order.

Still, growth alone does not absolve India of its economic ailments. Since 2011-12, India has been unable to recapture



the blistering 8-9% growth rates it enjoyed in the pre-2008 period. Instead, growth has slowed to a more modest 6% average since 2014. India's GDP, which stood at \$2.1 trillion in 2014, is expected to reach \$4.1 trillion by the end of the 2025 fiscal year. While this doubling is significant, it pales in comparison to China's turbocharged expansion in the mid-2000s—jumping from \$1.9 trillion to \$4.6 trillion in just four years.

The trade context that prompted Trump's outburst also reveals India's comparative weakness. India accounts for just 1.8% of global merchandise exports and 4.5% of global services exports—modest figures for a nation with over 1.4 billion people. This underperformance is in part due to a protectionist impulse that has often left India isolated in global trade forums. While other nations rapidly negotiated favorable terms with Trump to sidestep tariffs—Pakistan, Japan, and the EU among them—India remained locked in hard bargaining, unwilling or unable to make concessions on agricultural and industrial protectionism. The result was the imposition of steep tariffs and a sharp rebuke from Washington.

This inward-looking posture is symptomatic of deeper structural flaws. India's rural economy remains in distress, with a majority of farmers still operating at subsistence levels. Rather than absorbing surplus rural labor, India's manufacturing sector has underperformed. Data from the Ministry of Statistics reveal that since 2019-20, manufacturing has grown at a compound annual rate of just 4.04%, trailing even the agriculture sector at 4.72%. This is a troubling anomaly for a developing country where manufacturing is traditionally expected to lead the charge toward modernization.

The lopsided structure of growth has also produced rising inequality. Despite overall GDP expansion, the quality of that growth remains deeply skewed. Twenty-four percent of Indians still live below the World Bank's poverty line, a marginal improvement over the 27% recorded in 2011-12. This is especially sobering given the size of India's economic leap during the intervening years. Moreover, income and wealth inequality have grown more severe, with the top 1% of earners capturing a disproportionate share of new

wealth.

On human development indicators, the picture is equally concerning. Health and education continue to underperform, particularly in rural areas. India ranks 132 out of 191 countries on the UN Human Development Index—a figure that belies its economic ranking. Meanwhile, unemployment remains a persistent challenge, especially for the educated. There is a stark skills mismatch in the labor market; even as educational attainment rises, job creation has not kept pace. Youth unemployment hovers near double digits, and female labor force participation remains among the lowest in the world. Even when women do enter the workforce, they are often relegated to poorly paid, low-quality informal jobs.

These systemic challenges are compounded by the political economy of reform. India's reluctance to open key sectors to international competition stems not from bureaucratic inefficiency alone but from vested interests—be it politically powerful agrarian lobbies or industrial oligarchs with deep roots in the domestic economy. In "No Trade is Free", former US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer reveals how Trump's administration identified India's tycoons as key roadblocks to trade liberalization. Rather than bureaucrats, it was these entrenched economic elites who shaped Delhi's combative negotiating stance. Their influence continues to hinder structural reforms needed to make India globally competitive.

In this context, Trump's comments—however tactless—highlight a broader international perception that India must grapple with. The world is watching, and so far, India's rise has been viewed with a mix of admiration and exasperation. Its demographic advantage, technological potential, and geo-strategic position make it a natural counterweight to China. Yet, its underwhelming participation in global value chains, reluctance to liberalize trade, and sluggish human development betray an economy still struggling to convert promise into performance.

However, the road ahead need not be one of defensive nationalism or inward retreat. India's rise to the world's fifth-largest economy has been hard-earned, but it must not become complacent. The next phase must involve courageous reforms: revitalizing the manufacturing sector, boosting investment in health and education, enabling female participation in the workforce, and modernizing trade policy to reflect ambition rather than anxiety. Global investors and trading partners are not asking for miracles, but they are watching for signals that India is ready to lead—not just survive.

As for Trump's tariff war, history may yet show that it was less about India's economic health and more about America's evolving strategic calculus. Yet it serves as a stark reminder that in the ruthless theatre of global trade, perception can often trump data. It is now up to India to shape that perception through action.

The Indian economy, then, is anything but dead. It is very much alive—dynamic, erratic, and full of untapped potential. But without systemic course correction, it risks falling into a deeper malaise—not of stagnation, but of unfulfilled destiny. The choice is urgent, and the world is watching.

(the writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com)

Violence against child: A big challenge

By: Hemanga Goswami

Violence is a reality for half of the world's children as one billion of them experience physical, emotional or sexual abuse every year. Experiencing violence is not only a violation of children's rights, it also increases the risk of mental health conditions, non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cancer, infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, and social problems such as criminal activity and substance abuse.

Violence does more than harm individual children; it undermines the fabric of our society. It makes it harder for children to build happy, healthy lives and costs the global economy billions of dollars each year.

To address this global tragedy, the governments of Colombia and Sweden, in partnership with WHO, Unicef and the UN special representative of the secretary general on ending violence against children will host the first-ever ministerial conference on ending violence against children in Bogotá, Colombia on November 7 and 8 this year.

It is hoped that the conference will also help secure a step-change in support for proven prevention solutions and reset collective ambitions to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development target for every child to live free from violence. Possible outcomes will include revitalising country commitments for ending violence against children, announcing a new/renewed collective country-led initiative to end violence against children, launching a first-ever child/youth-led, movement dedicated to preventing child violence, adopting an inter-governmentally negotiated political declaration and hosting additional inclusive convening on pressing issues relating to ending violence against children.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Human Rights, in collaboration with WHO and Unicef, convened a consultation in Islamabad as part of the national preparatory sessions for the first global conference on ending violence against children (VAC).

The session assembled representatives from federal ministries, provincial governments, civil society, academia, and child protection experts to align Pakistan's priorities with the global agenda to end all forms of violence against children.

Maryam Mallick, technical representative WHO, gave a detailed briefing on the global statistics on violence against

children, objectives of the conference and the expected outcome.

Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO representative in Pakistan, Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson National Commission of Child Rights, Sarah Ahmad, Chairperson CP and WB Punjab, Rabeeah Hadi, Director CPI, Susan Andrew, Chief of Child Protection at Unicef, and Mohammad Arshad, Director General IC at the Ministry of Human Rights, attended the meeting.

War and child victims

Russia's war on Ukraine is having devastating impacts on children and families. More than 7 million children are affected, having experienced violence, loss of family members, displacement, and disruptedAt least 19,000 children are still gone, according to Ukrainian officials, but the real number is believed to be much higher. They're sent to Russian foster families, technical schools, military training and so-called summer camps with the intention of turning them into Russian citizens. This includes more than 1.8 million children who have crossed into neighbouring countries as refugees and 2.5 million who are now internally displaced inside Ukraine. "The war has caused one of the fastest large-scale displacements of children since World War II," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell Active fighting continues in many of Ukraine's communities in the east and south, with an estimated 2.9 million people living at or near the front lines. Children continue to suffer under relentless attacks. Since February 2022, 579 children have been killed and 1,284 children have been injured. About Ukraine's children and their families have endured 18 months of forced displacement, unthinkable loss, and relentless violence since the escalation of war in February 2022. At least 545 children have been killed – the equivalent of a child dying every day since the war escalated, mostly from bombardment. Often forced to flee their homes in search of safety, many remain displaced for extended periods of time, or never return home. Some are orphaned or separated from parents and caregivers. Over half of all civilians killed by landmines and explosive remnants of war are children. In 2022, more than 8,600 children were confirmed killed or maimed in conflicts worldwide. The situation has never been more desperate - 96% of the population are facing severe food shortages, as a result of the ongoing violence, displacement and restrictions on aid, over

20,000 children are estimated to be missing in the chaos of war, and thousands are presumed dead beneath the rubble. Over 20,000 children in Gaza are lost, detained, disappeared, or buried in mass graves or under rubble amid Israel's relentless war. Conservative figures show that more than 6,000 women and 11,000 children were killed in Gaza by the Israeli military over the last 12 months. Data from 2004-2021 on direct conflict deaths from the Small Arms Survey, estimates that the highest number of women killed in a single year was over 2,600 in Iraq in 2016.560 schools. But, in Gaza, 625,000 children have no school to return to at all. Most of Gaza's 560 schools have been damaged or destroyed. More than half have been directly hit by Israeli forces, who say schools have been used as shelter by Hamas militants. The war in the Gaza Strip is taking a catastrophic toll on children. More than 14,000 children have reportedly been killed, according to the latest estimate by the Palestinian Ministry of Health; thousands more have been injured. There are no safe spaces. All of Gaza's children have been exposed to the traumatic experiences of war, the consequences of which will last a lifetime.

Around 1.9 million people – about 9 in 10 of Gaza's population – are estimated to have been internally displaced. Half of them children. They do not have enough access to water, food, fuel and medicine. Their homes have been destroyed; their families torn apart. Many children have been displaced multiple times, and have lost homes, parents and loved ones. They need to be protected, along with the remaining services that they rely on, including medical facilities and shelter. Israel's relentless war on Gaza has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, at least 16,456 of them children and over 11,000 women. Gaza's Health Ministry announced the grim milestone, a figure that is likely an undercount as most of the missing 10,000 Palestinians are believed to be buried under mountains of rubble.

Our gravest fears about the reported numbers of children killed becoming dozens, then hundreds, and ultimately thousands were realized in just a fortnight. The numbers are appalling; reportedly more than 3,450 children killed; staggeringly this rises significantly every day. Gaza has become a graveyard for thousands of children. It's a living hell for everyone else.

Moral Values: The guiding light of life

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Moral values are an invisible guide in life that shapes an individual's thoughts, behavior, and relationships. They are a collection of beliefs, principles, and ideals that help distinguish between right and wrong for an individual or society. Moral values reflect a person's conscience, compelling them to consider the consequences of their actions. For instance, if an individual upholds the value of honesty, they will choose to speak the truth even in difficult situations, despite potential personal losses. This characteristic of moral values sets them apart from mere theoretical concepts, making them applicable in the practical aspects of life. Their primary goal is to promote human well-being and maintain societal stability.

The first and most significant source of moral values is the family. From childhood, the family environment fosters a child's initial understanding of morality. Through the behavior, conversations, and teachings of parents or guardians, a child learns what is right and wrong. For example, if a family cultivates a culture of truthfulness, the child imbibes the value of honesty from an early age. This familial education becomes deeply ingrained in the child's mind, guiding their future behavior. Religion and spiritual beliefs are another powerful source of moral values. Every religion provides its followers with principles for leading a moral life. For instance, the concept of dharma in Hinduism, the principle of non-violence in Jainism, compassion in Buddhism, and love and forgiveness in Christianity profoundly influence human life. Religious texts such as the Gita, Quran, Bible, or Guru Granth Sahib have passed down these teachings from generation to generation. Educational institutions also play a crucial role in shaping moral values. In schools, students learn discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and justice from their teachers. The curriculum, through subjects like literature, history, and philosophy, imparts lessons on moral values. In Indian literature, stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata teach values of sacrifice, duty, and justice. Societal culture and traditions are additional sources of moral values. Through traditional beliefs, folklore, festivals, and rituals, moral values are transmitted across generations. For example, in India, the tradition of spending time with family during Diwali strengthens the values of family unity and love.

Personal moral values are those related to an individual's own life, including honesty, self-discipline, patience, courage, and good intentions. When a person remains true to their actions, they experience a sense of inner satisfaction. Social moral values pertain to society, such as justice, equality, empathy, respect, and cooperation. These values help maintain peace and harmony in society. For instance, when everyone in a society is treated with equal respect, social conflicts diminish. Environmental moral values emphasize responsibility toward nature, including environmental conservation, kindness to animals, and the judicious use of natural resources. Professional moral values apply to the workplace, encompassing responsibility, transparency, impartiality, and respect for confidentiality. For example, a doctor's ethical duty is to protect patient confidentiality and make decisions in the best interest of their health. Together,

these various types of moral values help maintain balance in different aspects of life.

The application of moral values is evident in every sphere of life. In personal life, moral values guide individuals toward the right path in achieving their goals. For instance, adhering to the principle of honesty strengthens a person's relationships and social life. Through honesty, they earn the trust of others, bringing stability and happiness to their life. In social life, moral values form the foundation of relationships. Values like mutual respect, empathy, and cooperation foster peace and harmony in society. For example, when a community shows equal respect to all its members, conflicts based on caste, religion, or class are reduced. In professional life, moral values ensure transparency and fairness in the workplace. For instance, if a company adheres to ethical principles, such as dealing honestly with customers or treating employees fairly, it earns the trust of both, enhancing its reputation and achieving long-term success. In the environmental sphere, moral values encourage responsible behavior toward nature. Actions like reducing plastic use, planting trees, or showing kindness to animals stem from moral values and contribute to environmental protection, ensuring a healthier planet for future generations.

The impact of moral values is profound on individuals, society, the economy, and the world. On a personal level, moral values enable individuals to live with confidence and happiness. When a person adheres to ethical principles, they experience inner peace. For example, dishonest behavior may lead to temporary gains but can result in guilt, whereas acting with integrity boosts self-esteem and brings satisfaction. Socially, moral values lay the foundation for societal stability and prosperity. A society rooted in justice, equality, and empathy sees reduced conflict and increased cooperation. For instance, showing empathy toward the poor and marginalized reduces social inequality and fosters peace. In the economic sphere, morally driven businesses achieve long-term success by earning the trust of customers and employees. For example, a company that is honest about its product quality builds a strong reputation, leading to business growth. Globally, moral values foster peace and cooperation among nations. When countries adhere to principles of justice and equality, international conflicts decrease, promoting global well-being.

Moral values have always been integral to human civilization. In ancient India, texts like the Upanishads, Gita, and Manusmriti extensively discussed principles of ethical living. For instance, in the Gita, Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna about selfless action, emphasizing duty without attachment to outcomes. In ancient Greece, philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle laid the ethical foundations of Western civilization. Aristotle, for example, linked happiness with moral virtues. During the medieval period, religious ethics influenced societies, with teachings from Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism emphasizing the importance of moral values. In the modern era, the development of ethical philosophy has made the concept of moral values more complex. Philosophers like Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill proposed different ethical theories. Kant emphasized duty, while Mill focused on the greatest happiness for the greatest number. These historical perspectives

demonstrate that moral values are an inseparable part of human civilization.

However, the application of moral values faces numerous contemporary challenges. Rapid changes in the modern world have raised questions about their relevance. Technological advancements have created new ethical dilemmas, such as issues of privacy, impartiality, and accountability in the use of artificial intelligence. For instance, if an AI decision causes harm, who is responsible? Such questions introduce new dimensions to moral values. Similarly, globalization has led to conflicts between cultural values, where what is acceptable in one culture may be unacceptable in another. For example, Western cultures emphasize individual freedom, while Eastern cultures prioritize collective well-being, complicating ethical decision-making. Additionally, conflicts between personal interests and moral values further complicate their application. Some businesses, for instance, prioritize profit over ethics, causing environmental damage or exploiting employees, which poses challenges to moral values.

Addressing these challenges requires education and promotion of moral values. The education system should place greater emphasis on teaching moral values, instilling honesty, empathy, responsibility, and justice in children from a young age. This can be achieved through subjects like ethical philosophy, literature, and history. For example, Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence or Rabindranath Tagore's literature can teach children the importance of moral values. Additionally, raising awareness in society is essential for promoting moral values. Social media, mass media, and public programs should spread the message of their importance. For instance, campaigns on social media can raise awareness about environmental conservation. Above all, individual responsibility is crucial. If every person adheres to ethical principles in their daily life, positive societal change is possible. For example, reducing plastic use on an individual level can collectively have a positive impact on the environment.

Moral values have always been an essential part of human life and will remain so in the future. Despite new ethical challenges arising from technological advancements and globalization, the core principles of moral values, such as honesty, justice, and empathy, will always remain relevant. In the future, new approaches will be needed to promote and educate about moral values. For instance, technology can be used to spread ethical education through online courses, virtual classes, and interactive apps for children and youth. International cooperation can also promote universal moral principles. Organizations like the United Nations can work to promote values like peace, justice, and equality worldwide.

In conclusion, moral values are an indispensable part of life. They guide individuals on the right path, foster peace and cooperation in society, and contribute to making the world more just and beautiful. While contemporary challenges complicate their application, these can be overcome through education, awareness, and individual responsibility. Commitment to moral values not only enriches individual lives but also paves the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for the entire world.

Could simple blood tests improve Alzheimer's diagnosis in the future?

By: Deep Shukla

Alzheimer's disease has been deemed a public health crisis, with an estimated 7 million individuals in the United States currently living with this neurodegenerative disease.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease, with gradual worsening of cognitive and functional abilities over time. Early diagnosis of AD can facilitate better management of the condition and delay its progression.

In the past four years, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first three disease-modifying treatments, including aducanumab, lecanemab, and donanemab, which can delay or prevent the progression of Alzheimer's. These drugs are more effective in individuals in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, making its early diagnosis vital.

In addition, the advent of these therapies also necessitates the monitoring of treatment progression. This underscores the need for inexpensive, accessible, and accurate Alzheimer's biomarkers.

Currently approved brain imaging and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) biomarkers have high accuracy but are expensive and invasive. Blood-based biomarkers have been investigated as an accessible and cost-effective alternative to these biomarkers but have lacked accuracy.

Technological advances in the past decade have led to the development of ultrasensitive blood-based biomarker assays for Alzheimer's disease.

These blood-based biomarkers could reduce the cost and time of recruitment for Alzheimer's clinical trials and help monitor treatment outcomes. However, these biomarker assays still need to be standardized and validated before they can be used in primary care clinics.

Challenges with the clinical diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is characterized by the abnormal accumulation and aggregation of the beta-amyloid and tau proteins. The aggregation of beta-amyloid protein leads to the formation of plaques between neurons, whereas the tau protein aggregates to form neurofibrillary tangles inside neurons. The accumulation of beta-amyloid plaques in the brain precedes the emergence of cognitive symptoms by 1 to 3 Trusted Source decades. The period during which brain pathologies are present but cognitive symptoms have not manifested is referred to as the preclinical stage of Alzheimer's disease.

In most cases, the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is based on the presence of cognitive symptoms, such as memory loss. The diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease based on such clinical symptoms is challenging even for experts in the field.

Studies suggest that around 25-30% Trusted Source of individuals with Alzheimer's disease do not receive an appropriate diagnosis in specialized dementia clinics when relying on clinical symptoms alone. Furthermore, monitoring disease progression and making a prognosis based solely on clinical symptoms is also challenging.

Limitations of conventional Alzheimer's biomarkers

In 2018, the National Institute on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association (NIA-AA) developed guidelines recommending a focus on pathological changes in the brain instead of clinical symptoms for Alzheimer's diagnosis. In other words, Alzheimer's can be diagnosed solely based on biological changes.

Specifically, this framework, also known as the ATN framework, recommends diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease based on evidence of biomarkers for beta-amyloid deposits, tau neurofibrillary tangles, and neurodegeneration.

These pathological changes associated with Alzheimer's disease are currently assessed using brain imaging scans or cerebrospinal fluid markers. Positron emission tomography (PET) scans

are used to assess the accumulation of beta-amyloid deposits and tau tangles, as well as changes in glucose metabolism in the brain. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans are also sometimes used to detect structural changes in the brain.

The changes in glucose metabolism evaluated using PET and the decrease in the size of brain regions involved in cognition serve as biomarkers of neurodegeneration. Although accurate, brain imaging scans are expensive to conduct and require specialized facilities, thus limiting accessibility. CSF, a fluid that bathes the brain, is also commonly used to assess the levels of amyloid and tau pathology and neurodegeneration. CSF is collected using a lumbar puncture, also known as a spinal tap. The invasiveness of this procedure and its perceived risk are limiting factors for the utilization of CSF biomarkers.

The high costs, invasiveness, and limited accessibility associated with brain imaging and cerebrospinal biomarkers make them unsuitable for Alzheimer's diagnosis in routine clinical care.

These factors also pose a major challenge for the recruitment and follow-up of participants in large-scale clinical trials and population studies.

Blood-based biomarkers can be easily quantified in most clinical laboratories at a lower cost. However, until recently, the assays developed to measure biomarkers in the blood were not accurate. The recent development of ultra-sensitive assays for these biomarkers holds promise to change the clinical and research landscape.

While these blood-based biomarkers are not yet ready to be used as a standalone tool in clinics, they are currently being used in clinical trials and soon in clinics in conjunction Trusted Source with cognitive assessments and/or brain imaging and CSF markers.

Suzanne Schindler, MD, PhD, an associate professor of neurology at Washington University in St. Louis, explained that: "Traditional tests for Alzheimer's disease require a spinal tap or a specialized brain scan and are not readily available at many medical facilities. In contrast, most clinics routinely draw blood. This means that blood tests for Alzheimer's disease could be performed relatively easily, including by primary care providers."

Why blood tests may be more convenient Alzheimer's diagnostic tools

The recruitment of participants for Alzheimer's disease clinical trials is a slow and expensive process. The cost of screening participants for Alzheimer's disease clinical trials using PET and MRI scans is estimated Trusted Source to be \$8,000 per participant.

Furthermore, about 44-88% Trusted Source of individuals fail the screening test for participation in Alzheimer's disease clinical trials.

The use of blood-based biomarkers can reduce the cost and time needed to recruit clinical trial patients. Consistent with this, blood-based biomarkers have recently been used to screen clinical trial participants and measure treatment progress and outcomes. These blood-based markers could also be used in a primary care setting to further assess the risk of Alzheimer's disease in individuals showing deficits in cognitive assessments.

Patients at an intermediate-to-high risk of Alzheimer's, as evaluated using blood-based markers, could then be further assessed using imaging and cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers. Screening older patients using blood biomarkers could also become a part of routine clinical assessments, enabling early identification of individuals with preclinical Alzheimer's disease. Identification of Alzheimer's disease before the emergence of clinical symptoms could facilitate better management of the condition, especially given the availability of disease-modifying treatments.

Common blood-based biomarkers for Alzheimer's

The initial attempts at the development of



blood-based biomarkers for Alzheimer's included the measurement of the beta-amyloid-42 protein found in plaques. However, these assays were not accurate. Other studies focused on blood-based markers of neurodegeneration, such as neurofilament light and total tau Trusted Source, which are also present in other conditions besides Alzheimer's disease. Improvements in analytical methods have led to the development of assays that can detect biomarkers for amyloid and tau pathology and neurodegeneration.

These assays involve the quantification of the protein biomarkers with the help of antibodies or mass spectrometry.

Beta-amyloid levels

Beta-amyloid exists in several different forms, with beta-amyloid-40 and beta-amyloid-42 being the two prominent forms in the brain. Beta-amyloid-42 contains 42 amino acid residues and is prone to aggregate and form plaques. Beta-amyloid-40, the shorter form of beta-amyloid that contains 40 amino acids, is less toxic and inhibits the aggregation of beta-amyloid-42.

The formation of amyloid plaques in Alzheimer's disease is accompanied by a decrease Trusted Source in beta-amyloid-42 levels in the cerebrospinal fluid. The total levels of beta-amyloid-42, or the ratio of beta-amyloid-42 to beta-amyloid-40 in cerebrospinal fluid serve as Alzheimer's disease biomarkers.

The ratio of beta-amyloid-42/beta-amyloid-40 normalizes the beta-amyloid-42 levels for inter-individual variation in the production of beta-amyloid. As a result, the beta-amyloid-42/beta-amyloid-40 levels are a more accurate biomarker of amyloid pathology than beta-amyloid-42 concentrations alone.

The plasma shows a similar decline in the beta-amyloid-42/beta-amyloid-40 ratio to that observed in the cerebrospinal fluid and can be an accurate biomarker for beta-amyloid accumulation in the brain. Individuals with a positive beta-amyloid PET scan only show an 8-15 % decline of beta-amyloid-42/beta-amyloid-40 ratio in the blood but a 40-60% decline in the cerebrospinal levels of beta-amyloid-42/ beta-amyloid-40.

The smaller decline in the beta-amyloid protein in the blood is likely due to its production in peripheral tissues instead of the brain. As a result, measuring plasma beta-amyloid-42/beta-amyloid-40 levels is more susceptible to errors, such as those during the processing of the blood samples or performing the assay.

Plasma tau biomarkers

Alzheimer's disease involves Trusted Source the abnormal phosphorylation of the tau protein and its cleavage to form tau fragments that are prone to aggregation, forming neurofibrillary tangles.

The phosphorylated tau (p-tau) fragments that do not aggregate are secreted into the cerebrospinal fluid and subsequently released into the bloodstream. Several different variants or species of p-tau are present in the cerebrospinal fluid and plasma of individuals with Alzheimer's disease. These variants differ in the site of phosphorylation. Three p-tau species that have shown promise as Alzheimer's disease biomarkers include p-tau181, p-tau217, and p-tau231, with the numerical representing the amino acid in the tau protein that is phosphorylated.

The levels of p-tau181 in the cerebrospinal fluid are used as an Alzheimer's disease biomarker, whereas total tau in cerebrospinal fluid is an indicator of neurodegeneration.

Notably, the accumulation of amyloid deposits in the brain is thought to trigger the formation of these p-tau species. As a result, these p-tau species are observed Trusted Source only in Alzheimer's disease but not in other neurodegenerative diseases involving tau accumulation.

Moreover, the levels of the aforementioned p-tau species are moderately correlated with the accumulation of neurofibrillary tangles in the brain. In contrast, levels of p-tau show a stronger correlation with the accumulation of amyloid-beta plaques in the brain.

Other p-tau species, such as p-tau202 and p-tau205, and microtubule-binding region (MTBR) of the tau protein are being investigated for their potential as better biomarkers for tau pathology.

The presence of the p-tau species precedes the appearance of clinical symptoms of Alzheimer's disease as well as a positive beta-amyloid PET scan. Thus, these p-tau species could help identify individuals with preclinical Alzheimer's disease.

In addition, the levels of all three p-tau biomarkers increase with the severity of Alzheimer's disease, indicating their utility in tracking disease progression and monitoring treatment outcomes.

A recent study suggests that certain plasma tau biomarker assays, particularly those involving p-tau181 and p-tau217, have high levels of accuracy that are comparable to cerebrospinal fluid and PET biomarkers.

Neurofilament light and glial fibrillary acidic protein

The plasma levels of neurofilament light and glial fibrillary acidic protein Trusted Source are also elevated in individuals with Alzheimer's disease. Neurofilament light is found in nerve fibers, and higher levels of neurofilament light are an indicator of central nervous system injury, that is, neurodegeneration. Thus, neurofilament light levels are also elevated in other types of dementia, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and multiple sclerosis Trusted Source. Neurofilament light levels do

not change much in response to Alzheimer's severity, limiting its utility Trusted Source as an Alzheimer's biomarker.

However, neurofilament light could be used to detect the presence of other neurodegenerative disorders in individuals with cognitive impairment who test negative for Alzheimer's disease-specific biomarkers.

Glial fibrillary acidic protein is a protein that is upregulated in activated astrocytes, a type of brain cell, during the inflammation of the central nervous system, including in Alzheimer's disease.

Glial fibrillary acidic protein levels are closely associated with amyloid deposit levels in the brain and are correlated with a decline in cognitive function. Moreover, glial fibrillary acidic protein levels are elevated in preclinical Alzheimer's disease.

Although glial fibrillary acidic protein levels are elevated in other types of dementia, the increase in glial fibrillary acidic protein levels is more profound in Alzheimer's Trusted Source. Thus, glial fibrillary acidic protein could be used to monitor treatment progress and outcomes in people with Alzheimer's disease.

Challenges

Although blood-based biomarkers have performed well in studies, there are several challenges to deploying these biomarkers in the clinic. The studies assessing the performance of blood-based biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease have involved participants selected based on specific criteria, such as the absence of comorbid conditions. Importantly, these individuals were pre-screened for Alzheimer's disease using brain scans or cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers to categorize them into study groups. The prevalence of Alzheimer's disease in the population is much lower, and individuals tested in the clinic are expected to show considerable variation in the presentation of diseases than those included in the studies.

Moreover, most of the individuals involved were White, and the performance of these blood-based biomarkers needs to be validated in an ethnically diverse population. These factors have the potential to negatively impact the accuracy of blood-based biomarkers in real-life situations.

There are several ongoing studies to address these concerns about the real-world performance of these assays. For instance, a recent study Trusted Source conducted in primary care and specialized memory care clinics using a kit measuring plasma p-tau217 and the beta-amyloid-42/beta-amyloid-40 ratio showed high diagnostic accuracy exceeding 90%.

There is also a need to develop guidelines for the use of these assays and interpreting their results. There are a number of blood-based biomarker tests that measure plasma p-tau or the beta-amyloid-42/beta-amyloid-40 ratio. These assays use different types of antibodies or different measurement methods, resulting in vastly different outputs. Thus, there is a need for standardization of these assays and comparison of their performance. Moreover, these tests need to be validated to determine how the changes in biomarker levels correspond to disease severity and established PET or CSF biomarkers.

Schindler told MNT that: "Multiple blood tests for Alzheimer's disease are now clinically available, but vary widely in their accuracy. No tests are yet FDA-approved."

Lastly, there are pragmatic and logistical challenges to the adoption of these tests in the clinic. Clifford Jack, MD, professor of radiology at the Mayo Clinic, explained that: "Plasma biomarkers are new, and the infrastructure to deliver these tests to the broader medical community is just now starting to roll out. But accessibility will not be a problem in the future."

Schindler also noted that these blood-based biomarker assays are not covered by insurance, restricting their use. (Courtesy: MNT)

Malnutrition is declining but obesity is on steep rise in India: UN Report

By: Banjot Kaur

A UN organisations' report indicates that the obesity crisis is deepening in India both in adults and children.

According to the State of Food Security and Nutrition (SOFI) in the World 2025 report, among children below five years of age, the overweight rate has increased from 2.7% in 2012 to 3.7% in 2024 of this population group. In absolute numbers, it translates into an increase from 2.7 million in to 4.2 million – thus making them prone to obesity and its long-term related complications.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Health Organisation (WHO), World Food Programme and International Fund for Agriculture Development has prepared the report on the basis of secondary data. The primary data was provided by various countries.

Childhood obesity has adverse psychosocial consequences; it affects school performance and quality of life, compounded by stigma, discrimination and bullying, says the WHO. "Children with obesity are very likely to be adults with obesity and are also at a higher risk of developing Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in adulthood," it adds. The common NCDs are hypertension, diabetes and cardiac issues.

Similarly, the obesity in the population above 18 years has also increased consistently. In 2012, 4.7% of the population of this age group was obese. Now it has climbed to 7.3%. As many as 205.5 million adults are obese in India.

These findings echo a worrying situation which was highlighted in a recently released paper authored by experts from various ICMR-affiliated institutes, Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research, Symbiosis Medical College and TERI.

The paper states that as many as every 20th household in India had all adults classified as overweight, and every 10th household in India had all adults classified as obese. The richest wealth quintile fares worst. The proportion of households with all obese members was nearly twice as high in urban areas compared to their rural counterparts, the authors wrote.

Overweight and obesity are a collection of extra fat in the body. If body mass index (BMI) ranges between 25-29.9, one is labelled overweight. If BMI is between 30 to 39.9, one is the obese range. Anything above 24.9 BMI is unhealthy. Obesity prevention is intricately linked with preventing other diseases as chronic obesity can lead to NCDs which become a lifetime challenge to deal with. The authors of the paper point out



that though India had introduced a whole range of initiatives to control obesity, their impact remains limited. "The findings of this study indicate that these efforts must be scaled up to target high-risk urban and wealthier populations," said the paper, instead of broad strategies for all groups of populations.

The focus must be shifted to individual-level interventions to household clusters to effectively address the overweight and obesity epidemic in India, the authors recommend. They warn that the individuals living in these clusters face a higher risk of developing NCDs in the future if timely interventions are not implemented. They suggest that the attention should be directed towards the southern region, wealthier households, and urban residents, who have been identified as having a higher likelihood of obesity compared to their counterparts.

Undernourishment in India has gone down from 21% to 12%.

While obesity on the one hand remains a worrying area to be addressed, the SOFI report says as much as 40.4% of the population in India in 2024 – that is 586.5 million people are unable to afford a healthy diet. The report defines a healthy diet as one comprising a variety of locally available foods that meet energy and most nutrient requirements.

According to the WHO, a healthy diet is necessary for an individual to perform a range of functions, including enabling the body to produce enzymes, hormones and other substances needed for normal growth and development.

While some of the dangerous health issues caused by micronutrient deficiency are visible, the lack of mental clarity, reduction in energy level and overall capacity to work remain invisible, the WHO adds.

Although the fact that more than 500 million people are unable to afford a healthy diet sounds alarming, the

SOFI report says, this number has consistently declined over the past few years. In fact, the decrease in the number of people who can't afford a healthy diet in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) is primarily due to India's improved performance. India is a country that belongs to the LMIC group.

The SOFI report pointed out that Southern Asia registered a decline in the number of such people mostly due to India's improved performance. The extent of global hunger is measured by the prevalence of undernourishment. The prevalence in India has gone down from 21% to 12%. In other words, 243.9 million people in 2004-06 were undernourished as compared to 172 million in 2022-24.

The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) is an estimate of the proportion of the population whose habitual food consumption is insufficient to provide the dietary energy levels that are required to maintain a normal active and healthy life, according UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) definition.

"The progress seen at the global level is driven by notable improvement in South-eastern Asia, Southern Asia – which mainly reflects the impact of new data from India – and South America. The PoU in Asia decreased from 7.9 percent in 2022 to 6.7 percent (323 million people) in 2024," the SOFI report says about highlighting India's role in the global decrease in PoU. 15.7% of children of the total population below 5 years have been declared as 'wasted'.

As per WHO, low weight-for-high is known as wasting. It indicated that the child has been facing under-nutrition in his/her recent times. Usually one suffers extreme weight loss because of not eating enough food. It can also happen due to an infection due to which weight loss happens. She can face serious complications, including death.

As much as 15.7% of children of the total population below 5 years have been declared as 'wasted' in India in 2024. This is equivalent to 21.3 million children. This is the highest in South Asia. If a child has low weight-for-age, it is considered stunted. Unlike wasting, wherein a child faces undernutrition from recent times, stunting happens if a child has not been fed enough food for a very long time, and has been facing chronic undernutrition.

The prevalence of stunting has reduced in children below five years from 41.7% in 2012 to 37.4% in 2024. Thus, the number of stunted children in India is 53.3 million to 37.4 million.

The prevalence of anemia in women (15-49 years) increased from 50.1% (in 2012) to 53.7% (in 2023). (Courtesy: The Wire)

Living with joint pain? Here's when replacement becomes the answer

By: Dr Rajiv Thukral

Joint pain is often seen as a normal part of aging. Many people in India simply "adjust" to it, hoping it will go away with home remedies or rest. But sometimes, your joints are trying to tell you something more serious. When pain, stiffness, or swelling refuse to settle with lifestyle modifications, physiotherapy, splinting and medication, it signifies that your joint is severely damaged, and that joint replacement might be the remedy.

In India, the incidence of joint problems are rising sharply, especially amongst those over 50. According to data provided by the Indian Society of Hip and Knee Surgeons, nearly 1.2 lakh knee replacement surgeries are performed in India every year, and the estimates are of the numbers growing by 15% year on year. Increased life expectancy, sedentary lifestyle, obesity, and injuries are major contributors.

Everyday Movements Become a Struggle

One of the earliest signs is difficulty with daily activities. If climbing stairs, getting out of a chair, or walking a few steps feels painful and exhausting, it's time to take notice. Some people also feel "locking" or "giving way" in the knee or hip, making simple movements risky and unpredictable. Ignoring these signs can lead to further joint damage and weaker muscles over time.

Occasional joint pain after a long day is common. But if pain persists even when you're resting, sleeping, or taking medicines regularly, it's a warning sign. Pain that wakes you up at night or stops you from walking short distances is not something to ignore.

Stiffness and Swelling That Stay

Morning stiffness that lasts more than half an hour, or swelling that doesn't go down with rest, ice and medication, could be due to advanced joint damage. In conditions like osteoarthritis or rheumatoid



arthritis, the smooth cartilage covering the joints wears away, causing bones to rub together. This leads to constant swelling, deformity, and sometimes a change in the way you walk.

Joint replacement helps by removing the damaged joint surfaces and replacing them with artificial implants, giving back smooth movement and reducing friction inside the joint.

Joint problems don't just hurt physically; they impact your entire life. When you start avoiding social gatherings, family trips, or even household chores because of fear of pain, your quality of life takes a hit. Joint replacement surgery today offers quick recovery times, with many patients able to walk with support within 1-2 days after surgery.

Getting the Right Advice Early

Many people believe joint replacement should only be the last option in treatment. But waiting too long can make the surgery harder and the recovery slower. Early consultation with an experienced orthopaedic specialist can open up more treatment options, including minimally invasive partial joint replacement surgery, or corrective osteotomies, which requires shorter hospital stay and help preserve undamaged joints, with faster healing.

Awareness is growing in India, but there's still hesitation in many towns and smaller cities. It's important to know that with proper care and expert hands, joint replacement today is highly safe and successful, helping countless people return to active, pain-free lives.

Indian citizens being deprived of livelihood by illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, Rohingyas: BJP

KOLKATA, Aug 3: The BJP on Sunday claimed that Indian citizens from West Bengal, who have been working in other states, were being deprived of their livelihood by illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and, in some cases, by Rohingyas. BJP's state unit president Samik Bhattacharya asserted that Indian Muslims and those Hindus who have come to the country from Bangladesh owing to persecution have nothing to worry about as long as the saffron party is in there.

He also alleged that the ruling Trinamool Congress is afraid that the Election Commission of India (ECI) will identify fake voters if the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is conducted in Bengal.

"Genuine Indian citizens from Bengal, working in other states, are having their livelihood snatched by illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and, in some cases, by Rohingyas," the BJP leader said while addressing a press conference here.

Bhattacharya said that illegal voters in West Bengal will be identified just as has happened in Bihar during the SIR of electoral rolls.

"Just the indication that SIR may be done in Bengal has evoked so much fear, so imagine what will happen when it will really take place," he said.

The BJP leader said that the biggest problem that West Bengal is facing is "radicalisation", maintaining that the political upheavals



in Bangladesh in the recent months have had some fallout in some border districts of West Bengal.

Bhattacharya said that the central government has pointed out some banned organisations starting to get active within the country, with a north Bengal district being at the focal point.

"This is certainly dangerous for our country's internal security, and this is being compromised in this state," he claimed.

He said that on this issue raised by the Union government, several BJP-ruled and non-BJP-ruled states have started checking the identities of migrant labourers from West Bengal.

"Those apprehended during such checks have admitted to being Bangladeshi and that they have obtained fake identity cards here," the BJP leader said.

Justifying the Delhi Police's action, pointing to "Bangladeshi language", the BJP leader said that there is a distinctive difference in the dialect of the Bengali language spoken and written in West Bengal with that of Bangladesh.

The TMC on Sunday posted a letter, on its X handle, claiming that the officer-in-charge of a police station in New Delhi has written to the Barga Bhawan in the national capital, seeking a translator for "Bangladeshi national language" following the arrest of eight people, suspected to have illegally crossed over into India from the neighbouring country.

Alleging that BJP workers are being attacked by the ruling TMC and harassed by the state police, Bhattacharya said, "These are not stray incidents. These are happening in different parts of West Ben-

gal." He alleged that even TMC workers are being subjected to attacks, and incidents of murders are also taking place due to intra-party factional clashes.

"Many of these victim families, in their initial reactions, have demanded a CBI investigation into such incidents as they don't have confidence in the current dispensation in the state," he claimed.

The BJP state president, however, admitted that in several cases, the pace of ongoing CBI probes into crimes in the state has been slow.

"We do not deny it, and we are unhappy," he said. "We want CBI investigations to be more fast-paced," Bhattacharya said.

Pointing to TMC's Bardhaman-Durgapur MP Kirti Azad, who was earlier with the BJP and recently demanded an investigation by central agencies into alleged illegal mining, Bhattacharya said that the former India cricketer has not been able to destroy the saffron party's DNA in him completely.

"He (Azad) had on July 23 demanded a CBI and Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe into illegal mining, but has withdrawn the demand on August 2," he said.

Maintaining that the BJP was, however, viewing the demand for CBI and ED probe seriously, Bhattacharya said that party MPs will meet Union Minister of Mines G. Kishan Reddy on Monday to urge him to take appropriate steps.

Stating that the parents of the

RG Kar Medical College and Hospital doctor, who was raped and murdered a year ago, met the BJP leadership here on Saturday about a protest march on the anniversary of the gruesome incident on August 9, he said that the party expresses solidarity with them but will not make a political presence there.

"If any BJP leader or worker wants to go, he/she can but will not make any political statement from the platform or hold the party's flag," Bhattacharya said.

He said that BJP workers will participate in the protest rally, demanding justice for the deceased doctor, which he described as a social cause, without displaying their political leanings.

"We will inform the persons concerned about what the victim's parents told us, but since the CBI is no longer 'a caged parrot', we cannot make any commitment," he said.

The parents had moved court seeking further investigation into the rape and murder of their daughter, claiming that there were others involved in the crime.

The CBI is probing an alleged conspiracy in the rape and murder of the on-duty doctor, whose body was found in a seminar room of the hospital.

A man, Sanjay Roy, was sentenced to imprisonment till the end of his natural life by the Sealdah sessions court after finding him guilty of the crime. (PTI)

Nine of family among 11 killed as SUV falls into canal in UP's Gonda

GONDA (UP), Aug 3: Eleven people, including nine members of a family, died and four others were injured when an SUV plunged into the Saryu canal in this district on Sunday, police said.

The accident took place near Belwa Bahuta when the victims were going from Sihagaon village to offer prayers at the Prithvinath Temple in Khargapur, said Krishn Gopal Rai, Station House Officer (SHO) of Itiyathok police station.

Rai said the vehicle was carrying 15 people, including the driver. With the help of villagers and rescue teams, 11 bodies were recovered from the submerged vehicle, police said.

Superintendent of Police Vineet Jaiswal said those killed in the accident included six women, two men and three children.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish at the loss of lives and announced an ex-gratia of ₹ 2 lakh from the PM's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given ₹ 50,000, he said.

"Deeply saddened by the loss of lives due to an accident in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones in the mishap. May the injured recover soon," Modi said on X. Sihagaon resident Prahlad's family members and neighbours were going to the temple, police said, adding that among the dead

were nine members of his family. The deceased were identified as Prahlad's wife Bina (44), two daughters Kajal (22) and Mehak alias Rinki (14), Prahlad's brother Ramkaran (36) and his (Ramkaran's) wife Anasuya (34), daughter Saumya (9), son Shubh (7), Prahlad's youngest brother Ram Roop's wife Durgesh Nandini (35) and son Amit (14).

Apart from this, Prahlad's neighbour Ram Lalan Verma's wife Sanju (26) and his sister Gudiya Annu (20) also died in the incident. Prahlad's son Satyam, another daughter Pinky, neighbour Ram Lalan Verma and driver Sitaraman were injured, and are undergoing treatment at the local community health centre.

Prahlad is the manager of Meva Lal Madhyamik Vidyalaya in his village, police said. A teenage girl, who survived the accident, said, "We were visiting the Prithvinath Temple. At the time of the incident, most of us were singing bhajans." Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath condoned the loss of lives in the accident and announced a financial assistance of ₹ 5 lakh to the families of the deceased. As soon as news of the accident reached Sihagaon, the entire village went into shock and grief.

Rahul Verma, a resident of Itiyathok and an eyewitness to the accident, said the road was slippery due to rain in the morning. (PTI)

INDIA bloc to have dinner meeting on Aug 7, march to EC on Aug 8

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: Opposition INDIA bloc leaders are likely to have a dinner meeting on August 7 to discuss strategy over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) issue, sources said on Sunday.

The opposition parties are also planning to take out a march to the office of the Election Commission of India on August 8 in protest against the SIR of electoral rolls exercise, they said. This comes amid a standoff on the SIR issue in the Monsoon Session of Parliament, which has been a near washout as the Opposition's demand for a discussion has failed to draw a positive response from the ruling alliance.

According to the sources, the INDIA bloc party leaders will hold a dinner meeting on August 7 to discuss their strategy on the SIR issue. The meeting also comes as the election for the post of Vice President has been announced, and several opposition leaders have indicated that they may also field a joint candidate. Opposition parties have expressed apprehension over the SIR exercise in Bihar, warning that it would lead to disenfranchisement of many, and have termed it as "vote-bandi" and "vote-chori". The INDIA bloc parties have been protesting inside and outside Parliament. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju on Friday cited a ruling by former Lok Sabha speaker Balram Jakhar that the House cannot debate the functioning of a constitutional body like the EC to suggest the government's disapproval of the Opposition's demand for discussion. (PTI)

Youths in border village of Ladakh look towards stars for their future

HANLE (LADAKH), Aug 3: Youths in a border village in Ladakh are looking up towards the dark night sky for their future, with the stars shining bright down on their hopes and expectations.

They are the 'astro-ambassadors' at Hanle, the country's first dark sky reserve, who have taken up stargazing as a profession, giving astronomy enthusiasts and tourists a glimpse into the vast, deep universe through their telescopes.

"The Indian Astronomical Observatory (IOA) is located here, which has been a driving point for the declaration of the Hanle Dark Sky Reserve (HDSR). The local administrations came together with them to set this concept of 'astro-ambassadors' rolling," Rangdol Dorje, one of the youths enrolled in this initiative, told PTI here.

The region around Hanle, along the border with China, has one of the darkest skies in the country and is home to the IAO of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA, Bengaluru).

A region of about 22 km radius around Hanle, inside the Changthang Wildlife Reserve, was declared as the HDSR in December 2022.

It is the first dark sky reserve in the country, and is being operated through an MoU between the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh, Ladakh Autonomous Development Council (LAHDC) Leh, and IIA.

"After the different stakeholders came together, they asked the 'Nambardar' (village headmen) to collect applications from willing youths to train as astro-ambassadors. About 40 applicants applied for it, with 24 of us getting selected," another 'astro-ambassador' Kesang Dorje said. The selected youths are from the seven hamlets that together form Hanle village, with 70 per cent of the astro-ambassadors being women, Tsering Yangdol added.

Rangdol said they were imparted training for 15 days by the IIA on how to operate a telescope, look for the celestial bodies, etc, and also provided with an 8-inch telescope each, funded by UT Ladakh.

He said the area draws tourists for the IOA, the world's tenth highest optical telescope in the world at present, located in the village, and Khardung La, the world's second highest motorable pass, which is also nearby. Tourists also came for wildlife spotting as the village is located within the wildlife reserve, Rangdol



added. With the declaration of HDSR, the area is now receiving tourists for stargazing also, Yangdol said.

She said favourites among the tourists are spotting the milky way, looking for Saturn, Jupiter and pole star, with the stargazing done mostly between 9 pm to 11 pm. Dark moon nights are best for spotting the celestial bodies, she added. "Generally, the skies are clear here. But if there are clouds, we continue till past midnight also, as the skies clear out soon," Yangdol said. Though stargazing is not in itself a means of income to sustain a family at the moment, tourist footfalls have been increasing with this facility in Hanle gaining popularity through social media, Kesang said.

"Some of us also run homestays to add to our income. Source of income is limited here, and being selected as 'astro-ambassador' has definitely helped increase our income," he said.

Along with the rise in tourist arrivals, issues of sustainability are also being addressed by all stakeholders, including the IIA, administration and astro-ambassadors. A HDSR Light Management Plan, which prescribes rules, guidelines and measures to keep light pollution inside HDSR to a minimum, complements astro-tourism. Equipment like thick curtains, warm light bulbs, lamp shades, etc, are being provided to each house inside the region by UT Ladakh.

"Sustainable tourism committees have been formed, which hold regular community meetings. Light pollution has to be manageable, and we are also working on awareness among the local people and visitors to maintain the uniqueness of the region," Rangdol said. The astro-ambassadors are looking to beat any challenges that may come in the way and find their future among the stars twinkling away in the dark, night sky in this remote village. (PTI)

Thousands participate in silent march to seek Mahadevi's return from Vantara

KOLHAPUR, Aug 3: Thousands of people participated in a 'silent march' in Kolhapur on Sunday, demanding that 36-year-old female elephant Mahadevi (also called Madhuri), be brought back from Vantara wildlife rescue, treatment, and rehabilitation centre in Gujarat's Jamnagar district.

Former MP Raju Shetty led the march, which began from Nandani in the morning and culminated outside the district collectorate, where memorandum was given to the authorities to facilitate the elephant's return. "Madhuri was in tears when she was being taken away. The place where she has been relocated has 225 elephants but still they wanted her as she is beautiful," Shetty said, addressing the march participants.

At a meeting in Kolhapur on Friday, Vantara officials assured that they will cooperate in efforts to bring Mahadevi back to Nandani in the district, state health minister Prakash Abitkar had told reporters.

Mahadevi, who was with the Shri Jinsen Bhattarak Pattacharya Mahaswami Jain 'math' (monastery) at Nandani for over three decades, was relocated to Vantara's Radhe Krishna Temple Elephant Welfare Trust earlier this week following a court ruling.

The Bombay High Court on July 16, ordered Mahadevi to be rehabilitated at Vantara's facility in Jamnagar, after concerns raised by an NGO with the Maharashtra Forest Department and the Supreme Court appointed High-Powered Committee (HPC) on her deteriorated health and psychological suffering.

The Supreme Court on July 25 upheld the HC order. BJP MP Dhananjay Mahadik on Thursday met Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupendra Yadav and submitted a memorandum for bringing back Mahadevi to Nandani.

Madhuri's journey at Vantara begins with gentle care and close attention. We're taking the time to understand her: what keeps her calm, what makes her comfortable, and what she enjoys, Vantara said in a post on Instagram.

"It's not just about treatment; it's about helping her settle in, feel at ease, and live life on her own terms. Step by step, at her pace, with the care and respect she truly deserves," Vantara said.

Mahadevi, who was reportedly brought from Karnataka to the Kolhapur math in 1992 when she was



around three years old, allegedly killed the chief priest in 2017 by repeatedly slamming him against a wall.

Mahadevi suffers from foot rot, overgrown toenails, arthritis, and stereotypical behaviour such as constant head bobbing which is a sign of psychological trauma due to long-term solitary captivity.

The Vantara facility offers hydrotherapy, expert veterinary care, and socialisation with other elephants, which the HPC deemed essential for the elephant's recovery.

The last few days have seen several people in Kolhapur porting out their Jio mobile numbers to protest the elephant being taken to Vantara, a local leader said. Congress MLC Satej Patil said that people of Kolhapur want the elephant back.

More than 2 lakh persons have signed forms demanding Mahadevi's return to the Jain math at Nandani. These forms will be sent to the President's office via speed post from Kolhapur, he said.

In a statement on Saturday, Vantara said it holds the "deepest respect for the emotions and spiritual sentiments surrounding the revered elephant", recently relocated from the Jain math.

"We recognise that her presence there was more than symbolic, it was sacred to many. We want to clearly and respectfully state that Vantara acted solely in compliance with the binding orders of the Bombay High Court, which were subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court," Vantara said.

"We were not the initiators of this move, but the facility directed to carry out the court's decision and provide her with care. (PTI)

Cong flags concern over women's safety in BJP states

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: The Congress on Sunday slammed the BJP over recent incidents of crimes against women in states ruled by the saffron party, and demanded proper compensation and security for the victims' families as well as fast-track courts to deal with such cases.

Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba attacked the BJP over the death of a 15-year-old girl from Odisha, who was allegedly set on fire by three unidentified miscreants in Puri district. The girl succumbed to her burn injury while undergoing treatment in AIIMS Delhi. "You failed to catch the criminals and get them punished. The daughter died and today the police says that no one was involved in this," she said at a press conference here.

Lamba also pointed out that during the Assembly session in Madhya Pradesh, Congress MLA Arif Masood asked how many SC-ST women were raped in the state from 2022 to 2024, and the answer was 7,418. "A girl from Odisha died. Earlier, a girl studying in Fakir Mohan College alleged sexual harassment but did not get justice. She set herself on fire. That girl died in Bhubaneswar and now a 15-year-old girl has died in

AIIMS Delhi," Lamba said. In the name of religion in Chhattisgarh, "police arrested our sisters associated with Christian missionaries", she said. "Today, we are once again ashamed. In Ahmedabad, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a shameful poster has been put up by the traffic police, which states that daughters in Gujarat should not go out of their homes. If they go out and go to a party at night, they can be raped," the Congress leader said, as she showed a photograph of the poster.

"Now I come to the case of Karnataka. Prajwal Revanna from Hassan has been convicted of rape. You know that Prajwal Revanna is a mass rapist... Prime Minister Narendra Modi had campaigned for him and sought votes.

"But today I feel proud to tell you that Rahul Gandhi ji took this issue seriously, and told the Congress government in Karnataka not to come under any pressure because Prajwal Ravanna has the support of two prime ministers... one former and the current. Revanna has now been sentenced to life imprisonment," Lamba said. Women's safety remains a serious issue in the country and that is why Mahila Congress will continue its 'Nyay March', she said. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Aug 3: A government-appointed panel has warned that unscientific mining in Uttarakhand's Bageshwar district is destabilising slopes, threatening villages and agriculture, besides disrupting water sources in the fragile Himalayan region.

The "Geological Assessment and Recommendations For Sustainable Mining Practices in Bageshwar District" report, submitted to the National Green Tribunal on July 30, called for sweeping reforms in mining practices and stringent monitoring to mitigate the risks.

The assessment was conducted following rising complaints of landslides, cracks in houses, drying springs and crop losses in several villages in Bageshwar.

Bageshwar, particularly the Kanda-Kanyal valley region, is known for some of India's richest deposits of soapstone, a soft metamorphic rock widely used in paper, paint and cosmetics and in construction.

The case is similar to Jyotirmath (earlier named Joshimath), where cracks developed in homes, roads and agricultural fields in 2023 following incidents of land subsidence.

The tribunal had sought an ex-

pert evaluation after residents in Bageshwar alleged that mining in the district was being carried out without regard for environmental safeguards.

The panel, comprising experts from the Geological Survey of India, the Uttarakhand Landslide Mitigation and Management Centre, the Department of Geology and Mining and the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, examined 61 mines across Bageshwar, Kanda and Dugnakuri tehsils.

According to the report, most mines have altered natural slopes through steep vertical cuts and lack proper benches, making the terrain highly "vulnerable to landslides" and rockfalls.

The team observed cracks, ground subsidence and rockslides at multiple sites.

It noted that debris from mining was often dumped haphazardly into natural streams, choking drainage channels and aggravating waterlogging and slope failures.

Several leases overlap with villages, farmland and water sources, directly endangering local communities.

The committee highlighted that Bageshwar lies in seismic zone V, one of the most earthquake-prone regions in the country. Mining ac-



tivities in such zones, if not regulated scientifically, could amplify ground instability.

The experts stressed that the current monitoring system is inadequate and there is "no record" of how slope modifications have evolved over time. Satellite analyses also indicated land deformation around several mines, confirming the risk of further subsidence.

The report said mining has disrupted drainage patterns, leading to "depletion and contamination" of groundwater. Springs, which are critical for local drinking water and irrigation, have dried up or diminished in flow in several af-

ected villages.

The committee also found that reclamation efforts at mined-out areas were mostly superficial, with no measures taken to ensure long-term slope stability or ecological restoration.

In its recommendations, the expert panel called for strict scientific monitoring of all mining operations in the district. It proposed the installation of a local seismic network to track micro-earthquakes, deployment of satellite-based SAR technology to detect ground deformation and mandatory slope stability analysis for all existing and proposed mines.

Such analyses, it said, should be reviewed by reputed academic and research institutions to ensure accuracy. The panel urged the creation of a geo-referenced database of all lease boundaries to prevent encroachments and better track risk-prone areas.

It asked the state to reassess leases overlapping with villages, water sources or agricultural land. Aquifer mapping was recommended to understand the long-term impact of mining on groundwater reserves.

The committee strongly insisted on adopting sustainable mining practices, including controlled blasting, proper drainage management and engineering measures to stabilise slopes. It said debris should not be dumped into streams and stressed the need for systematic waste disposal and site reclamation. Regular field inspections must be carried out to ensure compliance with mining plans and environmental norms.

While the panel noted that riverbed mining, if done within prescribed limits, does not pose a threat to seismic stability, it emphasised that in-situ mining in Himalayan districts like Bageshwar should proceed only with extreme caution. (PTI)

NSCN (IM) asserts not to give up on sovereign rights of Nagas

Marks 10 yrs of Framework Agreement, says sovereignty non-negotiable

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 3: Commemorating the 10th anniversary of signing of the Framework Agreement (FA) with the Government of India, NSCN (IM) chairman Q Tuccu on Sunday asserted that they are not going to give up what was achieved on August 3, 2015, to reclaim "our rightful place with sovereign right as a nation".

In his speech on the occasion, Tuccu described the significance of this political agreement as the recognition of the sovereign rights of the Nagas by the Government of India.

He also stated that the political importance of the FA defines the road to the final draft of the Naga political solution.

"It was on this day that a milestone was achieved when National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) and Government of India signed the historic FA on 3rd August, 2015," Tuccu said.

He said though the Government of India is going slow under various pretexts, the NSCN waited with enduring commitment to stand by the FA, overcoming numerous challenges.

He expressed immense pleasure for the determined stand of the Nagas never to deviate from the FA, no matter.



"Let us work together in the same spirit that brought about this historic agreement. Let us accept our bounden duty to defend the sanctity of Framework Agreement at any cost," Tuccu appealed.

He accused the Government of

India of preparing a "devilish agenda" to destroy the Naga history.

Tuccu further noted that the Nagas are at a crossroads regarding how to bring out a working system between the NSCN and the work-

ing committee of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) to find a common ground for Naga political solution.

However, he affirmed that for the NSCN to work with the NNPGs is a dangerous proposition, accusing the latter of propagating Naga political solution under the Constitution of India.

He added that they are not the master of their own because the Government of India's agencies hold the reins.

Tuccu also said as the torch-bearer of Naga political movement, the NSCN will never take the risk by working with the very groups that have compromised the historical and political identity of the Nagas by failing to defend the sanctity of the uniqueness of the Naga history and political situation while talking with the Government of India.

He alleged that the NNPGs were created by the Government of India to counterweight the bona fide leadership of the NSCN for Naga political solution and signed a copycat of the Framework Agreement under the deceitful name "Agreed Position".

Tuccu said it is unimaginable for the NSCN to share a platform with the groups with contrasting stands on Naga political solution.

Tripura CM inaugurates cricket ground in Dhalai



AGARTALA, Aug 3: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday inaugurated a newly built cricket ground at Kamalapur in Dhalai district. The CM said the state government wants a cricket ground in each sub-division to provide better facility to budding players.

Saha said the previous regime made a mistake in building cricket stadium at Kamalpur. "When I was the TCA president, I visited Kamalpur to see the construction work and found faults there. The then state's Sports Minister Manoj Kanti Deb used to call me to get the stadium completed. Today, the cricket ground was inaugurated after removing all the faulty plans of the previous regime," he said.

"The Tripura Cricket Association (TCA) had to struggle a lot to build an international cricket stadium in West Tripura's Narsingharh. Now, all the obstacles have been removed and the international cricket sta-

dium is likely to be inaugurated in December," he said. Saha said, "Once the stadium is opened, international cricketers will come here to play at Narsingharh ground. It will be a great experience for cricket lovers."

The construction work of the international cricket ground at Narsingharh was started in 2017, but could not be completed due to different reasons.

Saha also alleged that many talented and eligible players of the state could not play due to political reasons during the previous dispensation.

"I know many talented players who deserve to play national-level cricket, but could not make it because they were not part of the erstwhile regime. The present government wants players with talent to get a fair chance. We have ensured that talent gets a fair chance in player selection and in selection of candidates for government jobs," he said. (PTI)

Drugs worth around ₹ 350 cr seized in Mizoram, 1 arrested

AIZAWL, Aug 3: In one of the biggest drug hauls in Mizoram, the state police have seized crystal methamphetamine and heroin worth around ₹ 350 crore and arrested one person, a senior officer said on Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team comprising personnel of the Criminal Investigation Department (Special Branch) and the Special Narcotic police station in Aizawl conducted an operation near the state capital on August 1.

The joint team intercepted an Aizawl-bound pickup truck, which was carrying Mithun, at a stretch between Zemaabaw and Seling areas, the police officer said.

During a thorough search of the vehicle, the team seized 20.304 kg of crystal meth worth around ₹ 300 crore and 1.652 kg of heroin concealed in 128 soap cases worth ₹ 49.56 lakh from a hidden compartment, the officer said.

The vehicle's driver, identified as B Lalthazuala (45), a resident of Aizawl's Republic Mutual Veng, has been arrested for transporting drugs, he said.

The accused has been booked under sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, he said.

Further investigation is underway, the officer added. (PTI)

ADG BSF reviews security preparedness in Manipur

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 3: Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal, IPS, Additional Director General (ADG) of the Border Security Force (BSF) Eastern Command, wrapped up a two-day visit to Manipur on Friday after conducting a comprehensive review of the security situation in the strife-torn state.

According to an official statement, the senior BSF officer arrived at Imphal's Tulihal International Airport on August 1 and was received by Ravi Kant, IPS, Inspector General of BSF M&C Frontier, along with other senior officers.

During the visit, Aggarwal met Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Security Advisor Kuldip Singh, and Director General of Police (DGP) Rajiv Singh to discuss the evolving law-and-order scenario.

Govt doctor injured in attack in Tripura's premier hospital

AGARTALA, Aug 3: A doctor of the state-run Govind Ballabh Pant (GBP) hospital, a premier healthcare facility in Tripura, was injured when two relatives of a patient attacked doctors there on Sunday, an official said.

The incident happened in the early hours of the day. The injured doctor, identified as Dr Litan Das, was admitted to the same hospital after he suffered multiple injuries. He is, however, out of danger, the official said. A complaint has been lodged with the police. The accused persons fled the hospital, leaving their father there, after the incident. They were yet to be arrested till the last reports came in.

"On Sunday, around 3.45 am, Bimal Sarkar, who had consumed alcohol with poison, was taken to the emergency department of the GBP hospital by his two sons, Tapan Sarkar and Bapan Sarkar. They attacked Dr Litan Das and Abhik Deb when they were treating the patient," head of the emergency department Dr Shishendu Dhar, told reporters.

They verbally abused the two attending doctors. At one point in time, both youths thrashed the doctors, pushed and knocked them down on the floor. Hearing hue and cry, private security rushed in, but they did not take any action against the violent persons, he said.

"It is very disturbing that two of our doctors have been assaulted by the patient's family despite giving the best possible treatment to the patient. We are feeling insecure at the hospital," he said.

Expressing concern over the attack on doctors, the Deputy Medical Superintendent of the hospital, Dr Kanak Chowdhury, told PTI that a specific complaint has been lodged against two attackers with the police for taking necessary steps.

"Police have already visited the place and carried out raids to arrest the culprits, but no arrests have been made so far. A formal FIR will be registered by the hospital's Medical Superintendent on Monday" he said. (PTI)

3 elephant tusks seized

AGARTALA, Aug 3: Three elephant tusks have been seized from a village in Tripura's Unakoti district, police said on Sunday.

However, no arrest has been made as the owner of the house from where the tusks were seized managed to escape. Acting on a tip-off, police carried out a raid at the house of Ayub Ali at Sonapur village on Saturday evening.

"During the search, police found three elephant tusks. We could not arrest the house owner as he escaped before the arrival of the police," Kailashahar Sub-divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Jayanta Karmakar told reporters.

He said a case has been registered and a manhunt launched to nab the accused. Assistant Wildlife Officer Subhankar Das said the tusks are not of adult elephants.

"It is not clear as to how Ali got hold of the tusks," he said.

The forest department, in association with the police, will take legal action against those involved in the case, he said. (PTI)

'Seva Aapke Dwar' model of inclusive growth in Arunachal: CM

ITANAGAR, Aug 3: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Sunday asserted that the state government's flagship programme 'Seva Aapke Dwar' is a clear example of "governance in action", as it brings essential services to the doorsteps of people.

Sharing an update on the initiative on his X handle, Khandu said that more than 1,051 camps have been organised so far under the programme, reaching out to remote areas and underserved populations.

Through these camps, over 15 lakh citizens across the state have benefitted by enrolling in various welfare schemes and availing of services that were earlier difficult to access, he said.

The chief minister said that during the nationwide celebration of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', Arunachal Pradesh organised 26 mega camps under 'Seva Aapke Dwar', significantly expanding the scale and scope of the programme.

Calling the programme a major step toward inclusive governance, Khandu said that the impact of the initiative is visible on the ground as more people are coming forward to avail of benefits, while awareness about government schemes has grown considerably, and there is an unprecedented level of inter-departmental collaboration.

He noted that the administration has moved from a 'pull' model of governance, where people are expected to seek out services, to a 'push' model, where the government actively reaches out to every eligible citizen.

The chief minister reiterated that the core objectives of 'Seva Aapke Dwar' are not only to deliver essential services but also to educate citizens about available schemes, eligibility criteria, and ensure 100 per cent coverage of beneficiaries. By reaching out to people at their homes, the government is ensuring that no one is left behind, he added. (PTI)

Youth's intellectual growth key to 'Viksit Arunachal': DyCM



ITANAGAR, Aug 3: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein has emphasised that empowering the youth with knowledge, opportunity, and a clear vision is vital for building a 'Viksit Arunachal'.

Speaking at the zonal final of the second edition of the 'Battle of Minds' quiz competition here on Saturday evening, the deputy chief minister emphasised the government's unwavering commitment to nurturing a skilled, confident, and intellectually vibrant young generation.

Organised by the state Youth Affairs department, the event saw enthusiastic participation from 343 school

teams, up from just 53 in the first edition, reflecting the rising intellectual curiosity and competitive spirit among students.

Commending the department for curating such an impactful platform, Mein said the initiative is not only about quizzing but also about instilling leadership qualities, collaborative learning, and academic excellence.

"Today's quizzers are tomorrow's leaders. I encourage each of you to dream big, stay disciplined, and pursue your goals with clarity and determination," he told the students. The Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya (VKV) team from Chimpur, near here, emerged as the winner of the zonal final and was felicitated by the deputy chief minister.

The DyCM congratulated all participants for their spirited involvement and extended best wishes to the zonal champions from all six zones, who will compete in the state-level semi-finals and finals scheduled for August and September.

State Sports and Youth Affairs minister Kento Jini, Namsai MLA Chau Zingnu Namchoom, Sports and Youth Affairs Secretary Abu Tayeng, Director of Sports Tadar Appa, and Director of Youth Affairs Ramesh Linggi were also present at the event. (PTI)

From education to e-commerce, internet connectivity rewiring life in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Aug 3: In Kibithoo, one of India's easternmost villages located near the India-China border in Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district, a group of children huddle under a solar light in the evening to download their next day's homework.

Until just a few years ago, Kibithoo had no mobile signal, no internet, and virtually no digital access. Today, satellite-powered internet terminals installed under the BharatNet Phase-II project beam connectivity to the local primary school, the village panchayat office, and several homes.

For the villagers, the arrival of the internet feels nothing short of a revolution. "Earlier, we used to wait for days for information. Now my son attends online tuition and watches science videos on YouTube," said Kunsang Chodon Meyor, a mother of two.

Arunachal Pradesh's challenging terrain, dense forests, and widely scattered settlements have digital inclusion difficult. But with renewed efforts from both the Centre and the state government, even remote blocks such as Chaglagam (Anjaw) and Gelling (Upper Siang) are witnessing early signs of the internet age.

Projects under BharatNet, coupled with 4G towers installed by BSNL and Airtel, are extending high-speed internet access to gram panchayats and far-flung border villages. As of now, over 1,300 gram pan-

chayats across the state have been connected through BharatNet Phase-II, with another 500 slated to come online through satellite or microwave links.

"Digital connectivity was once a dream here. Now, it is the lifeline," said Samir Kiri, a local resident of Walong in Anjaw district of the state.

One of the most visible changes has come in the field of education.

In Menchuka, a picturesque village in Shi-Yomi district, teachers now use smart TVs and internet-based content to make lessons more engaging, especially when textbooks arrive late.

"Earlier, we relied only on blackboard teaching. Now, we show children documentaries and interactive mathematics apps. It keeps them engaged," said Dege Eite, a government school teacher from Lungte.

Some villages are also experimenting with digital libraries, using offline Wi-Fi intranets to share videos and e-books to avoid straining limited internet bandwidth.

Internet access is reshaping local economies as well. In towns like Dirang in West Kameng and Ziro in Lower Subansiri district, farmers and artisans are learning to market their products online through training provided by NGOs and Common Service Centres (CSCs).

"I listed my homemade pickles on WhatsApp and now sell to buyers in



Itanagar and even Tezpur in Assam," said Rubu Yassung, a young entrepreneur from Ziro.

"Without internet, I was just a village seller. Now, I feel like a brand," she added.

Government schemes have also become more accessible. From applying for ration cards and birth certificates to accessing PM-Kisan benefits or pension schemes, digital centres are sparing villagers from long, difficult trips to district headquarters.

"Earlier, we had to walk for hours to submit a single form. Now we do it in minutes online," said Akha Wangsu, a farmer

in Pongchou under Longding district of the northeastern state.

Still, full digital inclusion remains a work in progress. Harsh weather, frequent landslides, unreliable power supply, and slow backhaul networks continue to disrupt connectivity in many areas.

Digital literacy also remains patchy. While younger generations adapt quickly, many older residents are still hesitant to use digital services, and gaps in cybersecurity and financial awareness persist.

"Connectivity is the first step, not the last. We need training, reliable power, and



DNGC pays tribute to former faculty member

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 3: The Dera Natung Government College (DNGC) family on Saturday mourned the demise of former faculty member Shashikant Sharma, who passed away unexpectedly.

Born on February 15, 1957 at Pauri in Uttarakhand, Sharma had joined Jawaharlal Nehru College, Pasighat, on December 3, 1984 as Assistant Professor in the Commerce Department.

He was transferred to DNGC in August 1994, where he founded the Commerce stream at the institute and served with dedication for over two decades.

In a condolence message, DNGC principal Dr M Q Khan described Sharma as a sincere and capable academician whose simplicity and commitment to work would never be forgotten.

"It is profoundly disheartening, shocking and saddening to lose someone of his stature and character. At this hour of sorrow, anguish and grief heartfelt deep condolences of the entire college family go to his bereaved family members," Dr Khan stated. Teachers, non-teaching staff and students gathered at the college premises at 5 pm to offer floral tributes and pay their last respects to the departed soul.

The condolence programme concluded with the quote, "Actions of just small sweet and blossom in their dust."

Health gaps flagged, action plan drawn in Papum Pare DHS review

HT Correspondent

YUPIA, Aug 3: The District Health Society (DHS), Papum Pare, held its first quarter review meeting (April-June period) here on Friday to assess the performance of various health programmes and identify areas requiring urgent intervention. The information was provided in an official statement.

Chaired by Deputy Commissioner-cum-DHS Chairperson Vishakha Yadav, the meeting highlighted low footfall in AYUSH OPD services, poor tracking of immunisation drop-outs, low Tetanus-Diphtheria (TD) vaccine coverage in schools, and inadequate water supply in several Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) among other issues.

affordable data," said Sangey Pema, a tech volunteer in Tawang.

In a joint effort between the state and central governments, 254 4G mobile towers in Arunachal Pradesh were dedicated to the nation in April 2023. These towers cover 336 villages, bringing high-speed network connectivity to thousands and enabling digital services across education, healthcare, e-commerce, and agriculture, catalysing socio-economic development.

So far, over 1,310 gram panchayats have been connected with optical fibre under the BharatNet scheme, and more than 1,156 additional towers are in the pipeline to push digital inclusion further in the state.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu has reaffirmed the state government's commitment to transparent and efficient governance through a digital-first approach.

In a recent social media post, Khandu emphasised that digital governance is not only about modernisation, it's about transforming the system.

"Reflecting on a time when governance was synonymous with long queues, misplaced files, and approvals that often depended on personal influence rather than genuine need, that's why we chose the digital path. Not just to modernise, but to cleanse the system, to bring back trust," Khandu stated in a post on X. (PTI)

KL Rahul spent every minute post last IPL match preparing for England series: Abhishek Nayar

MUMBAI, Aug 3: KL Rahul has spent every minute after his last IPL match preparing for the England tour and rightly deserves all the recognition coming his way for doing the "dirty job at all numbers" for India, said the team's former assistant coach Abhishek Nayar on Sunday. Rahul finished as India's second highest run-scorer in the five-Test series with two tons and two fifties giving him 532 runs at 53.20 while forging

a robust opening partnership with Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Nayar, who has worked closely with Rahul during his time as India's assistant coach till recently, said while he cannot reveal the changes the latter has made, he is pleased to see the desired results.

"I can't talk about the changes that I've seen in KL Rahul. I can't, because then it's out there and the effectiveness goes down a lot," Nayar, the

head coach of Women's Premier League team UP Warriorz, told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"All I can say is that, whatever the changes are, they have really worked. Sometimes -- (and) I always say in a cricketer's journey and in a team's journey -- things need to click. You need a bit of the rub of the green. I think he's had that as well," Nayar said Rahul did not waste any time after the IPL to

start preparing for England tour. "He has worked very, very hard. There are a very, very few people who know this that after the birth of his child he was in the IPL (and) he came back immediately," he said.

"He started preparing for the (England) Test series while a lot of people wouldn't have done that. He knew the importance of this series, he understood it."

"And every minute post the

last game that he played in the IPL, was about how he can do well in this Test series, so it's great to see him do well there and get the recognition that he rightly deserves being the guy who's done all the dirty jobs and still managed to perform at every number in that batting order," he

added. "All in all, Indian cricket is in good hands and hopefully we wrap it up today (Sunday) and everything's good," Nayar said, talking about the fifth Test.

Nayar praised the character shown by the Indian team on this tour. "A lot of the changes that

you've seen in our players getting runs is also somewhere the conditions which have played a part, but also the fact that the hunger that our players have had to go out there and actually prove a point, is on show," he said. "The determination in the last game (Manchester), the fight they showed, it just tells you that the mentality that our players carry and, the feeling that they have for Test cricket," he added. (PTI)



West Indies hold their nerves to beat Pakistan in T20 thriller



LAUDERHILL (US), Aug 3: Jason Holder took four wickets and then smashed a boundary off the final ball of the game to lift West Indies to a thrilling two-wicket victory over Pakistan and level the three-match Twenty20 cricket international series.

The veteran allrounder bowled an inspired spell to take 4-19 off four overs, as Pakistan struggled to 133 for nine after it won the toss and batted in Florida.

The West Indies reply also stumbled as Pakistan's spinners kept scoring difficult but late cameos by Gudakesh Motie and Romario Shepherd kept West Indies just about in the contest before Holder's heroics off Pakistan batsman Shaheen Shah Afridi's final delivery clinched it.

It is the first T20 victory for West Indies in seven matches, a span that includes a heavy 5-0 series defeat to Australia, on top of a test series sweep last month.

"Been a tough couple of weeks for us," captain Shai Hope said. "We always try to

get better, the guys have put in a lot of hard work.

"Hopefully today is the turnaround we are looking for."

Earlier, Hasan Nawaz's 40 from 23 balls and captain Salman Agha's 38 from 33 deliveries led Pakistan from a precarious 53-4 in the 10th over, but 133 looked a vulnerable target at the innings break.

Fresh from taking three wickets in Pakistan's 14-run win in the opening game at the same venue on Thursday, Mohammad Nawaz took another three Saturday, returning 3-14 from his four overs.

Like Thursday's game, West Indies found scoring more than five-an-over difficult on the spin-friendly pitch and lost regular wickets.

When Roston Chase was teased into a big shot by Saim Ayub (2-20), West Indies had sunk to 70-5 in the 14th over and looking at a steep mountain to climb.

Motie got the innings moving with his quickfire 28

from 20 balls before Shepherd chipped in with 15 from 11 balls, including taking 10 runs off Hasan Ali in the second-to-last over to give West Indies a glimpse.

Needing eight runs from the final over, Afridi (1-31) removed Shepherd off the second ball, with Holder and new batter Shamar Joseph only able to score singles off the next three balls.

Afridi then bowled a wide to leave West Indies needing three runs from the final ball. Holder (16 from 10 balls) then found the gap at backward square to score the boundary they needed and end their six T20 match losing streak.

"We've had a fair bit of criticism which is warranted," player-of-the-match Holder said. "We haven't done justice to our potential."

"We can be a lot better, consistency has definitely plagued us."

The third T20 will be held in Lauderhill on Sunday before an ODI series in the Caribbean. (AP)

Abhishek Nayar: Want to create culture of winning trophies at UP Warriorz



MUMBAI, Aug 3: Former India assistant coach Abhishek Nayar sees his new role as head coach of the Women's Premier League side UP Warriorz more as an opportunity than a challenge, as he aims to build a trophy-winning culture.

Nayar was appointed as the head coach of the franchise after a disappointing last-place finish in the WPL earlier this year, which followed their fourth-place finish in the inaugural edition in 2023.

"I've always looked at anything as opportunities and this is an opportunity, which I'm very, very excited for in that regard," Nayar told PTI in an exclusive interview organised by the franchise.

"The opportunity is to create a culture where everyone who enters this franchise understands that this franchise plays to win trophies, and try and bring that mentality into this franchise and into our ecosystem," he said.

Unfazed with how the last three seasons in WPL have gone for his new franchise, Nayar said the only challenge for them is to move up.

"If I have to be brutally honest, I'm not sure yet what challenges (are that) I'm about to face. I really don't know and that's the exciting part," he said.

"I don't look at the challenges, for I look at the opportunities. Now the opportunities with our team this year is that we've obviously been last, last year, so there's only one way up. That's the opportunity," he said. As he gears up to take up a big role in the WPL, Nayar pointed out specific changes that he has observed in women's cricket in India.

"When you saw the England Women's team facing up against the Indian Women's team, you could see a stark difference in power in shots and in variety of shots; the bowlers as well," he said.

"It's not often that an Indian women's team travels abroad and wins with such conviction. When that happens, you know that Indian cricket is in the right hands. They're moving in the right direction."

"WPL will impact not only Indian cricket, but also Indian domestic cricket. While I'm talking to you, I'm in Chennai, we're having this small tournament cum trial for a lot of domestic players."

"I've been part of a trial before as well in women's cricket and I can see such a huge difference in a lot of domestic players. I can see 14 or 15 year old girls who are clearing the ropes now."

"It is very different from the first year in a WPL trial where I felt a lot of people were more touch players. (Now) you can see so much more power entering the game. You can see the girls diving around, throws are flat, throws are faster. There's enormous growth and that's not going to stop," he added.

Nayar, who is also on board the KKR coaching staff again, said his return to the franchise two days after leaving the Indian team showed that is where he belongs.

"KKR is family to me. Everyone throws his weight way too much around (the fact) that it's family but for me, I think it's family because the speed at which I came back was testament to the fact that that's where I belong in a lot of ways," he said. (PTI)

Indo-British golfer Aaron Rai stays in top-three at Wyndham Championship

GREENSBORO (US), Aug 3: Defending champion Aaron Rai shot 1-under 69 to stay in the top-three while Cameron Young added a 5-under 65 to earlier rounds of 63-62 to take a five-shot lead at the Wyndham Championship here. Indo-British Rai, whose rounds have been 63-66-69, is 12-under and lying third alongside Chris Kirk (67) and Mac Meissner (70). Colombian Nico Echavarria is sole second after a round of 64 and he is 15-under and five behind Young.

On a storm-delayed second round in the morning, Rai had five birdies, three of them in a row from the 13th to the 15th and he also dropped four bogeys.

Sahith Theegala had earlier missed the cut while the other Indian American Akshay Bhatia withdrew with five holes to

go. When play was suspended, Bhatia had no chance of making the cut.

Following the Wyndham Championship, the top 70 players in the FedEx Cup standings will qualify for next week's FedEx St. Jude Championship, the first of three events in the FedEx Cup Playoffs.

Rai and Bhatia are assured of a start at the FedEx St. Jude Championship.

Young, who is chasing a maiden PGA Tour title, had four straight birdies on the front nine and stretched his lead to eight shots at one stage Saturday before a series of pars saw him finish 5-under 65.

Young capped off a bogey-free 65 in the storm-delayed second round in the morning. Then he stretched his lead with his four straight birdies, including a 30-footer on No. 4 and a two-putt birdie

from 20 feet on the par-5 fifth.

Young is widely considered as the best player to have never won on a main TOUR. He was runner-up seven times since his rookie season in 2021. That includes a World Golf Championship and more notably the 2022 Open Championship at St. Andrews.

Young, who is 20-under 190, is also chasing a place on the Ryder Cup team at Bethpage Black. He was No. 9 in the Ryder Cup standings in 2023 and left off the team.

Kirk is at No. 73 in the FedEx Cup standings. The Wyndham Championship is the final event in the regular season and determines the top 70 who advance to the lucrative PGA TOUR postseason that starts next week in Memphis, Tennessee. (PTI)

Diksha slips on back nine as Yamashita leads AIG Women's Open

PORTRCAWL (WALES), Aug 3: Diksha Dagar went through a roller coaster third round and carded a second straight 1-over 73 that saw her slip from T-28 to T-42 after 54 holes in the AIG Women's Open here.

The 24-year-old, making her second cut at the Open, had a round that included three birdies, an eagle, two bogeys and two double bogeys.

She scored well with three birdies against one bogey on the front nine but dropped a bogey and two doubles in a span of four holes from the 13th to the 16th and closed the day with an eagle, her second one of the week.

With rounds of 71-73-73, she was 1-over after being two-under for the tournament at the end of the front and she seemed in sight of a top-10 at that stage. Then came the dropped shots on the back as it happened on the second day.

Diksha's best at the Open has been T-21 in 2023 and she is looking for a third LET win, which she is aiming for in the second half of the season that includes an event at home in the Hero Women's Indian Open. Meanwhile, Miyu Yamashita carded a two-over-par 74, but that was enough to stay at the top on nine-under. It was also her 24th birthday but the lead was trimmed down from three to one shot.

Lim Kim heads the chasing pack just a shot adrift after a bogey-free 67, with Andrea Lee a shot further back having recorded the same score.

Charley Hull was another to mount a charge, carding a 66 to the delight of the sizable crowds following her every move -- a number which will only swell if she stays in the hunt. (PTI)

PCB issues 'blanket ban' on future participation in WCL

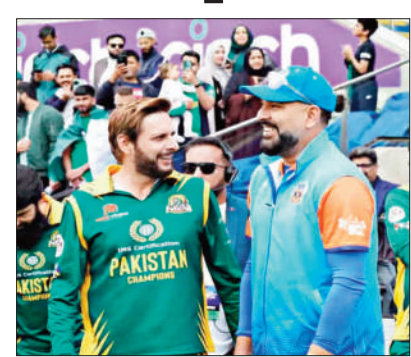
LAHORE, Aug 3: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday announced a blanket ban on its players' participation in future editions of the World Championship of Legends (WCL), accusing the tournament organisers of being "biased" and lacking sporting integrity.

The decision follows a sequence of events in which the Indian team forfeited both their group-stage clash and semifinal against Pakistan, citing the country's stand against bilateral sporting ties with the neighbouring country after the gruesome Pahalagam terror attack.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announces that it is issuing a blanket ban from future participation in the World Championship of Legends (WCL)," the PCB said in a statement after its board of governors meeting held virtually under the chairmanship of Mohsin Naqvi.

The PCB also took strong exception to the WCL's decision to award points to India despite the forfeiture, calling it "tainted with hypocrisy and bias."

India and Pakistan had been slated to meet in the group stage, but the Indian side -- featuring Shikhar Dhawan, Yuvraj Singh, Irfan Pathan, Suresh Raina, and Harbhajan Singh -- refused to play, citing national sentiment following the terror attack and India's subsequent 'Operation Sindoor'. With India also pulling out of the semifinal, Pakistan advanced directly to the final. "The PCB reviewed with considerable disappointment WCL's ap-



palling conduct of awarding points to a willfully forfeiting team, and the content of the press releases of the WCL announcing the cancellation of the scheduled India vs. Pakistan legends matches, which were tainted with hypocrisy and bias." Criticising the tournament's handling of the situation, the PCB said, "The cancellation was not based on cricketing merit but on appeasing a specific nationalistic narrative. This sends an unacceptable message to the international sporting community."

The board further stated that it could not allow its players to participate in events where "the spirit of the game is overshadowed by skewed politics that undermine the very essence of sportsmanship and the gentleman's game."

The WCL, which is co-owned by Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn, had earlier issued an apology for "hurting the feelings of many and stirring emotions" follow-

ing the cancellation of the group stage match.

"We sincerely apologise again for hurting the sentiments and hope people will understand that all we ever wanted was to bring a few happy moments to the fans," the WCL had said.

The PCB, however, termed the apology "farfetched," accusing the organisers of caving to "a specific nationalistic narrative." "The WCL's apology for 'hurting the sentiments', whilst being farfetched, inadvertently acknowledges that the cancellation was not based on cricketing merit, but rather on succumbing to a specific nationalistic narrative," the PCB said. "This bias, masquerading as sensitivity, sends an unacceptable message to the international sporting community."

PCB said it had no choice but to implement the ban.

"In light of this unfortunate development, which underscores a clear and intolerable pattern of external influence and a disregard for the principles of sporting neutrality, the Pakistan Cricket Board is compelled to take a firm stance. "The PCB can no longer condone participation in an event where the fundamental principles of fair play and unbiased administration are compromised by external pressures," it added.

Sources in the know of things have indicated that WCL's Indian promoters were already considering dropping the Pakistan team from future editions of the tournament. (PTI)

MAHABODHI LORD BUDDHA COLLEGE

NAMSAL, ARUNACHAL PRADESH 792103

An Affiliated College of Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar

ESTD: 2013 Approved by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), New Delhi

Courses offered

- Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.)
- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
- Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com.)
- Distance Education
- Diploma in Computer Application

Highly Qualified Faculties

Green & Holistic Environment

Facilities

- Scholarships
- Sports facilities
- Library & Reading room
- Hostel facility for girls
- Bus facilities
- Institute of Distance Education

Admission Open 2025-26

+91 8413 052 616 | +91 9366 429 249 | +91 9883 670 136

mbcollege6@gmail.com | www.mlbcollege.in

Namsal-Diyun Road, Adi-Ningroo, Namsal, Arunachal Pradesh-792103