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WORLD



● Trump again claims he stopped India-Pak war from 'going nuclear'

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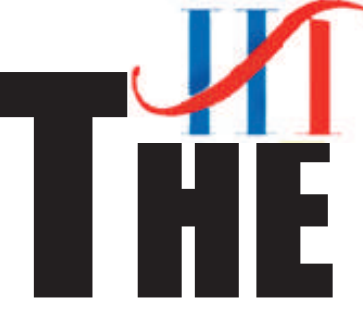
NATION



● Sri Lanka's Supreme Court issues notice to govt on India-funded digital ID project

● JK: Death toll mounts to 41 after record rains in Jammu

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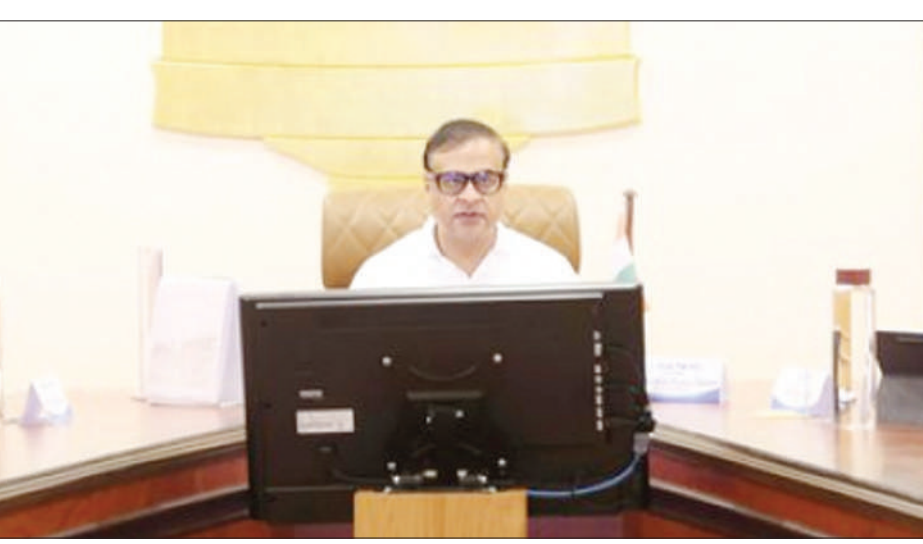
THE HILLS TIMES

Voice of the hills people

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State govt to scrutinise applications for land transfer between persons of different faiths

State Cabinet clears new land transfer SOPs



GUWAHATI, Aug 27: The Assam Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Special Operating Procedure (SOP) to scrutinise applications for land transfer between persons of different religions for examining several angles, including national security, before final permission is granted.

Committee formed to plan, materialise Special Development Zone

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: A committee, headed by Assam Chief Secretary Ravi Kota, has been formed to oversee the planning and materialisation of the proposed Special Development Zone (SDZ) adjacent to National Highway 24 in Guwahati.

The committee comprises senior officials from the Housing and Urban Affairs, Sports, Town and Country Planning, PWD (Building and NH) and Water Resources departments, and Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), Assam Power Development Corporation Limited (APDCL) and Assam Electricity Grid Corporation Limited (AEGCL).

"To take forward the Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. @himantabiswa's vision for the proposed Special Development Zone (SDZ) adjacent to NH-24 near Sarusajai Stadium, a High-Level Committee under the chairmanship of CS Assam was constituted to oversee its planning and development," Kota said in a post on X.

He chaired the first meeting on Tuesday, where detailed deliberations on the comprehensive framework of the project were held.

"Discussions focused on the seamless integration of key infrastructure components, including connectivity, water supply, power, and drainage, while also addressing critical issues such as water-logging and provision of essential services," he said.

The committee also reviewed suitable modifications to the development plan to align it with the state's long-term growth priorities.

"Directions were issued to prepare a holistic master-plan for the project," he said.

All special regulations for the zone will be re-examined, and amendments will be proposed wherever necessary, Kota said.

The engagement of an expert consultant was also discussed to ensure the highest standards in planning and execution, he said.

"This ambitious project is envisioned as a landmark urban hub, designed to enhance connectivity, boost economic (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

gal act, the source of funding of the buyers, impact on the social fabric of the locality where the land exists, and also the issue of national security, the CM said at a media briefing after the Cabinet meeting.

"If the proposal is received from buyers and sellers of the same religion, the SOP will not be applicable to them. But in the case of those from different religions, all these factors will be strictly examined," Sarma said.

The same SOP will also be applicable to NGOs from outside planning to buy land in the state for setting up educational and healthcare institutions, he said.

"In a sensitive state like Assam, the issue of land transfer needs to be handled very carefully," he said.

Some NGOs from Kerala have already bought land in Barpeta district, while some others are trying to buy huge tracts of land in Cachar and Sribhumi districts in Barak Valley, Samah said.

The Cabinet has approved streamlining the procedure for granting permission in cases of transfer of immovable property between persons of different religions, (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Communication channels open to resolve India-US tariff issue: Govt sources



NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Communication channels between India and the US are open to resolve the ongoing tariff issues, and the glitch in trade ties is only temporary, given the long-term relationship between the two nations, government sources said on Wednesday.

The US's 50 per cent tariffs on Indian exports to America came into effect from August 27, barring a few sectors.

According to the sources, there is no need for panic for exporters as the impact of these high tariffs are unlikely to be as severe as feared given the diversified nature of Indian exports.

They added that India's exports to the US during the first four months of this fiscal year has risen 21.64 per cent to USD 33.53 billion.

Going by the trend, the exports may touch the last year's figure (USD 86.5 billion), one of the sources said.

"Communication channels are open between India and the US to resolve the ongoing tariff issues... it is a temporary phase in a long-term relationship," they said.

Meanwhile, in an interview with Fox Business, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has described the India-US relationship as "very complicated" but hoped that "at the end of the day, we will come together".

"This is a very complicated relationship. President (Donald) Trump or Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

CABINET DECISIONS

₹ 969-cr private investment proposals cleared

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 27: In a significant push to boost private investment and generate employment in Assam, the State Cabinet chaired by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at Lok Sewa Bhawan, Dispur, on Wednesday approved a set of key decisions, including major industrial and hospitality projects worth ₹ 969 crore.

According to the official statement, the Cabinet approved customised incentives under the Industrial and Investment Policy of Assam (IIPA) 2019 (as amended) to attract big-ticket investments in sectors ranging from gas manufacturing to healthcare, tourism and hospitality.

Among the projects cleared, Premier Cryogenics Limited will invest ₹ 125 crore in setting up a high-purity semiconductor-grade gas manufacturing plant at Jagiroad, which is expected to create employment for 200 people.

Jonali Construction Private Limited's proposal of ₹ 182.17 crore for a Marriott Resort and SPA project will add 204 jobs in the tourism and hospitality sector.

In healthcare, Ambuja Neotia Healthcare Venture Limited will set up a hospital project with an investment of ₹ 302.65 crore, while Ambuja Neotia Hotel Ventures Limited has proposed a hotel project worth ₹ 360 crore.

Collectively, these ventures represent investments of ₹ 969 crore and are likely to generate 2,704 employment opportunities in the state.

The Cabinet also approved the closure of the Assam Plantation Crops Development Corporation Ltd, along with financial sanction of ₹ 600 lakh towards VRS/one-time settlement and closure cost.

In another key decision, the Cabinet streamlined procedures for granting permission in cases of inter-religious (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Amit Shah on two-day Assam visit from today

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will arrive here on a two-day visit on Thursday and attend the Assam BJP's core committee meeting to discuss issues related to the Assembly polls scheduled next year, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday.

Soon after his arrival, the home minister will attend the core committee meeting at the party headquarters where he will also have dinner with BJP members, Sarma told a press conference.

"Shah will discuss preparations for the forthcoming Assembly elections, which are very important for the party. He takes a keen interest in state polls," the CM told reporters.

On Friday, Shah will inaugurate the newly-constructed Brahmaputra wing of the Raj Bhavan, followed by the e-inauguration of the National Cyber Forensic Laboratory and e-inauguration-cum-foundation laying of various development projects of ITBP, SSB and Assam Rifles.

In the afternoon, Shah will attend a convention of the newly elected NDA panchayat members at the 'Panchayat Sammilan'.

In the evening, he will inaugurate the birth centenary celebrations of Assam's first non-Congress chief minister, Golap Borbora, before leaving for New Delhi.

"The visit of the Union Minister is very important for us politically, but all the other events are equally important", the chief minister said.

Shah was earlier scheduled to visit the state for a day on August 29. (PTI)

Operations Sindoor, Mahadev sent strong message to terror masterminds: Shah

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said that two major security operations, Operation Sindoor and Operation Mahadev, have sent an unmistakable message to the architects of terrorism that there will be consequences for targeting Indian citizens.

Shah said that while Operation Sindoor "brought satisfaction among the people", Operation Mahadev transformed that satisfaction into "confidence".

The home minister said this while honouring 12 members of the Army, who successfully carried out Operation Mahadev and neutralised terrorists involved in the Pahalgam attack. Four personnel, two each from Jammu and Kashmir Police and CRPF, were also honoured for being a part of the operation.

The two operations were a direct response to a brutal attack on April 22 in Pahalgam, which claimed the lives of 26 people, mostly tourists.

"Whether from the ruling party or the Opposition, everyone felt joy and enthusiasm about operations Sindoor and Mahadev, and expressed gratitude towards the security forces," Shah said.

This very trust in national security is the foundation of India's aspiration to achieve the highest position in the world in every field, he added.

On May 7, the armed forces launched Operation Sindoor, a large-scale military action targeting hideouts of banned Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba terror outfits in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Operation Mahadev, launched immediately after the Pahalgam massacre, met with success on July 28 when the Army's elite para commandos neutralised mastermind, Sulieman alias Asif, and two of his associates, Jibran and Hamza Afghani.

The operation was launched after a technical signal detected the use of a satellite phone by the perpetrators. "Operation Sindoor and Operation Mahadev have sent a clear message to the masterminds of terror about the consequences of playing with the lives of Indian citizens," Shah said.

The security forces have shown the world that no matter how many tactics or strategies terrorists may adopt, they can no longer hurt (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Charge-sheets submitted in 93 pc of cases: DGP

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: Assam Director General of Police (DGP) Harneet Singh said that charge-sheets have been submitted in 93 per cent of the cases registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) in the state.

The DGP, after chairing the monthly state crime review meeting, said in an X post on Tuesday night that charge-sheets were submitted in 93 per cent of the BNS cases in July this year, up from 84.42 per cent in May. The BNS came into effect in July 2024, replacing the Indian Penal Code.

Singh said that the conviction rate in cases has also increased to 26.72 per cent in 2025 from 5.5 per cent in 2020.

With this, the number of cases under investigation has come down to 12,338 in July 2025 from 1,54,280 in 2020. (PTI)

Man held for being in touch with B'deshi fundamental outfit JMB: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said that one person was arrested for allegedly sending phone numbers of several residents of Dhubri district to the fundamentalist outfit Jamat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) which is trying to create disturbances in the state.

The arrested man, who is an Indian, was the main conduit who supplied phone numbers to the JMB, and its members would then dial those people with the intention to radicalise them, the chief minister said at a press conference here.

The arrested person, Ali Hussain Bepari, had also been apprehended earlier but was out on bail, he said.

The police are in the last stage of the investigation, and more details are likely to emerge soon, Sarma said.

A strict vigil is being kept in the districts of Dhubri and South Salmara which borders Bangladesh, he said.

"South Salmara has been peaceful for the last five years, but there have been several activities in recent times in Dhubri. So, we have decided to continue with the shoot-at-sight orders at night during the Durga Puja as we are apprehensive about the law and order situation," the chief minister said.

He said that no FIR will be filed against former Planning Commission member Sayeeda Hamid for saying that Bangladeshis can also live here.

"If I file an FIR, then she will collect contributions from different parts of the (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

PM's Assam visit postponed from Sept 13

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a two-day visit to Assam from September 13, instead of his earlier scheduled day-long visit on September 8, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday.

The PM's visit has been rescheduled due to the Vice-Presidential elections on September 9, and he will now spend a night in Guwahati, the chief minister said at a press conference here.

The PM, who was scheduled to inaugurate the birth centenary celebrations of renowned singer Bhupen Hazarika, will participate in the events related to the celebrations on September 13.

The state government will, however, hold a separate programme on September (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Assam businessman held for cheating contractors of ₹ 52 lakh in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Aug 27: Arunachal Police arrested a Guwahati-based businessman on the charge of cheating contractors of over ₹ 52 lakh in connection with the construction of BSNL's mobile phone towers in the state, an officer said on Wednesday.

The 41-year-old accused who had been absconding for nearly a year was picked up from Guwahati in a joint operation with Assam police.

West Siang Superintendent of Police Kardak Riba said the businessman had secured sub-contracts through a company for building BSNL towers in Aalo and other parts of Arunachal Pradesh.

Local contractors made a police complaint stating that despite completion of the civil works for seven towers, the businessman failed to release their dues after receiving full payment from the principal company.

The SP, who supervised the operation, said the accused switched off his mobile phone and evaded contact with the complainants and law enforcement agencies.

"This arrest on August 25 is a significant success for police and exposes a wider network of fraudulent dealings in government contracts," he said.

The SP said the investigation has revealed a pattern of fraud involving his company and its associates, with similar complaints emerging from Papum Pare, Daporijo and other districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

The case has been registered under various sections of cheating and criminal conspiracy, and further investigation is underway to identify others involved in the racket, he added. (PTI)



AMCH becomes first institute in Assam, NE to get Centre of Excellence status under NPRD, 2021

AMCH designated Centre of Excellence for rare diseases by Govt of India

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Aug 27: In a major boost to specialised healthcare in the region, the Government of India has designated Assam Medical College & Hospital (AMCH), Dibrugarh, as a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Rare Diseases under the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD), 2021.

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (Rare Disease Cell), through an official memorandum issued on Tuesday, formally conveyed the approval for AMCH to be included among the select group of premier government tertiary hospitals across the country equipped with advanced facilities for the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of rare diseases.

With this development, AMCH has achieved the distinction of becoming the first medical institute in Assam and the entire Northeastern region to be accorded this prestigious recognition.

It now joins a network of only 15 such Centres of Excellence functioning across India.

According to the memorandum, all responsibilities and activities of AMCH as a designated CoE will be carried out strictly in accordance with the provisions laid down under NPRD, 2021, and in line with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare from time to time.

The official recognition is seen as a step forward in strengthening the capacity of AMCH to deal with rare and complex medical conditions.

It is expected to enhance the institution's ability to provide comprehensive care through specialised diagnostic and treatment facilities that will benefit patients suffering from rare diseases.

The move also holds significance for medical research and clinical advancements in this field.

The designation is particularly important for the Northeastern region, where patients often face difficulties in accessing proper diagnosis and treatment for rare diseases due to the lack of specialised infrastructure. With AMCH's new (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)



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Secondary, tertiary effects of US tariffs on economy pose challenges: FinMin report

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: The immediate impact of recent US tariffs on Indian exports may appear limited but their secondary and tertiary effects on the economy pose challenges that must be addressed, the finance ministry said in a report on Wednesday amid the US effecting a steep 50 per cent tariff on shipments from India.

Ongoing India-US trade negotiations are critical in addressing these issues including the secondary and tertiary effects of high tariff by the US on Indian goods, the monthly economic review released by the ministry said.

The steep 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods entering the US, which came into effect from August 27, would impact exports worth more than USD 48 billion. The sectors which would bear the brunt of the high import duties imposed by the Trump administration include textiles/ clothing, gems and jewellery, shrimp, leather and footwear, animal products, chemicals, and electrical and mechanical machinery.

"While the immediate impact of recent US tariffs on Indian exports may appear limited, their secondary and tertiary effects on the economy pose challenges that must be addressed. In this context, the ongoing India-US trade negotiations will be crucial," it said.

In line with the global shift towards diversification and strategic realignment, it said, India is actively pursuing a diversified trade strategy to sustain its resilient trade performance.

"This includes the recently con-



cluded FTA with the UK and EFTA and ongoing FTA negotiations with the US, EU, New Zealand, Chile, and Peru. But, these initiatives will take time to show results and may not fully address the shortfall in exports to the US that may arise if the current tariff rates on India persist," it said.

Observing that India's economy stands at a critical juncture, the report said, its strong economic performance over the past few years, along with policy stability and high infrastructure investment, has earned it a sovereign rating upgrade by S&P from 'BBB-' to 'BBB'.

"This upgrade serves as a testament to the economy's robust macroeconomic fundamentals and ongoing reform initiatives. The assessment comes at a moment when the economy has exhibited considerable resilience in the face of global challenges, with strong domestic demand and prudent policy

management contributing to economic stability," it said.

On the domestic front, the report said, aided by above-normal precipitation and better sowing of kharif crops, the headline inflation may remain moderate in the near term.

"An increased market arrival in Q1, comfortable buffer stocks and better output prospects, coupled with stable global oil markets, might keep the prices of food grain moderate. The downside risks to global growth are likely to keep international commodity prices in check, partly offsetting the impact of higher tariffs," it said.

To enhance economic growth amidst the challenging global landscape, the Prime Minister has announced a few initiatives focusing on policy reforms.

First, the creation of a Task Force for Next-Generation Reforms aims at further simplifying regulations, lowering compliance

costs, and fostering a more enabling environment for startups, MSMEs, and entrepreneurs, it said, adding, the planned rollout of next-generation GST reforms in the coming months, with an emphasis on reducing the tax burden on essential items, is expected to provide direct relief to households and boost consumption demand.

Complementing these measures, the rating upgrade is anticipated to reduce the borrowing costs, attract greater foreign capital inflows, widen the access to global capital markets, boost disposable income, reduce inflationary pressures, cut input costs for businesses, and support growth, it said.

Amid global uncertainties, these government initiatives are charting a growth trajectory driven by long-term reforms that will boost disposable income, reduce inflationary pressures, and reduce costs for businesses, it said.

It further said that the government's focus on employment generation through schemes like the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, combined with reforms in the education sector and skill development initiatives, aims to create a workforce that is well-prepared for the demands of the changing world.

Taken together, these reform initiatives and the improved sovereign rating will underpin growth by encouraging investment, stimulating consumption, increasing employment opportunities and strengthening confidence in the economy's long-term trajectory, it added. (PTI)

NE, Maha, Goa, TN and WB emerging as cigarette smuggling hubs: DRI

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has reported a sharp surge in cigarette smuggling across India, with seizures rising by more than 107% in volume and over 110% in value between 2019-20 and 2023-24.

According to the data provided in an official statement, the North-East has emerged as the largest epicentre of smuggling, accounting for one-third of the total seizures, largely due to porous international borders. Maharashtra and Goa together made up around 20% of seizures, pointing to growing use of western coastal routes.

Tamil Nadu and West Bengal contributed over 13% and 9%, respectively, highlighting the increasing role of maritime channels.

The DRI, along with enforcement agencies including the Assam Rifles, CRPF and Customs Field Formations, seized smuggled cigarettes worth over ₹600 crore in FY'25.

However, officials noted that the actual market size is likely much higher, with FICCI CASCADE estimating that one in every four cigarettes consumed in India comes from untaxed sources.

Former CBIC Chairman and FICCI CASCADE Adviser P.C. Jha said high taxation has fuelled smuggling and placed enormous pressure on enforcement agencies.

He stressed the need to moderate taxes on high-margin products like tobacco to curb il-

licit trade.

Experts have cautioned that heavy taxation often proves counterproductive. They cited Australia's experience, where aggressive tax hikes led to a thriving black market and significant revenue losses.

In Parliament, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitendra Prasada informed that nearly 3.93 crore sticks of smuggled cigarettes worth ₹104.38 crore were seized in just the first quarter of 2025-26. He added that the government has strengthened monitoring by mandating monthly production data from manufacturers and introducing a "Track and Trace" mechanism under the CGST Act to ensure real-time supply chain oversight.

The April-September 2024 DRI Bulletin also revealed that syndicates from South East Asia and the Middle East were increasingly using sea routes, with consignments often shipped via Dubai before being re-routed to India.

A FICCI CASCADE report further underlined the scale of the problem, estimating that India's illicit tobacco market expanded by nearly 18% between 2018-19 and 2022-23, rising from ₹25,495 crore to ₹30,012 crore. Authorities warned that while tobacco taxation aims to reduce consumption, excessive rates risk fuelling smuggling networks, causing major revenue losses, and exposing consumers to substandard products.

Infinix HOT 60i 5G launched at ₹9,299 with 6000mAh battery, AI features

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: Smartphone brand Infinix has launched its latest model, the HOT 60i 5G, which is now available on Flipkart and retail outlets at a price of ₹9,299. According to an official statement, the device offers 5G connectivity across all networks, a 6000mAh battery, and advanced AI features aimed at students, professionals, and first-time 5G users.

The HOT 60i 5G comes with Ultra Link "No Network Call" technology, allowing device-to-device calls even without mobile coverage. It is powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6400 5G processor with a benchmark score of over 470,000 on AnTuTu, coupled with 8GB RAM (4GB internal + 4GB virtual) and 128GB storage, expandable up to 2TB.

Infinix said the 6000mAh battery can deliver up to 128 hours of music playback and 41 hours of calling. It supports 18W fast charging via Type-C and reverse wired charging. The company claims the battery retains durability across 1,600 charging cycles, ensuring over four years of usage. Running on XOS 15 (Android 15), the smartphone integrates AI tools including Circle to Search, AI Call Translation, AI Writing Assistant, AI Eraser, AI Wallpaper Generator, and voice assistant Folax. The device features a 6.75-inch HD+ display with a 120Hz refresh rate and 670 nits brightness. Its camera setup includes a 50MP rear sensor supported by AI modes for versatile photography.

It also carries IP64 dust and water resistance and TÜV certification for a five-year lag-free experience. The HOT 60i 5G is available in four colours — Shadow Blue, Monsoon Green, Plum Red, and Slek Black — and comes with a dual-tone matte finish.



NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Chennai-based agrochemicals company Tropical Agrosystem is targeting a 22 per cent jump in revenues to ₹2,200 crore this fiscal year, driven by a favourable monsoon and strong demand for its patented products, Chairman V K Jhaver said.

The company, which competes with MNC giants like Bayer, Syngenta and UPL, expects to turn debt-free by next fiscal and is exploring private equity funding instead of going public.

Tropical Agrosystem has launched three patented products including herbicide Tag Proxy and granular insecticide Tag Stem Lee, with three more slated for December launch. The company is confident of achieving ₹100 crore in sales from its new dual-action paddy insecticide Stem Lee alone this financial year.

"We have just introduced one patented product 'Stem Lee' for dual-action control of stem borer and leaf folder in paddy crops. I

am confident that this product will have sales of ₹100 crore this year. I don't think it should be a problem to achieve ₹2,200 crore sales this year," Jhaver told PTI in an interview.

Despite uneven monsoon patterns across India, with some regions experiencing deficits, while others facing flood-like conditions, overall demand remains strong, he added. The company's turnover stood at ₹1,800 crore during 2024-25 fiscal.

The company is expanding manufacturing capacity with new plants coming up in Kharagpur and Chennai, expected to start production next year. A third facility is planned in Gujarat where land has already been purchased, with construction to begin in 2026, he said.

The Chennai plant will manufacture the complete product range currently produced at its Secunderabad facility in Telangana, while the Kharagpur unit will focus on granular products, pesticides and weedicides.

Tropical Agrosystem will fund these expansions through internal accruals as it moves towards becoming debt-free. "I am very confident we will become debt-free because our EBITDA is getting better and better," Jhaver said.

The company is pursuing private equity investment for both Tropical Agrosystem and its subsidiary JE AgriScience rather than going public. "We are not going for an IPO. We are going for only private equity," Jhaver said, adding that discussions with potential investors have begun.

Export operations, currently in nascent stages, are expected to get a boost from next year as the company builds dedicated teams for biological and chemical products.

The company's key advantage against MNC rivals is competitive pricing, coupled with a dealer network of 22,000 partners pan-India. It also benefits from co-marketing arrangements with major players, particularly when their patents expire and generic manufacturing becomes available.

"When their products get off-patent, then everybody gets to manufacture these products. If you have the strength in the marketing team, then definitely selling will not be a problem," Jhaver noted.

On regulatory tailwinds, the chairman said the recent government ban on 30-40 year-old chemicals haven't impacted the company's operations. More importantly, regulatory approval timelines have improved dramatically -- from 5-7 years earlier, to just 1-1.5 years now. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

State Cabinet clears

with the aim of ensuring more efficient processing and expeditious disposal of such proposals, he said. 'All applications for land transfer of this nature would be submitted to the government, which would exercise scrutiny over each case,' he said.

The district commissioner concerned would forward the proposal to the Revenue Department.

The designated nodal officer within that Department would then transmit it to the Special Branch of the Assam Police, where officials would examine the proposal to identify any elements of fraud, coercion, or illegality, to verify the source of funds used for the purchase, assess potential implications for social cohesion, and safeguard national security, he said.

Thereafter, the proposal would be returned to the government, with the district commissioner taking the final decision. The Cabinet also gave its nod to projects with private investment of ₹969 crore which would likely create 2,704 employment opportunities.

The projects include Ambuja Neotia Healthcare Venture Limited's hospital project with an investment of ₹302.65 crore, in addition to Ambuja Neotia Hotel Ventures Limited's ₹360 crore hospitality project.

The others include Premier Cryogenics Limited's investment of Rs 125 crore for setting up a high-purity semiconductor-grade gas manufacturing plant at Jagir Road, which is expected to generate employment for 200 people and Jonali Construction Private Limited's investment of ₹182.17 crore in tourism and hospitality services related to the Marriott Resort and SPA project, with the potential to create 204 jobs.

The Cabinet also approved the closure of the Assam Plantation Crops Development Corporation Ltd and corresponding financial sanction towards payment of VRS/one-time settlement and closure cost amounting to ₹600 lakh. (PTI)

Communication channels open

have very good relationships at that level. And it's not just over the Russian oil," Bessent said.

His comments came hours after the additional 25 per cent penalty imposed by Trump on India for its purchases of Russian oil came into effect from August 27, bringing the total amount of levies on New Delhi to 50 per cent.

Sources added that there are positive signals coming from both sides and "we need to build upon that".

They also said the government is working on measures to insulate domestic exporters from the impact of the US tariffs. The commerce ministry is holding a series of stakeholder consultations this week from sectors such as chemicals, gems and jewellery to discuss ways to push India's exports in new markets.

Work is also progressing fast on the formulation of the Export Promotion Mission, announced in the Budget for 2025-26.

"In the next 2-3 days, the ministry will meet stakeholders on the diversification of exports," an official said. The steep 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods entering the US, which came into effect from August 27, will impact India's exports worth more than USD 48 billion to America.

The sectors, which would bear the brunt of high import duties imposed by the Trump administration include textiles/clothing, gems and jewellery, shrimp, leather and footwear, animal products, chemicals, and electrical and mechanical machinery. Sectors such as pharma, energy products and electronic goods are out of the ambit of these sweeping duties.

The US accounted for about 20 per cent of India's USD 437.42 billion worth of goods exports in 2024-25. The US has been the largest trading partner of India from 2021-22. In 2024-25, the bilateral trade in goods stood at USD 131.8 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports).

India is also planning dedicated outreach programmes in 40 countries, including the UK, Japan, and South Korea, to push textiles exports.

Together, these 40 countries represent more than USD 590 billion in textile and apparel imports, offering vast opportunities for India to enhance its market share, which stands at only 5-6 per cent, the official said.

According to exporters, these high tariffs will have impact on their cost competitiveness in the US as their competitor countries, including Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia are being subjected to lower duties by America. Exporters said the imposition of a 25 per cent penalty on India over and above the 25 per cent tariffs move will disrupt the flow of Indian goods to its largest export market.

Mithileshwar Thakur, Secretary General, AEPC (Apparel Export Promotion Council), has said the textiles sector, with exports of USD 10.3 billion to the US, is one of the worst-impacted sectors.

Similarly, a leather exporter said some of the companies have orders in hand for 2-3 months, but the US firms are demanding about a 20 per cent discount to retain the orders.

Economic think tank GTRI said the US tariffs will hit 66 per cent of India's USD 86.5 billion exports to America. "The United States' new tariff regime marks one of the most severe trade shocks India has faced in recent years. With over two-thirds of India's USD 86.5 billion exports to the US now subject to prohibitive 25-50 per cent duties, critical labour-intensive sectors face sharp declines in competitiveness and employment," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava has said.

He said India's exports to the US are set to fall steeply to about USD 49.6 billion in FY26 due to Washington's new tariff regime.

Exporters have urged the government to announce steps to deal with these high tariffs. They have urged a moratorium on payment of principal and interest for loans up to a period of one year.

Besides, expanding PLI schemes, enhancing infrastructure, and investing in cold-chain/storage assets to strengthen competitiveness and aggressive market diversification through accelerated trade agreements (FTAs) with the EU, Oman, Chile, Peru, GCC, Africa, and other Latin American countries, with a provision for early-harvest for labour-intensive sectors, should be prioritised, FIEO said.

It appeals for swift, coordinated action among exporters, industry bodies, and government agencies to protect livelihoods, reinforce global trade links, and navigate this turbulent phase. (PTI)

₹969-cr private investment

transfer of immovable property. Applications for such land transfers will be submitted to the Government, with scrutiny conducted by the Revenue Department and the Special Branch of Assam Police to check for fraud, coercion, illegal funding, or threats to social cohesion and national security.

The final decision will rest with the concerned District Commissioner.

The same procedure will apply to NGOs from outside Assam seeking to acquire land for educational or healthcare institutions, while local NGOs will be exempt. The Cabinet further decided to extend a financial grant of ₹25,000 to each participant of the Jhumoir Binandini programme scheduled for October 12 as a gesture of encouragement. Meanwhile, chief minister Sarma informed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Assam, originally linked to the year-long birth centenary celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr Bhuben Hazarika, has been rescheduled to September 13-14. While the state-level celebration will be held on September 8, the Prime Minister will commemorate the occasion on September 13.

activity, and create world-class infrastructure. Assam is proud to move towards realising this vision, which will add a new dimension to the state's development journey," the chief secretary added. (PTI)

Operations Sindoor, Mahadev

India and escape, the home minister said. The forensic lab of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has confirmed that the terrorists killed on July 28 were indeed the perpetrators of the Pahalgam massacre. Shah added that the Pahalgam attack, which occurred during the peak of the tourism season in Kashmir, was a failed attempt to "derail the 'Kashmir Mission'". The home minister also said that alongside the Army and the paramilitary forces, the Jammu and Kashmir Police now plays a leading role in the fight against terrorism. "On behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the entire nation, I congratulate the security forces for strengthening the sense of security in the hearts of Indian citizens," he added. (PTI)

Man held for being

country to fight the case. She will be only enriched," he said. If she, however, comes back to Assam, the state government will do what is required to be done according to the law, the CM said. Sarma had earlier said that it was people like her who seek to realise Muhammad Ali Jinnah's dream of making Assam a part of Pakistan by legitimising infiltrators. The chief minister said that since the Assam agitation around four decades ago, no Bangladeshi had been deported, but now "every week we are pushing back 70-100 people who are trying to enter the country".

He said that it is a fact that Assam and the North East are used as a corridor by the infiltrators.

Regarding the National Register of Citizens (NRC), Sarma alleged that the "people of Assam have been cheated as there are many anomalies in the list with many doubtful entries made".

Cases in this regard are pending in the Supreme Court, he said.

The final NRC released on August 31, 2019, excluded 19,06,657 applicants. A total of 3,11,21,004 names were included out of 3,30,27,661 applicants. It has, however, not yet been notified.

"Our final aim is to ensure that the Centre, Supreme Court or the Assam government, within its powers, examine the legal angle and find a solution as the existing NRC cannot be accepted by us," he said.

During its publication, the court had said that the list is final and so "it can be notified, following which the state government will ask for updating it," Sarma told reporters.

Regarding the reporting by a section of the foreign media on the eviction of encroachers in the state, the CM said that he has no fascination for them and "does not watch their coverage".

"In Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime, we are out of the colonial era. For us, all national or local media are equal. Besides, how much time will foreign media give us - maybe five or 10 minutes and this will not affect our voters," he added. (PTI)

PM's Assam visit

8 on Hazarika's birth centenary, and the celebration committee will meet on Thursday to discuss the event, Sarma said.

On September 14, the PM is scheduled to visit Mangaldai in Darrang district, where he will inaugurate the Guwahati Ring Road, a bridge over the Brahmaputra connecting Kuruwa and Narengi in Guwahati, and also lay the foundation stone of the Mangaldai Medical College and Hospital.

He will then leave for Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) in Golaghat district and dedicate to the nation a bio-ethanol plant, set up at a cost of Rs 4,200 crore, Sarma said. (PTI)

AMCH designated Centre of

role as a CoE, patients from across Assam as well as neighbouring states will now be able to access quality care closer to home.

The recognition marks another milestone in the long history of AMCH, which is the oldest medical institution in the state and has played a central role in healthcare delivery, education, and research in the region.

By becoming part of the limited group of Centres of Excellence for Rare Diseases in India, AMCH is poised to take on a leadership role in addressing the medical challenges posed by rare and complex conditions while contributing to the national framework laid out under NPRD, 2021.

NAME CORRECTION

Nang Benita Chowpoo (27). W/o Chow Cheyapingya Khamhoo, is the same and single person as Miss/ Smt/ Nang/ Benita/ Binita/ Chowpoo/ Khampoo. The correct name is Benita Chowpoo and this will be used for all intent and purposes.

Nang Benita Chowpoo, Vill.- Nampong, Piyong Circle, PO & PS- Namsai, Dist.- Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh

NAME CORRECTION

I, Munser Ali, SO- Lal Mamud of the below mentioned address do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that my actual and correct name is- Munser Ali. That my name appeared in that land record bearing Patta No. 274 and dag No. 493 situated at the Barghuli village, Mouza-Pub Dalgao under Darrang District as Sri Moisor Ali in place of Munser Ali. That both MunserAli and Sri Moisor Ali are the same and one person. That intend to rectify my name as Munser Ali.

Sd/- Munser Ali Vill.- Barghuli, PO- Lalpul PS- Dalgao, Dist- Darrang

AFFIDAVIT

I Mayarun Nessa D/o- Kuti Miya, House no- 138, Tengatoli, P.O.- Korioluni, PS.- Murajhar, Dist- Hojai (Assam). I have changed my name from "Mussa Kanai Bibi" to "Mayarun Nessa" before the Notary public at Hojai on 26/8/2025

Amit Shah turned Assam from unrest to peace and progress: Devajit Mahanta

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: Amit Shah slated to visit Assam on 29th August. Addressing a press conference today at the State Headquarters of Assam Pradesh BJP, Party Spokesperson Dr. Devajit Mahanta stated that, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Ji will administer the pledge Sankalp Path to all the victorious Panchayat representatives.

Dr. Mahanta highlighted that in Bodo-inhabited areas, despite multiple talks and accords signed during Congress regimes, permanent peace never arrived. The land of Bodoland remained devastated by guns, explosives, and violence. Under the farsighted leadership of Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and the stewardship of Union Home Minister Amit Shah a historic Permanent Peace Accord was signed on 27 January 2020 in New Delhi between the Government of India, Government of Assam, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, All Bodo Students' Union, and United Bodo People's Organization.

Dr. Mahanta mentioned the Karbi Peace Accord 4 September 2021, the Adivasi Peace Ac-



cord 15 September 2022, the Dimas Peace Accord 29 December 2023 and the ULFA Peace Accord (29 December 2023 were all possible

due to the initiative of Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and the leadership of Home Minister Amit Shah. To implement the promises of these accords, the Central Government recently sanctioned nearly ₹4,000 crore for Assam an unprecedented step.

Dr. Mahanta also pointed out that during Congress rule, no step was taken to withdraw AFSPA from Assam. Under Amit Shah, this course changed. On 31 March 2021, effective from 1 April 2022, AFSPA was relaxed in large parts of Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland. He thanked Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and Home Minister Amit Shah, for whom AFSPA has been withdrawn from 24 districts and one sub-division of Assam.

Congress, between 1962 and 1979, fragmented greater Assam into seven separate states but never resolved the boundary disputes. Under the leadership of Amit Shah Ji and initiative of Dr. Sarma, significant progress was made. On 29 March 2022, Assam signed a boundary agreement with Meghalaya; on 20 April 2023, with Arunachal Pradesh. These longstanding disputes are now moving towards progress.

Assam sports min reviews preparations for international cricket events in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: Assam Minister for Sports and Youth Welfare, Nandita Garlosa, has reviewed the preparations for two upcoming international cricket events scheduled to be held in Guwahati.

The ICC Women's Cricket World Cup and the second test series between India and South Africa are scheduled to be held here in October and November, respectively.

A meeting in this regard was held on Tuesday night.

The meeting, chaired by Garlosa, was attended by Chief Secretary Ravi Kota, Board of Cricket Council of India (BCCI) secretary Devajit Saikia, officials of the Assam Cricket Association (ACA) and senior officials of the state's sports department.

The 13th edition of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, will feature Guwahati as one of the key venues for the first time.

The BCCI secretary said that



four ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 matches were scheduled to be held at the ACA Barsapara Cricket Stadium on September 30, October 3, 7 and 10.

The opening ceremony of the tournament, along with the opening match between India and Sri Lanka, will be held in Guwahati under the aegis of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

All matches will be of 50 overs, scheduled from 3.30 pm to 11.30 pm, and there is also a possibility of one semifinal match being hosted either in Guwahati or Colombo on October 29, he said.

The second test series between India and South Africa will also be

played in Guwahati from November 22.

A T20 league match is scheduled for January-February next year, Saikia said.

The chief secretary said that all wings of the Public Works Department (PWD) have been directed to carry out necessary work to ensure world-class infrastructure and facilities.

Dedicated teams from the PWD and Traffic Police will be deployed to manage event-related logistics, he said.

All departments concerned have been instructed to prepare detailed plans and ensure the timely execution of their assigned responsibilities for the smooth conduct of these prestigious events.

"Assam is proud to host these landmark matches, which will firmly place Guwahati on the international cricket map and demonstrate the state's readiness to deliver world-class sporting infrastructure and experiences," Kota said. (PTI)

SOF confers three awards on Mir Mukul Ali

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 27: Mir Mukul Ali, CABE In-Charge (under AS40) and Olympiad Coordinator of Markaz Academy, Hajo, was recently conferred with three awards by the Science Olympiad Foundation (SOF), New Delhi — Best District Teacher Award 2024-25, Best Zonal Teacher Award 2024-25, and Best Overall Coordinator of North East Zone 2024-25.

The awards recognized his leadership and extraordinary efforts in improving students' thinking skills across five campuses of Ajmal Foundation, including Ajmal Modern Residential School, Hajo.

The trustees of Ajmal Foundation — Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, Sirajuddin Ajmal (MLA, Binnakandi), along with Director Dr. Khasrul Islam, General Secretary Jahidul Haque Choudhury, Project Head Abdul Kadir, and Project Director Dr. Razi Ahmed Qasmi — extended their congratulations to him.

Ganesh Chaturthi celebrated in Diphu with devotion and unity

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 27: Along with the rest of the country, Ganesh Chaturthi also known as Vinayaka Chaturthi was celebrated in Diphu town. While people from different communities participated, the festival was celebrated mainly by the Marwari community residing in Diphu.

Ganesh Chaturthi is a cherished Hindu festival that marks the birth of Lord Ganesha the remover of obstacles and the embodiment of wisdom and prosperity. Across India and in Indian communities worldwide, this ten-day festival is known for its vibrant rituals, colorful decorations, and spirit of unity. This year, Ganesh Chaturthi fell on August 27.

At Lord Ganesh Mandir, Dillaji, near the DIG Bungalow, celebrations began yesterday as the priest offered prayers. Today since morning, large numbers of devotees men, women, and children dressed in festive attire thronged the tem-



ple to seek Lord Ganesha's blessings.

Sahil Agarwal, Secretary of Marwari Samaj, Diphu, said the whole community, irrespective of caste and language, came together to celebrate the festival. More than 1,000 devotees participated in the rituals. Puja began in the morning and continued till evening.

Agarwal added that while in

Assam and other Northeastern states Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated only for a day, in states like Maharashtra, Odisha, Karnataka, and Kerala, the festivities continue for 10 days. The Dillaji temple is maintained by Marwari Samaj, Diphu, he informed.

At noon, after the completion of puja, prasad was distributed among devotees, symbolizing divine blessings.

District administration gears up for smooth conduct of BTC elections in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 27: The district administration has made all necessary preparations to conduct the upcoming Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Elections 2025 in a smooth and peaceful manner, scheduled to be held on September 2.

Addressing reporters at a press conference held at the DC office conference hall on Wednesday, District Commissioner and Returning Officer Masanda Magdalin Pertin said that the district administration is fully prepared to conduct the council elections.

According to official data, Kokrajhar district now has a total of 7,00,752 voters Male: 3,50,407; Female: 3,50,340; TG: 5, compared to 6,52,877 voters in 2020, marking a 7.33% increase. These voters will be

represented across 12 constituencies in the district.

A total of 942 polling stations, including auxiliary polling stations, will be set up across the district this year, compared to 886 in 2020 — an increase of 6.3%. Of the 12 constituencies, 9 are reserved for ST candidates, 2 for non-ST candidates, and 1 is open.

Pertin further informed that nomination papers can be filed from August 27 to September 2 between 11 AM and 3 PM. The last date for filing nominations is September 2, while scrutiny of nominations will take place on September 4, with the list of validly nominated candidates also being published on the same day. Candidates may withdraw their candidature until September 6, after which the final list of contesting candidates will be released.

Teacher arrested in Dhubri for alleged links to jihadi outfits

HT Correspondent

DHUBRI, Aug 27: In a significant development, a school teacher has been arrested in Golakganj, Assam, on suspicion of links with jihadi organizations. The accused, identified as Shah Alam Sarkar, a teacher at Lakhimari Middle School, was arrested by Dhubri police for alleged association with Jamaat-e-Islami, a political and religious group in Bangladesh.

According to police, Sarkar, a resident of Lakhimari village on the India-Bangladesh border, is currently under interrogation. Investigations are ongoing to determine the extent of his connections.

Lakhimari Middle School, where Sarkar worked, was originally established as Lakhimari Pre-ME Madrasa and later converted into a general school under SEBA by a government notification on 13th December 2023. Police are investigating whether the school's history played any role in facilitating these alleged links.

Meanwhile, another teacher from the same school, Hazrat Ali, is absconding. Authorities are actively searching for him as part of the probe.

Special mentorship session under CM's 'Aarohan' scheme inspires 115 Class IX students in Tezpur

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 27: The Sonitpur District Administration organized a special mentorship programme under the Assam Government's flagship scheme "Aarohan" for 115 meritorious Class IX students at Darrang College here on Wednesday. The scheme, launched in 2022 under the leadership of Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, aims to provide guidance, career counselling, and motivational mentorship to bright students of government schools.

The session began with a chorus presented by students of Tezpur Government Girls' HS School, followed by a welcome address delivered by Additional District Commissioner (Education) Kabita Kakati Konwar, who elaborated on the objectives of the Aarohan scheme.

District Commissioner and Chief Mentor Ananda Kumar Das, delivering the keynote address, urged students to focus on becoming good human beings before aspiring to be doctors, engineers, or administrators. Quoting philosophers, he said, "Only a person with values and social responsibility can truly take society forward. That should be your first goal."

During the programme, Assistant Commissioner Dibyangaana Mohan, herself a government school alumna, shared her inspiring journey from completing a B.Tech degree to clearing the Assam Civil Services examination. She told the students, "Perseverance and patience are the key to success," while also highlighting her achievements in swimming at national and international levels during her studies. DSP Ankita Sharma, who recently joined Sonitpur, and District Employment Officer Churnika Das also delivered motivational messages.

A special highlight of the session was a career awareness talk by Dr. Palashmoni Saikia,



Principal of Darrang College, who inspired students with examples of achievers from Tezpur and beyond. He cited the example of Bhaswati Sarma, a student of St. Joseph's Convent who represented Tezpur at the National Children's Science Congress with her project, and who is now a renowned scientist in Canada ranked among the top three scientists worldwide under 50 years of age. He also shared the story of Olympic legend Michael Phelps, who once did not know how to swim but went on to win 23 gold medals. Recalling pioneers from Assam, Dr. Saikia mentioned Hira Chaliha, the state's first woman pilot in 1961. He further spoke about Bihar's Patwatoli village, popularly known as "IIT Village," and Madhopatti village of Uttar Pradesh, famed as "UPSC Village," where nearly every household has produced successful graduates.

Teachers from Potential and Concept Educations, including Ankush Bhaduri, also served as mentors, guiding students on goal-setting and academic discipline. The session, hosted by Pankaj Baruah of the Tezpur District Secondary Teachers' and Employees' Association, featured screenings of documentaries on the Aarohan scheme and career awareness, followed by a chorus led by student mentee Ishika Guriya from Sonabil Tea Estate Adarsha School.

The event was also attended by Inspector of Schools Prabhat Das, District Mission Coordinator of Samagra Siksha Krishnakanta Deka, and several senior officials of the department. The Sonitpur District Administration, in collaboration with Samagra Siksha Sonitpur, emphasized that such initiatives will continue to nurture young talent and inspire them to achieve greater heights in life.

Assam LoP writes to human rights commission over infant's death in govt hospital

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: Leader of the Opposition in Assam Assembly, Debabrata Saikia, on Wednesday urged the state human rights commission to lodge a suo motu case and inquire into the death of a newborn in Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH).

In a letter written to the chairperson of Assam Human Rights Commission (AHRC), Saikia sought to fix accountability in the death of the newborn at GMCH neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) on August 18, allegedly due to negligence.

"This incident, prima facie attributable to overcrowding, staff shortages, and abject failure in duty of care in the NICU, constitutes a blatant violation of fundamental human rights enshrined in the Constitution."

"I urge the commission to take suo motu cognisance under Section 21(5) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHRA)," he said.

A four-day-old infant died after she was found hanging from the wires of a medical equipment in the NICU of GMCH on August 18. The infant, born in the same hospital on August 15, was admitted to the NICU for infection and jaundice.

Saikia demanded that a committee of independent experts be constituted to investigate the incident and submit a time-bound report on systemic failures in Assam's hospitals, including staffing and infrastructure deficiencies. "That liability be fixed on the chief minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, and the Department of Health for irresponsible statements causing emotional distress, and for systemic lapses, recommending disciplinary action," he added.

Further, Saikia demanded that immediate interim compensation of Rs 10 lakh be paid to the parents under the Assam Victim Compensation Scheme, 2012, with final relief based on inquiry findings.

He said that state protection, including security and legal aid, should be provided to parents of the deceased infant under whistleblower laws for facing threats.

"The persistent recurrence of medical negligence in Assam's public healthcare facilities, coupled with the state's failure to effect meaningful reforms, necessitates immediate and robust intervention by the AHRC pursuant to the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993," Saikia said in the letter. The commission's statutory authority to initiate suo motu inquiries, recommend prosecutions, and direct compensatory relief must be invoked to curb impunity and uphold fundamental rights, he said.

"The egregious circumstances surrounding the death of a newborn at GMCH on August 18, attributable to systemic lapses such as overcrowding and inadequate supervision, underscore the urgency of such action," the senior Congress leader added. (PTI)

Union Cabinet approves doubling of Railway Line between Furkating and New Tinsukia Section

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 27: The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a major infrastructure project for doubling the railway line between Furkating and New Tinsukia, spanning a total length of 194 kilometres, under the jurisdiction of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), at an estimated cost of approximately ₹ 3,634 crore. This doubling



project is a strategic move aimed at enhancing the capacity, speed, and reliability of both passenger and freight transportation.

The Furkating-New Tinsukia section serves as a crucial rail link between Upper Assam and the rest of the country. This route currently handles important long-distance services such as the Rajdhani Express, along with numerous express and intercity trains, in addition to substantial freight traffic.

The doubling of this section is expected to significantly improve operational efficiency and ensure more reliable services. The project will provide a major boost to connectivity and economic development in the North-eastern region.

Assam to Observe Birth Centenary of Former Chief Minister Golap Borbora tomorrow

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 27: The Government of Assam will observe the birth centenary of late Golap Borbora, former Chief Minister of Assam, on August 29 with statewide participation. To mark the occasion, the speeches of Hon'ble Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah and Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma will be live-cast across all districts and sub-divisions.

In Karbi Anglong, the District Commissioner has instructed the concerned departments to make necessary arrangements for the smooth telecast of the event. Suitable venues, such as auditoriums and halls in educational institutions, will be identified to facilitate public viewing. The Directorate of In-

formation and Public Relations, Assam, will provide the live feed of the programme.

As part of the centenary observance, a souvenir, a documentary on the life and contributions of Golap Borbora, and extensive publicity activities have been planned. Invitations will also be extended to students, social workers, family members, and other distinguished guests to ensure meaningful participation.

This celebration stands as a tribute to the enduring legacy of Golap Borbora, whose leadership was marked by dedication and vision. District administrations have been directed to ensure wide public engagement and the smooth conduct of the programme.



Factory sealed for fake and substandard products in Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 27: As part of an inspection program by the Legal Metrology Department under the Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs Department, a surprise inspection was conducted today at a factory in Uppar Dimaruguri, on the outskirts of Nagaon town.

The inspection team, led by District Additional Commissioner Sudip Nath, Assistant Commissioner Tejas Agnihotri, District Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Officer, District Drug Inspector, and officials from the Legal Metrology Department, found a large quantity of substandard and misbranded goods stored for sale.

The factory, which manufactures puja and food items, was producing and storing adulterated and hazardous products, including fake honey and ghee. To safeguard consumer health and facilitate further investigation, the factory was sealed.

A complicated situation

Clarification offered on August 21 by director general of Assam Rifles Lt-Gen Vikas Lakhera about Myanmar nationals entering India under the Free Movement Regime (FMR) effective from last week of December 2024 has given an opportunity to the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), a representative civil society organization in Manipur, to reiterate that their community people are not illegal immigrants nor have they entered India in recent times. Lt-Gen Lakhera's clarification followed a seminar Assam Rifles organized the previous day, that is, Wednesday, August 20 at the Manipur University premises as part of an academic collaboration between Assam Rifles and the university. FMR was the theme. The importance of the Assam Rifles initiative has to be gauged from the fact that this old, prominent security establishment is practically in charge of administering FMR along the 398 km Manipur-Myanmar border, which has been at the centre of controversy since February 2021 when a junta assumed control of Myanmar and the country witnessed the emergence of resistance forces opposed to the junta. Myanmar people crossing over to the Indian side has been an issue since then and former chief minister's regular refrain has been that a large number of illegal immigrants in Manipur are Kuki-Zos who have been engaging themselves in illegal activity, such as, smuggling and poppy cultivation.

What did Lt-Gen Lakhera say on August 21 in clarification? After the new FMR policy came into effect, the Myanmar nationals entering India through crossing points are now being mapped. Since December [2024] 42,000 individuals have been mapped with the help of biometrics and various measures put in place by all involved government agencies, whom the data is being shared. These Myanmar citizens stay temporarily in India's north-eastern states of Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh and "eventually revert to their country as per the provisions of the new FMR policy". Thus, the situation that has evolved after the Assam Rifles DG's clarification lends itself to two interpretations: first, Lt-Gen Lakhera's observation has been found comforting by KZC and secondly, KZC has utilized the occasion to target the immediate past Manipur chief minister, who is one of the tall Meitei leaders known for strong anti-Kuki-Zo bias.

It appears there is no formal order on scrapping FMR. As it is an international matter, India's external affairs ministry naturally should be in the picture. It looks like it is an in-principle decision, based on which directives on what has to be done have been given to officials. From published reports it is seen that an intention to scrap FMR was first announced by Union home minister Amit Shah in February 2024 taking into account the then raging ethnic conflict in Manipur and the complicated situation on the Manipur stretch of India-Myanmar border.

Assam's Aadhaar Dilemma: Identity, Migration, and the politics of citizenship

By: Dipak Kurmi

Economy and identity are often seen as the twin foundations upon which the destiny of nations rests. While the former dictates material survival, the latter defines belonging. Nowhere in India does this tension appear more visibly than in Assam, a land of immense natural beauty, abundant resources, and yet, an unending struggle with questions of citizenship, migration, and cultural preservation. At the heart of this struggle lies a paradoxical situation surrounding Aadhaar—the twelve-digit biometric identity number meant to be a universal marker of citizenship-like recognition in India. For most Indians, Aadhaar is an enabler, a facilitator of access to welfare, banking, mobile connectivity, and countless everyday functions. But in Assam, it has become the site of contradiction, exclusion, and contested legitimacy.

The debate over Aadhaar in Assam cannot be understood in isolation; it is inseparably linked to the history of migration, the Assam Accord of 1985, the prolonged exercise of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and the fraught politics of identity. While the Union government has projected Aadhaar as a universal identity project, in Assam, Aadhaar's legitimacy has been undercut by the state's exceptional position within India's citizenship regime. As the state still grapples with the aftermaths of the NRC exercise that excluded nearly two million people, Aadhaar assumes an uncertain place—functional in parts, yet legally tenuous, accessible to many yet denied to others.

The crux of the Aadhaar dilemma lies in its uneasy coexistence with the NRC. The NRC, updated under the monitoring of the Supreme Court, was meant to be the definitive list of Indian citizens in Assam. Its publication in 2019 excluded 19,06,657 names, plunging these individuals into uncertainty about their legal status. Yet, many among these excluded have Aadhaar cards, which, by design, were never meant to confer citizenship but have nonetheless become a quasi-proof of legitimacy in practice. This disjuncture has created a peculiar situation where individuals can hold Aadhaar and enjoy its functional benefits—such as rations under the Public Distribution System (PDS) or banking services—while simultaneously being excluded from the NRC, thereby facing the threat of statelessness.

The contradictions multiply when one examines how Aadhaar enrolment has played out in Assam. Unlike other states, Aadhaar penetration here was deliberately delayed due to concerns over illegal migration from Bangladesh. While in Kerala or Maharashtra Aadhaar enrolment surpassed 95 percent early on, Assam's coverage lagged behind, creating a vacuum in welfare distribution and leaving millions in limbo. It was only after the Supreme Court's interventions and persistent central push that Aadhaar enrolment picked up. Yet, the spectre of migration politics continued to haunt the process, with allegations that Aadhaar could be misused by "illegal immigrants" to claim entitlements, further unsettling the indigenous Assamese psyche.

The lived consequences of this exceptionalism are stark. Farmers denied crop subsidies because they lack Aadhaar linkage, daily wage workers unable to receive government transfers, students barred from scholarships, pensioners cut off from benefits—all bear testimony to the precarious in-

tersection of welfare and identity. What was envisioned as a neutral, technocratic tool of inclusion has in Assam become a weapon of exclusion. Stories abound of families where the father has Aadhaar and is included in the NRC, the mother has Aadhaar but is excluded, and children are caught in bureaucratic uncertainty, deprived of state benefits despite being born in India. These human tragedies underscore the limitations of a purely technocratic approach to a deeply political issue.

At the heart of this debate lies the uneasy Assamese relationship with migration. The Assam Accord of 1985, signed after a six-year-long agitation, recognized March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date for identifying illegal immigrants. Anyone entering Assam after this date, regardless of origin, was to be declared a foreigner. This unique provision set Assam apart from the rest of India, embedding within its political consciousness a heightened sensitivity to migration. Aadhaar, with its universalist claims, seems to undercut this exceptionalism, raising fears that it dilutes the hard-won safeguards of the Accord. For Assamese nationalists, Aadhaar becomes more than a number—it is a perceived threat to identity, culture, and demography.

Yet, the Aadhaar-NRC conundrum is not merely a local story; it is emblematic of India's larger struggle to balance inclusion with exclusion, welfare with surveillance, and identity with citizenship. For the Union government, Aadhaar is indispensable in building a digital welfare state, plugging leakages, and accelerating direct benefit transfers. But in Assam, this logic collides with a state-specific history where identity politics precedes welfare priorities. This tension is further aggravated by the political economy of the region, where livelihoods are fragile and heavily dependent on state support. In such a context, denial of Aadhaar-linked benefits can quickly escalate into humanitarian crises.

The judiciary too has been drawn into this labyrinth. On one hand, the Supreme Court has ruled that Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship but merely of residence. On the other, the very act of excluding Aadhaar in Assam due to migration concerns implicitly treats it as a marker of citizenship. This contradiction not only confuses citizens but also paralyzes administrators, forcing them into impossible choices between legality and compassion. The Foreigners' Tribunals, burdened with adjudicating claims of citizenship, often confront cases where Aadhaar exists but is deemed irrelevant. Meanwhile, those excluded from NRC but holding Aadhaar live in perpetual uncertainty—legally suspect but practically dependent on the system.

Politics in Assam has weaponized this dilemma further. For the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the NRC and Aadhaar debates have provided fertile ground for electoral mobilization. By projecting itself as the guardian of Assamese identity while simultaneously championing welfare schemes tied to Aadhaar, the party has sought to straddle the contradictions. Opposition parties, meanwhile, accuse the government of doublespeak, arguing that the combination of NRC exclusion and Aadhaar-linked welfare reflects an incoherent policy that punishes the poor. Civil society, too, is divided—some groups see Aadhaar as an insidious attempt to erase Assamese exceptionalism, while others demand its universalization to ensure that no child goes hungry due to

bureaucratic denial.

The consequences of this stalemate extend beyond Assam, raising questions about India's larger democratic trajectory. At one level, Aadhaar symbolizes the promise of a modern digital state—efficient, transparent, and inclusive. At another, it exposes the fragility of citizenship in a democracy still wrestling with post-colonial anxieties of identity. Assam, with its fraught borders, history of migration, and contested nationalism, has become the testing ground for how India negotiates this tension. The world is watching, for the questions Assam confronts are not unique—many nations today face similar dilemmas of how to integrate migrants, secure borders, and yet remain inclusive. In this sense, Assam's Aadhaar dilemma is both a local tragedy and a global parable.

It is worth remembering that identity systems have historically been double-edged. From South Africa's pass laws under apartheid to America's Social Security number, state-issued identities have often oscillated between inclusion and exclusion, empowerment and surveillance. Aadhaar, though far removed from such histories, carries similar risks, especially in contexts like Assam where citizenship itself is contested. The challenge, therefore, is not to reject Aadhaar but to reconcile it with the state's unique history, ensuring that technology does not trample upon rights, and that the promise of inclusion does not degenerate into a new form of exclusion.

The way forward demands honesty and imagination. Legally, there must be clarity on the relationship between Aadhaar and citizenship—are they complementary, supplementary, or independent? Administratively, safeguards are needed to ensure that denial of Aadhaar does not mean denial of welfare.

Politically, leaders must resist the temptation to exploit identity for electoral gain and instead focus on building consensus around inclusive growth. Socially, there is a need to recognize that Assamese fears of cultural erosion are real, but they cannot be addressed through bureaucratic exclusion alone. Only a combination of legal safeguards, economic empowerment, and cultural recognition can ease these anxieties.

The broader Indian story too is instructive. As the world's largest democracy, India's ability to harmonize diversity with unity, citizenship with rights, and welfare with identity will shape its global image. Assam, though a small state geographically, thus holds disproportionate importance in this national narrative. Its Aadhaar dilemma is not a marginal problem but a mirror reflecting the tensions of Indian democracy itself.

Assam today stands at a crossroads where technology, politics, and identity intersect in unsettling ways. Aadhaar, hailed as a universal enabler, has become in Assam a contested marker of belonging. The NRC, intended to provide clarity, has deepened uncertainty. Between them lies a humanitarian crisis where millions hover between recognition and exclusion, between security and statelessness. The challenge before India is not simply to resolve a technical glitch or a legal anomaly but to reaffirm the very principles of justice, equality, and inclusion upon which its democracy rests. For in the final analysis, identity is not just about numbers or documents—it is about dignity, belonging, and the promise of a future where no citizen feels alien in their own land. (the writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

The education system in Assam has been progressing with time, yet it remains burdened with numerous challenges. The government has introduced several new policies and initiatives to enhance the quality of education, but issues such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access in rural areas, and socio-economic problems continue to hinder its effectiveness. Despite these challenges, Assam's education system holds immense potential to play a pivotal role in empowering the youth. Beyond merely providing basic education, its primary objective is to prepare young individuals to lead society, actively participate in economic development, and make meaningful contributions to civic life.

In Assam, the youth represent a significant and vital force for the state. Therefore, establishing an accessible, equitable, and relevant education system for them is a pressing necessity. Empowering the youth through education entails equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed for decision-making, problem-solving, and active participation in society. Herein lies the crucial role of the education system. However, despite its potential, certain critical issues within the system prevent the full realization of youth empowerment.

A major challenge across most regions of the state is the lack of educational resources. While urban areas benefit from readily available institutions, resources, and facilities, rural areas continue to face a shortage of essential educational infrastructure. In regions such as Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, and parts of the Barak Valley, schools often suffer from insufficient funding, a lack of teachers, and limited access to modern technology. This disparity between urban and rural education exacerbates inequality. Rural youth are deprived of quality education, and the gap in educational achievement between urban and rural students poses a significant threat to the po-

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

lack of a robust framework for fostering critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills, and vocational training leaves young people unprepared for the dynamic job market. While the education provided in Assam's schools equips students with basic knowledge in science, mathematics, and humanities, it often fails to impart the skills required to thrive in today's fast-changing economy. The absence of vocational training and skill development in the curriculum means many youths are not adequately pre-



pared to succeed in the workforce.

Youth empowerment involves fostering emotional intelligence, leadership, and a sense of social responsibility. In Assam, the education system continues to prioritize academic achievement over holistic development. This exam-centric, narrow approach overlooks essential life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and resilience, which are indispensable in modern society for success in personal, academic, and professional spheres. Education should prepare children not only for work but also for life. However, the lack of a comprehensive approach to student development has hindered the growth of Assam's youth.

Despite these challenges, in recent years, Assam's education system has made strides toward reform and preparing young people for the future. One notable initiative is the integration of skill-based training and vocational courses in various colleges and universities across the state. These programs aim to equip students with practical skills necessary for employment or entrepreneurial ventures. For instance, the Assam Skill Development Mission, launched by the state government, has trained thousands of youths in fields such as information technology and healthcare. By

emphasizing skill development alongside traditional education, these programs are gradually bridging the gap between education and employment.

Another critical step toward youth empowerment is the integration of technology into education. The advent of digital learning tools offers the potential to create a more inclusive and accessible education system. The Assam government has taken steps to provide digital infrastructure, e-learning platforms, and web-based resources in schools and colleges. These digital tools play a vital role in democratizing education, particularly in remote rural areas where teachers and learning materials are scarce. Moreover, they enable students to transcend the traditional boundaries of the classroom, allowing them to explore their areas of interest and acquire additional skills at their own pace.

It is encouraging to note that, at the governmental level, the importance of student involvement in social and community development is being recognized. Various educational institutions and students in Assam are engaging in initiatives related to social justice, environmental conservation, and public health campaigns. These activities prepare students to become leaders and agents of change in their com-

munities. Whether it is raising awareness about climate change or preserving Assam's cultural heritage, young people are stepping forward to shape the future of both themselves and their communities.

To achieve the goal of youth empowerment, several critical steps must be taken. Increased investment is needed to improve educational infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to ensure that students from all socio-economic backgrounds have access to high-quality education. This includes enhancing teacher quality, upgrading school facilities, and integrating modern technology into the curriculum. Additionally, greater emphasis must be placed on vocational skills, critical thinking, and leadership development. Moving away from rote learning, the focus should shift toward the holistic development of students.

Furthermore, a robust support system must be established to assist students from economically disadvantaged families. Scholarships, grants, and other forms of assistance should be provided to enable these students to access higher education and vocational training. Such measures will help break the cycle of poverty and empower young people to contribute meaningfully to the state's development.

In conclusion, Assam's education system has the potential to play a pivotal role in shaping the state's future and economic development. Despite its numerous challenges, there are ample opportunities to reform the system to meet the needs of the youth. By ensuring equitable access to education, providing practical experiences, and fostering leadership and civic responsibility, Assam can harness the potential of its youth for social and economic progress, cultural preservation, and global development. While the path to empowering the youth is not without obstacles, with the right guidance and efforts, it can pave the way for a brighter future for both Assam's youth and the state as a whole.

An appraisal of the Indian ports bill 2025

By: Diganta Barooah

In a historic moment, the Lok Sabha passed the Indian Ports Bill, 2025 on 12th August, 2025 ushering in a new era of India's maritime future. The act will modernise India's port governance, enhance trade efficiency, and solidify India's position as a global maritime leader. The Rajya Sabha too on Monday the 18th August, 2025 passed The Indian Ports Bill, 2025, which seeks to consolidate the law relating to ports, promote integrated port development, facilitate ease of doing business, and ensure optimum utilisation of India's coastline.

Objectives of the Bill :
✓ Replace archaic colonial laws with a contemporary governance structure. ✓ Strengthen cooperative federalism through Centre-State partnership. ✓ Ensure environmental compliance and green port development. ✓ Encourage investment, PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships), and FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in port infrastructure.

"Replacing colonial-era regulations, the bill reflects Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of a self-reliant, world-class maritime sector", said the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal. The bill replaces outdated provisions of the Indian Ports Act, 1908, with modern & contemporary regulations. It aims to simplify port procedures & digitalise operations to enhance ease of doing business (EODB). The legislation also emphasises sustainability, incorporating green initiatives, pollution control, and disaster management protocols for sustainable port development. Furthermore, it seeks to improve port competitiveness through transparent tariff policies and better investment frameworks, while ensuring uniform safety standards and planning across all Indian ports. The Indian Ports Bill, 2025 will reduce logistics costs by speeding up cargo movement and enhancing connectivity. The bill is also expected to generate significant employment opportunities in port operations, logistics, warehousing, and allied industries. Additionally, the bill outlines strict anti-pollution measures and eco-friendly port practices, contributing to a cleaner environment. Exporters & MSMEs will benefit from streamlined procedures and improved infrastructure, reducing bottlenecks & facilitating smoother operations.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Indian maritime sector has been a key driver of India's economic transformation. The government's initiatives, such as the Sagarmala Programme and Maritime India Vision 2030, have focused on port-led development, global competitive-

ness, and environmental stewardship. The Indian Ports Bill, 2025 builds on these efforts, ensuring that India's ports evolve into engines of sustainable economic growth and global trade," added Sarbananda Sonowal.

For ports themselves, the bill provides greater autonomy with accountability, allowing ports to set competitive tariffs within a transparent framework. It introduces integrated planning for long-term port development, ensuring cargo growth and improved hinterland connectivity. A boost to coastal shipping is also envisioned, with seamless integration with inland waterways and multimodal transport systems. The bill provides flexibility in funding, making clear provisions for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and foreign investment in port projects. The bill establishes a strong institutional framework to support its objectives. The Maritime State Development Council (MSDC), comprising representatives from both Central and State governments, will coordinate national port development strategies. State Maritime Boards will have strengthened authority to effectively manage non-major ports, while Dispute Resolution Committees will expedite the settlement of conflicts between ports, users, and service providers. Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal said, "The bill also aims to boost cooperative federalism as the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) is aimed at ironing out differences and laying down a smooth way forward for the holistic development of our ports. The bill also provides for the State Maritime Board which helps to effectively manage non major ports, allowing a comprehensive framework for ports development. Under the dynamic leadership of PM Modi ji, we are creating an ecosystem that will empower our ecosystem to spruce up the maritime prowess of Viksit Bharat, propelling India to become one of the top global maritime nations by 2047."

In terms of sustainability and safety, the bill mandates waste reception and handling facilities at all ports. It also enforces stringent pollution prevention measures in line with international conventions like MARPOL and Ballast Water Management. Emergency preparedness plans for disasters and security threats will be required at every port, while the promotion of renewable energy and shore power systems will help reduce emissions and foster environmental sustainability.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Indian maritime sector has been a key driver of India's economic transformation. The government's initiatives, such as the Sagarmala Programme and Maritime India Vision 2030, have focused on port-led development, global competitive-

ness, and environmental stewardship. The Indian Ports Bill, 2025 builds on these efforts, ensuring that India's ports evolve into engines of sustainable economic growth and global trade," added Sarbananda Sonowal. The Indian Ports Bill, 2025 is a transformative piece of legislation that aligns India's legal framework with global trade practices, best practices, and national priorities. With a focus on efficiency, sustainability, and inclusivity, the bill will position India's maritime sector for continued success and growth in the global economy for decades to come.

Key Highlights of the Bill

- ✓ Establishment of State Maritime Boards :
Statutory recognition for administration and regulation of non-major ports.
- ✓ Functions:
 - ✓ Plan and develop port infrastructure. Grant licenses. ✓ Fix tariffs within a transparent framework.
 - ✓ Ensure compliance with safety, security, and environmental norms.
 - ✓ Strengthened authority to manage non-major ports effectively.
- ✓ Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) :
 - Provides statutory recognition to MSDC • Chairperson: Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways. • Members : State Ministers, Indian Navy/Coast Guard secretaries, Union Ministry Secretary.

- ✓ Functions:
 - ✓ Coordinate national port development strategies. ✓ Issue guidelines on tariff transparency, data collection, storage, and dissemination.
 - ✓ Advise on national perspective plan, legislative adequacy, port efficiency, and connectivity. ✓ Promotes cooperative federalism for holistic port development.

- ✓ Dispute Resolution:
Mandates state governments to establish Dispute Resolution Committees (DRCs) to adjudicate disputes involving non-major ports with appeals to the High Court. No civil court shall have jurisdiction in matters under DRC.

- ✓ Port Tariff:
Fixed by the Board of Major Port Authority or Board of directors (for ports under Companies Act, 2013) in case of major ports. In case of non-major ports, the same is done by State Maritime Boards.

- ✓ Notification of New Ports and Altering of Port Limits :
By the Central Government in consultation with State Government.

- ✓ Mega Ports :
Empowers Central Government, in consultation with the State Government, to specify the criteria for classification of one or more port as a mega port.

(CONTD TO NEXT ISSUE)

100 years of RSS: A Saga of service

By: Satyabrata Borah

On September 27, 1925, a small gathering of young men in Nagpur, India, marked the birth of an organization that would grow into one of the world's largest voluntary networks, profoundly shaping the nation's socio-political landscape. Founded by Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a physician and freedom fighter disillusioned with the prevailing independence movement, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or RSS, emerged as a response to the perceived disunity among Hindus amid British colonial rule and communal tensions. Hedgewar, inspired by the writings of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the architect of Hindutva ideology, envisioned the RSS as a non-political body dedicated to character building, physical discipline, and fostering a sense of Hindu unity. That Vijaydashami day, with just 15 to 20 participants including early stalwarts like Bhauji Kawre, Anna Sohni, and Vishwanathrao Kelkar, the group hoisted the saffron flag, known as the Bhagwa Dhwaj, which would become the symbolic guru of the organization. This modest beginning laid the foundation for what would evolve into a vast ecosystem promoting Hindu cultural revival and national strength.

The early years of the RSS were marked by a deliberate focus on grassroots organization rather than overt political engagement. By May 28, 1926, the first daily shakha, or branch meeting, commenced at Mohitewada Ground in Nagpur, introducing routines of physical exercises, lathi training, and intellectual discussions. Commands like "Dakhsa" for attention and "Aaram" for rest echoed in Sanskrit, emphasizing discipline and cultural rootedness. Hedgewar insisted on starting and ending sessions with salutations to the Bhagwa Dhwaj and prayers in Hindi and Marathi, instilling a sense of devotion to the motherland. The inaugural route march, with 30 participants, symbolized the paramilitary-style drills that would characterize RSS activities, aimed at building valor and courage among Hindu youth. Hedgewar's philosophy was clear: train individuals physically, mentally, and intellectually to serve the nation selflessly, without formal membership or fees, making it accessible to all.

On April 17, 1926, a pivotal meeting at Hedgewar's residence finalized the organization's name from options like Jaripatka Mandal and Bharat Uddharak Mandal. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was chosen for its emphasis on national volunteers united in service. This naming reflected Hedgewar's rejection of his own deification; despite swayamsevaks' wishes to honor him as guru, he elevated the saffron flag to that status,

a tradition upheld annually on Vyas Purnima. Under Hedgewar's leadership until his death in 1940, the RSS expanded cautiously, establishing shakhas across Maharashtra and beyond. It maintained neutrality toward the Indian National Congress's non-cooperation movement, prioritizing long-term Hindu consolidation over immediate anti-colonial agitation. Many early members, including Hedgewar himself, had Congress ties, but the RSS critiqued Gandhi's emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity, viewing it as weakening Hindu resolve. By the late 1930s, the organization had grown to thousands of members, with Hedgewar organizing the first training camps to instill ideological depth.

Hedgewar's passing on June 21, 1940, was a turning point, as leadership passed to Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, known as Gurujii, a bachelor ideologue who would steer the RSS for three decades. Golwalkar, influenced by Savarkar's Hindutva, articulated the vision of a Hindu Rashtra in his seminal 1939 book "We or Our Nationhood Defined," arguing that India's identity was inherently Hindu and that minorities must assimilate into this cultural framework. Under Golwalkar, the RSS formalized its hierarchical structure, with regional parents and full-time pracharakas dedicated to propagation. The organization distanced itself from direct politics, advising members to engage individually but not as RSS representatives. This period saw rapid expansion, with shakhas multiplying amid World War II and the Quit India Movement of 1942, where RSS swayamsevaks provided underground support without official involvement.

The partition of India in 1947 brought communal violence on an unprecedented scale, and RSS volunteers played a significant role in protecting Hindu refugees and organizing relief efforts. However, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948, by Nathuram Godse, a former RSS member who had left the organization, cast a dark shadow. The government, led by Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, imposed a nationwide ban on the RSS on February 4, 1948, accusing it of fostering hatred. Golwalkar and thousands of swayamsevaks were arrested, and the organization went underground. The ban highlighted early criticisms: the RSS's initial reluctance to adopt the tricolor flag, preferring the Bhagwa Dhwaj, and its critique of the Indian Constitution for not referencing Manusmriti laws. Publications like the RSS-inspired Organizer newspaper had editorialized against the tricolor, calling it unfit for Hindus. After 18 months of negotiations and assurances of non-violence, the ban was lifted on July 11, 1949, but with con-

ditions like maintaining membership records and avoiding communal activities. This episode forced introspection, leading Golwalkar to emphasize the RSS's cultural rather than militant role.

The 1950s and 1960s under Golwalkar saw the RSS's ideological consolidation and expansion into the Sangh Parivar family of organizations. In 1951, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh was founded as its political arm, with RSS pracharakas like Deendayal Upadhyaya playing key roles. The Jana Sangh advocated for a Hindu-centric polity, contesting elections and winning seats, though it remained marginal. Golwalkar's tenure emphasized anti-communism and social reform, with swayamsevaks involved in cow protection movements and opposing linguistic divisions post-independence. The 1962 Sino-Indian War was another defining moment; RSS volunteers offered relief and even joined the army, earning praise from Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who lifted lingering restrictions. This bolstered the organization's image as patriotic, despite ongoing Congress suspicions.

Golwalkar's death on June 5, 1973, led to the appointment of Madhukar Dattatray Deoras, or Balasaheb, as the third Sarsanghchalak. Deoras shifted focus toward social engagement, declaring in 1974 that "if untouchability is not wrong, nothing in the world is wrong," galvanizing anti-caste efforts. This era saw the RSS penetrate diverse sectors, from education via Vidya Bharati schools to labor through Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh. The Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi on June 25, 1975, tested the RSS's resilience. Banned again on July 4, 1975, for alleged anti-government activities, Golwalkar had already prepared swayamsevaks for underground operations. Over 100,000 members were imprisoned, yet the RSS coordinated with Jayaprakash Narayan's opposition, mobilizing protests that contributed to the Emergency's end in 1977. The ban's lifting of post-elections marked a turning point, mainstreaming the RSS and leading to the Jana Sangh's merger into the Janata Party, which formed the first non-Congress government.

The late 1970s and 1980s witnessed the RSS's deepening influence on politics. The Janata Party's internal conflicts led to the BJP's formation on April 6, 1980, under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, with RSS backing. Leaders like L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, former swayamsevaks, steered it toward Hindutva. The Ram Janmabhoomi movement, launched in 1984 by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), an RSS affiliate, became a mass mobilization effort. The 1989 palanquin procession of Ram's idols from Sita-



marhi to Ayodhya galvanized millions, culminating in the Babri Masjid's demolition on December 6, 1992, triggering nationwide riots and a third RSS ban until June 1993. Despite the controversy, the movement propelled the BJP to power in 1998, with Vajpayee as Prime Minister. The RSS's role in relief during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and natural disasters like the 1979 Morbi dam failure underscored its service ethos.

The 1990s and 2000s under fourth Sarsanghchalak Rajendra Singh (K.S. Sudarshan, 2000-2009) saw the Sangh Parivar's diversification. Organizations like Seva Bharati focused on welfare, running schools for tribals and disaster relief. The 2001 Gujarat earthquake saw RSS volunteers providing aid to over 100,000 people. Controversies persisted, including the 2002 Gujarat riots, where RSS was accused of inciting violence, though it denied involvement and aided rehabilitation. In 2002, after activists forcibly hoisted the tricolor at RSS headquarters on Republic Day, protesting its absence, the organization finally adopted the national flag officially, marking symbolic integration. Sudarshan's tenure emphasized outreach, with initiatives like the Vishwa Mangal Gau Grama Yatra in 2009 collecting millions of signatures for cow protection.

The fifth Sarsanghchalak, Mohan Bhagwat, assumed leadership in 2009, ushering in a phase of strategic moderation and expansion. Under Bhagwat, the RSS grew to over 58,000 shakhas and 44,000 bastis by 2025, with swayamsevaks numbering in the millions. The organization supported the BJP's 2014 victory under Narendra Modi, a

lifelong RSS pracharak, influencing policies like the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and the Ram Temple foundation in 2020. Bhagwat's 2018 three-day conclave in Delhi outlined a 21st-century roadmap, emphasizing social harmony, environmentalism, and inclusive Hindutva, attracting diverse audiences through Q&A sessions. Service activities surged: during the 2013 Uttarakhand floods, RSS volunteers rescued thousands alongside the army; in 2006 Surat floods, they distributed essentials to affected families. The 2020 COVID-19 lockdown saw swayamsevaks deliver food, masks, and aid to millions, earning praise even from a Muslim woman in Kashmir who donated her Hajj savings to Seva Bharati.

The RSS's centenary in 2025 reflects a century of evolution from a small cadre to a global force with affiliates in over 100 countries via Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh. Key moments like the bans forged resilience, while movements like Ram Janmabhoomi unified Hindus across castes. Critiques of communalism persist, but the RSS maintains its cultural focus, with women's wings like Rashtra Sevika Samiti boasting 1.8 million members. Bhagwat's leadership has promoted interfaith dialogues and anti-conversion law support, balancing ideology with pragmatism. As India navigates global challenges, the RSS's emphasis on self-reliant Bharat, drawing from ancient values, positions it as an enduring pillar. From Hedgewar's vision to Bhagwat's roadmap, the journey underscores a commitment to national rejuvenation, proving that disciplined service can transform societies.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: Centenary year journey and meaningful contribution to the society

The objective of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is not limited to the organization only. It works to strengthen moral, cultural and social values in the society, develop discipline and dedication in each individual and contribute to nation building. The approach of the Sangh is inclusive; it is not against any religion, caste or group. The word Hindu does not mean only religion, but responsibility, devotion and commitment to society. The Sangh works to free the society from factionalism and establish unity in diversity. Shatabdi Yatra is a confirmation of this dedication and organization.

By: Dr Satyawan Saurabh

Under the guidance of organisation chief Dr Mohan Bhagwat, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh organised a three-day lecture series at Vigyan Bhavan in Delhi on the occasion of its centenary year. This event was not just a programme but a live demonstration of the ideology, working methods and the journey of social construction of the Sangh. The Sangh was formed keeping India at the centre and its aim is to contribute in making the country a world leader. The prayer of the Sangh "Bharat Mata ki Jai" is not just words but an inspiration of action and dedication. The formation of the Sangh is the result of a slow and continuous process, which has stood the test of time.

Although the Sangh uses the word 'Hindu', its essence is not limited to religion alone. It contains a sense of inclusion, humanity and responsibility towards the nation. The aim of the Sangh is not to stand for any opposition or competition, but to maintain the unity of the country by organizing every section of the society. The work of the Sangh is carried out through volunteers, and this work provides an opportunity to train new volunteers and develop leadership and responsibility in them.

The concept of nation is not defined by power or government. In Indian tradition, the meaning of nation is associated with culture, self-reflection and social consciousness. Looking at history, it is clear that the freedom struggle of 1857 was unsuccessful, but it gave rise to new consciousness and self-awareness

in Indian society. After this, Congress emerged, which paved the way for political understanding and social reform. After independence, the challenge of removing the inequalities and evils arising in the society remained. This need gave birth to the establishment of the Sangh and its role.

Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar and other great men recognized the need to remove the vices of society and to organize the entire society. The Sangh was established in 1925 with the vision to strengthen the moral and cultural values of the society and ensure contribution to nation building. The word 'Hindu' is not just a religion, but a symbol of responsibility, dedication and inclusion. It does not have the feeling of separating or opposing anyone, but the objective is to unite everyone and organize the society.

India's nature is of cooperation and coordination, not conflict. Its unity lies in geography, resources and tradition of introspection. Looking inside instead of looking outside makes it clear that there is the same element in all, even if it appears in different forms. This is why Mother India and ancestors are revered by us. A person who respects Mother India and his ancestors is a true Hindu. Words may change, but the feeling of devotion and reverence connects every person in the society.

Gradually people in the society have started understanding the meaning of the words Sangh and Hindu. With the improvement in the quality of life, people return to their original traditions. The Sangh does not force anyone to become a Hindu; its aim is to

contribute to the overall organization of society and nation building. The Sangh is not against any religion, caste or group, but organizes the society by connecting everyone with an inclusive approach.

Sangh's work is not limited to the organization only. Its aim is to develop moral, cultural and social values within every person of the society. Bringing awareness and discipline in the society is the main objective of the Sangh. Personal dedication and discipline have special importance in the working method of the Sangh. Every volunteer imbibes the basic spirit and working style of the Sangh and implements it in the society. The aim of the Sangh is that there should be no factionalism in the society, but everyone should be organized and unity should be maintained in the country.

Unity in diversity is India's true identity. Despite different languages, religions, cultures and traditions, India's identity lies in its soul, culture and respect for ancestors. The aim of the Sangh is to maintain this unity and make every person of the society a part of it. The work of the Sangh works at all three levels of individual development, social upliftment and nation building.

Through the Sangh, moral and cultural values are being strengthened in the society. Through the Sangh workers, the Sangh instills discipline, dedication and spirit of service in the society. The aim of the Sangh is not limited to the volunteers only, but its influence is to reach every section of the society. There is a balance between individual effort and organizational vision in the working style of the Sangh. The aim of the Sangh is that every person in the society should understand his duties and contribute to nation building.

The lecture series shed light on the establishment of the Sangh, the meaning of the word Hindu, organisational vision, social service and the process of nation building. The aim of the Sangh is not to oppose anyone but to contribute to the upliftment of the society and the nation. The working style of the Sangh, personal dedication and organisational vision are a source of inspiration for the society.

Thus, this lecture series of the Sangh Centenary Year provides an important opportunity to understand the role of the Sangh in society, its functioning and purpose. It makes it clear that the purpose of the Sangh is not limited to the organization only, but to contribute to the overall upliftment of the society and nation building. The work of the Sangh is to organize the society through personal dedication, discipline and social responsibility.

Saplings under CM's 'Amrit Vriksh Andolan' and PM's 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'



By: Kanchan Jyoti Gohain

On 8 June 2023, Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a new green initiative called the "Amrit Vriksh Andolan." This became one of the largest plantation drives in Assam, under which 53 species of commercially valuable trees were chosen for plantation. On 17 September 2023, lakhs of people across the state—including women, teachers, party workers, and security forces—participated in the campaign.

The state forest department arranged free distribution of saplings for plantations. By 2024, more than 1.19 crore commercial saplings had been planted across the state, and reports indicate that over 80% of them are still surviving. Building on this achievement, the Chief Minister announced that under the 2023-24 financial year plan, a target of planting 5 crore saplings by 2025 has been set.

This campaign, based on a public participation model, received an overwhelming response. Over 48 lakh beneficiaries registered themselves through a mobile application. After planting saplings, people uploaded geo-tagged photos to the portal, verifying their contribution. Due to such mass participation and success, the "Amrit Vriksh Andolan 2023" even set a Greeniz World Record.

Objectives of the Amrit Vriksh Andolan

The main objectives of this movement are to increase tree cover outside forest areas, expand commercial plantations, nurture saplings through sustainable methods, and enhance Assam's green economy. It also aims to strengthen the agro-forestry sector, provide raw ma-

terials for wood-based industries, attract investment in the sector, and create new employment opportunities for the people of Assam.

"Amrit Vriksh Andolan" and "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" Campaign

Alongside this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the occasion of World Environment Day (5 June 2024), launched the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, urging citizens to plant a sapling in their mother's name as a tribute. Responding to this call, Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma also encouraged the people of Assam to participate in this campaign.

Contribution of the Government Nursery at Chenga, Barpeta

Among the nurseries that contributed significantly to both "Amrit Vriksh Andolan" and "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam," the government nursery at Chenga in Barpeta under the Divisional Social Forestry Department has come into the limelight for distributing the highest number of saplings.

Managed under the supervision of forest officer and Beat In-Charge Dhira Shri Das since 2024, this nursery has been making remarkable contributions. It produces a wide variety of valuable saplings such as mahogany, hilikha, amlakhi (Indian gooseberry), bhomora, bogijamu, sisoo, Manipuri urhi, kadam, shimlu, and arjun.

The nursery was initially established in 2024 on 5 hectares of land under the CAMPA Scheme. Later in 2025, another 3-hectare nursery was set up under the SOPD Scheme. The government's plan for 2024-25 includes planting 5 crore saplings across Assam, of which 12.15 lakh saplings are to be supplied from

these two Chenga nurseries to different parts of the state.

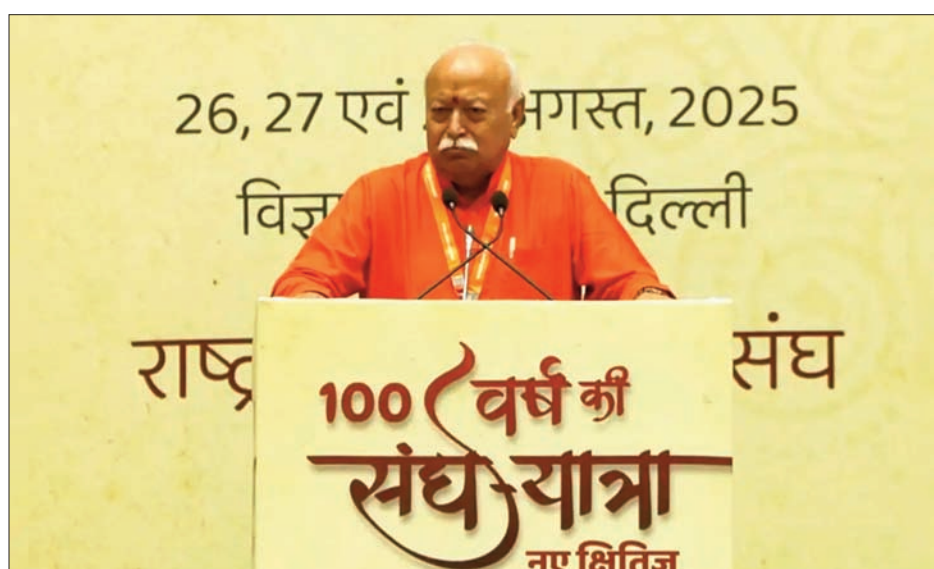
During the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, this nursery distributed over 30,000 saplings, bringing special recognition to both the nursery and its in-charge Dhira Shri Das. Owing to this significant contribution, she was even invited as a special guest during the 79th Independence Day of India.

Challenges Faced in Establishing the Nursery

When the responsibility of establishing the Chenga nursery under the SOPD Scheme was entrusted to Dhira Shri Das, many considered it nearly impossible. However, through dedication and hard work, she successfully developed the nursery in a very short period.

The first major challenge was land preparation. The site was previously covered with dense forest, which had to be cleared to prepare land for the nursery. Another big challenge was water scarcity. The region receives very little rainfall, causing many saplings to wither. Initially, attempts were made to irrigate using borewells, but covering the vast 5-8 hectare area was nearly impossible. During the scorching heat of June-July, a large number of saplings dried up, forcing the SDRF (State Disaster Response Force) to assist in supplying water continuously for two to three days.

Despite such difficulties, Dhira Shri Das, along with the cooperation of Barpeta's forest division and other officials, played a vital role in successfully implementing both the Chief Minister's "Amrit Vriksh Andolan" and the Prime Minister's "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign. Her dedication and contribution truly deserve high appreciation and recognition.



Trump again claims he stopped India-Pak war from 'going nuclear'

WASHINGTON, Aug 27: US President Donald Trump has once again claimed that he stopped the India and Pakistan war from "going nuclear" by threatening to impose tariffs and refusing to do any trade deals if they did not agree to a ceasefire.

Trump's latest comments came on Tuesday during a cabinet meeting at the White House, where he also claimed that he had spoken with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"I am talking to a very terrific man, Narendra Modi. I said, 'What's going on with you and Pakistan?' The hatred was tremendous. This has been going on for a hell of a long time, like, sometimes with different names for hundreds of years," the US president said.

"I said, I don't want to make a trade deal with you... You guys are going to end up in a nuclear war... I said, call me back tomorrow. But we're not going to do any deals with you, or we're going to put tariffs on you that are so high, your head's going to spin," he added.

"Within five hours, it was done. Maybe it starts again, but I will



stop it if it does," Trump went on to say.

Trump also claimed that "seven jets or maybe more than that" were shot down without elaborating which country's aircraft he was referring to.

Trump's comments came just hours before new tariffs totalling 50 per cent on Indian goods were set to take effect on August 27.

Talking to the press at the White House on Monday, Trump had

claimed that he stopped seven wars around the world, including the one between India and Pakistan. He added that of the seven wars he stopped, four were because he used tariffs and trade to negotiate with the parties involved in the conflict.

Since May 10, when Trump announced on social media that India and Pakistan had agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after a "long night" of talks mediated by Washington, he has repeated his claim over 40 times that he "helped settle" the tensions between India and Pakistan.

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said in Parliament that no leader of any country asked India to stop Operation Sindoor.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has categorically said there was no third-party intervention in bringing about a ceasefire with Pakistan during Operation Sindoor. (PTI)

Sri Lanka's Supreme Court issues notice to govt on India-funded digital ID project

COLOMBO, Aug 27: Sri Lanka's Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notices to President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and the Cabinet over the India-funded Sri Lanka Unique Digital Identity (SL-UDI) programme following a petition alleging violation of fundamental rights.



The petition was filed by former minister Wimal Weerawansa, who contended that the government's decision to proceed with the project violates fundamental rights and lacked transparency as neither Parliament nor the public had been adequately informed.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Colombo in April, the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on sharing India's large-scale digital solutions to

support Sri Lanka's digital transformation drive.

The Unique Digital Identity project, backed by an Indian grant, aims to provide Sri Lankan citizens with a secure digital ID similar to India's Aadhaar system. It is being implemented through cooperation between India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Sri Lanka's Ministry of Digital Economy.

In his petition, Weerawansa argued that the original MoU signed with India in 2022 had been amended by Cabinet decisions in January and June this year, enabling New Delhi to "select and control" the project's core technical infrastructure, including the Master System Integrator (MSI) and the biometric database software (MOSIP).

He claimed that the project posed a threat to Sri Lanka's national security as citizens' biometric and demographic data could be exposed to foreign entities without adequate safeguards.

The Supreme Court has fixed the next hearing for October 17. (PTI)

Israeli drone strikes kill 6 Syrian soldiers in Damascus suburb, reports say

DAMASCUS, Aug 27: Israeli drone strikes on a southern suburb of the Syrian capital Damascus killed six soldiers and wounded others, state media and a war monitor reported Wednesday.

The latest drone strikes occurred Tuesday in the southern Damascus suburb of Kiswah and killed six soldiers, state-run Al-Ikhabariah reported, without giving further details.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the strikes.

Since the fall of Bashar Assad in December, Israel has carried out hundreds of airstrikes on different parts of the country, destroying Syrian army assets.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the strikes hit a point that links Damascus with the southern province of Sweida that witnessed deadly clashes last month between pro-government gunmen and fighters from Syria's Druze minority.

Israel intervened during the fighting last month on the side of the Druze, who form a substantial community in Israel, where they are seen as a loyal minority and often serve in the Israeli military.

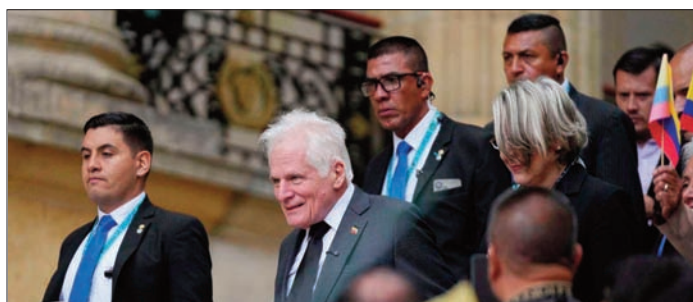
The Observatory added that the area struck Tuesday had military posts for Assad's military before his fall almost nine months ago.

The Observatory said there were several strikes on the area, including one that hit after paramedics arrived. In addition to the six soldiers killed, three people were wounded, it added.

Earlier Tuesday, an Israeli drone strike near the southern town of Quneitra killed one person, according to Al-Ikhabariah and the Observatory.

Syria's Foreign Ministry condemned the strike near Quneitra, saying it violates international law and threatens peace and stability in the region. (AP)

Father of slain Colombian candidate Miguel Uribe launches presidential bid



BOGOTA, Aug 27: The father of Miguel Uribe, the Colombian presidential candidate fatally shot at a political rally earlier this year, launched a presidential campaign Tuesday in what he called an effort to keep his son's legacy alive and build a safer and more prosperous Colombia.

Miguel Uribe Londoño, 72, announced his candidacy with a speech outside the congressional building in the capital where his son became a well-known senator, and spoke behind a podium fitted with the campaign logo used by his deceased son.

"Together we can build a secure Colombia where people will not fear going out into the streets, and where business owners will not have to make extortion payments" to gangs, Uribe Londoño said in Bogota. "A democratic Colombia, where the government does not foment divisions between the rich and the poor, whites or Blacks, or those who are on the left or on the right."

Uribe Londoño was a member of Bogota's city council in the late 80s and a senator for Colombia's Conservative Party in the early 90s. But he had no plans to run for the presidency before his son's death, and was not widely known by the public.

He gained new prominence during his son's nationally televised funeral, when he delivered a speech decrying what he called the country's descent into "madness" under the administration of left-wing President Gustavo Petro and

urging Colombians to vote in next year's elections.

Uribe Londoño is one of five candidates that are running for the Democratic Center, the conservative party that Miguel Uribe belonged to. The party has said that later this year, it will use opinion polls to decide on its final candidate.

Sergio Guzman, a political analyst in Bogota, said that Uribe Londoño's decision to enter the presidential race "reinvigorates" the Democratic Center, which has struggled to find a popular candidate while its leader, former President Alvaro Uribe, fights corruption allegations in Colombian courts. The former president is no relation to Uribe Londoño.

Guzman said that Uribe Londoño, whose wife was murdered in the 1990s, "symbolizes the pain of many victims, especially those who are conservatives."

Uribe Londoño's entry into the presidential race comes as Colombia faces a new wave of violence, caused largely by rebel groups and drug gangs that are trying to take over territory abandoned by the FARC, the guerrilla army that made peace with the government in 2016.

Last week, seven people were killed as a FARC hold-out group set off a car bomb outside a military base in Colombia's third largest city. While in the province of Antioquia, rebels took down a helicopter that was conducting anti-narcotics operations, killing 13 police officers. (AP)

Asian shares post modest gains after Wall Street nears more records

BANGKOK, Aug 27: Shares logged modest gains Wednesday in Asia after Wall Street benchmarks ended just below their records following a day of choppy trading.

US futures edged higher as investors awaited an earnings update from computer chip giant Nvidia due after trading ends Wednesday in New York. The artificial intelligence bellwether's quarterly report is expected to help clarify whether markets have been soaring on an overhyped bubble or if AI is a technology boom in the making.

Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 0.3 per cent to 42,522.97, while the Kospi in Seoul was up just over 1 point to 3,181.31.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng also edged less than 0.1 per cent higher, to 25,541.43, and the Shanghai Composite index advanced 0.3 per cent to 3,881.07.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 was up 0.1 per cent at 8,948.30.

Taiwan's TaieX climbed 0.7 per cent, and the SET in Bangkok was up 0.4 per cent. Markets in India were closed for a public holiday, as 50 per cent tariffs on exports to the United States took effect. The move by US President Donald Trump was expected to hit labour-intensive sectors like textile manufacturing especially hard.

On Wednesday, the S&P 500 closed 0.4 per cent higher at 6,465.94. The Dow gained 0.3 per cent to 45,418.07 and the Nasdaq added 0.4 per cent to 21,544.27.

Boeing rose 3.5 per cent for one of the biggest gains among S&P 500 companies after Korean Air announced a USD 50 billion deal with the company that includes buying more than 100 aircraft. Dish Network parent EchoStar surged 70.2 per cent after AT&T said it will buy some of its wireless spectrum licenses in a USD 23 billion deal.

A report said consumer confidence declined modestly in August as anxiety over a weakening job market grew for the eighth straight month. The small decline from The Conference Board's monthly survey was mostly in line with economists' projections.

Wall Street notched big gains last week on hopes for interest rate cuts from the Federal Reserve. But markets were subdued after President Donald Trump escalated his fight with the Federal Reserve by saying he's firing Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook. Cook's lawyer said she'll sue Trump's administration to try to stop him.

Trump has been feuding with the central



bank over its cautious interest rate policy. The Fed has held rates steady since late 2024 over worries that Trump's unpredictable tariff policies will reignite inflation. Trump has also threatened to fire Fed Chair Jerome Powell, often taunting him with name-calling. Still, he is only one of 12 votes that decides interest rate policy.

Traders are still betting the Fed will trim its benchmark interest rate at its next meeting in September. Traders see an 87 per cent chance that the central bank will cut the rate by a quarter of a percentage point, according to data from CME Group.

The Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate in late 2024 after spending the last several years fighting rising inflation by rais-

ing interest rates. It managed to tame inflation mostly and avoided having those higher rates stall economic growth, thanks largely to strong consumer spending and a resilient job market.

The Fed hit the pause button heading into 2025 over concerns that higher tariffs imposed by Trump could reignite inflation. Lower interest rates make borrowing easier, helping to spur more investment and spending, but that could also potentially fuel inflation. However, concerns are deepening over the jobs market.

Friday will bring another update on inflation, the US personal consumption expenditures index. Economists expect it to show that inflation remained at about 2.6 per cent in July, compared with a year ago. Businesses have been warning investors and consumers about higher costs and prices because of tariffs.

In other dealings early Wednesday, US benchmark crude oil edged up 1 cent to USD 63.26 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, slipped 1 cent to USD 66.69 a barrel.

The US dollar rose to 147.91 Japanese yen from 147.43 yen. The euro fell to USD 1.1618 from USD 1.1643. (AP)

Indians lead surge in sex crime convictions among foreigners in UK

LONDON, Aug 27: Indians have emerged as the nationality with the largest percentage increase in convictions for sexual offences in the UK amid a wider surge in foreigners being sentenced for such crimes over the past four years in the country, according to an analysis of British government data.

Indian nationals logged a 72-per cent increase between 2021 and 2024, reflecting a 257 per cent hike amid an overall 62 per cent increase in foreign nationals being convicted of sexual offences during that period.

The figures are based on UK Ministry of Justice data drawn from the Police National Computer and then analysed by the anti-immigration think tank Centre for Migration Control (CMC).

"The number of foreign nationals convicted of sexual offences increased by 62 per cent between 2021

and 2024 - jumping from 687 to 1,114. The British convictions rate for these crimes increased by 39.31 per cent over the same time period," the CMC states in its analysis this week. According to the think tank's tally, Indians have remained at the top end of this chart since 2021, when 28 such offences were logged, followed by 53 in 2022, 67 in 2023 and 100 last year.

Nigerians with a 166 per cent increase in cases, Iraqis at 160 per cent, Sudanese at 117 per cent and Afghans at 115 per cent make up the top five nationalities in the sexual crime charts between 2021 and 2024. Other South Asian nationalities highlighted in the analysis include Bangladeshis, ranked sixth with a 100 per cent hike over the four-year period, and Pakistanis eleventh with a 47 per cent increase.

Among the non-summary or seri-

ous crime convictions, Indians ranked third with a 115 per cent increase and a 315-case hike for the 2021-24 period, with the highest number of cases (588) logged last year - more than double the 273 in 2021. "There were almost 75,000 non-summary convictions of foreign nationals between 2021 and 2024... showing a general pattern of increase," notes the CMC.

"There was a decrease in foreign nationals convictions for violent offences and fraud offences between 2021 and 2024," the CMC adds.

The analysis follows recent UK Home Office figures which indicated that Indian nationals in detention have almost doubled in the past year. The data also revealed Indians as the second-largest group to be granted study visas for the UK (98,014) and the largest for work and tourist visas. (PTI)

Imran Khan's party decides to boycott upcoming by-elections in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Aug 27: Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party has decided to boycott the upcoming by-elections for national and provincial assemblies, in line with the opinion of its founder.

Several seats of the national and provincial assemblies became vacant last month after the conviction of leaders of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for their involvement in the May 9, 2023 riots.

The decision to boycott the by-elections was taken by the party's political committee, which met to consider Khan's input following a meeting with his legal team at Adiala Jail on Tuesday, The Dawn newspaper reported.

Earlier in the day, Khan's message was relayed to the media by his sister, Aleema Khan, who also met the 72-year-old cricket-turned-politician in prison.

She was flanked by PTI secretary general Salman Akram Raja - whose resignation was reportedly turned down by Khan.

Denying reports of a bitter exchange with Raja, she said the lawyer was "like family" to them.

She said her brother had asked the party's political committee to hold another meeting on the by-election issue based on his instructions.

Later on Tuesday night, PTI lawmaker Amir Dogar confirmed that the political committee had endorsed Khan's opinion on not contesting the by-elections, adding that party lawmakers would also start quitting parliamentary bodies soon.

A day earlier, the party's political committee had voted 12-9 to take part in the by-elections.

PTI's information secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram had even posted on social media that candidates would be given Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) tickets to avoid the chances of their being declared 'independents'.

Talking to Dawn, former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser confirmed that in Khan's opinion, the party should not go into by-elections, and that its lawmakers should leave all parliamen-



tary standing committees, including the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

"Parliament has already been made a rubber stamp, as the voice of the opposition members has been suppressed by not telecasting their remarks on the floor of the house," he said.

"Khan was of the view that the government will not let the PTI candidate win by-elections... [and] if [we] take part in the elections, it will legitimise the government's illegal action of de-seating PTI legislators," he added.

Political analyst Ahmed Bilal Mehboob said it was quite unfortunate that the decision taken by the party's political committee to contest by-elections was reversed by Khan.

The PTI is more of a "one-man show" than any other political party, he said.

Last week, Pakistan's two major political parties in the current ruling dispensation - the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) - announced to jointly contest the upcoming by-elections.

As per the schedule issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the by-elections will be held on September 18 for the NA-66 Wazirabad, NA-129 Lahore-XIII, and PP-87 Mianwali-III constituencies.

It would be followed by elections in NA-143 Sahiwal-III, NA-185, DG Khan-II, PP-203 Sahiwal-VI, NA-96 Faisalabad-II, NA-104 Faisalabad-X, and PP-98 Faisalabad-I on October 5, the ECP said. (PTI)

Over 100 people stranded as floodwaters submerge Kartarpur Corridor in Pakistan

LAHORE, Aug 27: More than 100 people, mostly staff members, were stranded as floodwaters from the Ravi River inundated the Kartarpur Corridor, including Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, in Narowal district of Pakistan's Punjab province, officials said Wednesday.

"The entire Kartarpur Corridor complex, including Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, has been submerged by high floodwater," Saifullah Khokar, head of the Kartarpur Corridor Project Management Unit, told PTI.

He said the trapped people, mostly staff members of the Kartarpur Project Management Unit, were being rescued by boats and a helicopter.

Images and videos circulating on social media show the revered Sikh shrine surrounded by floodwaters.

The Pakistani government opened the Kartarpur Corridor in November 2019, which is around 4.1 kilometres from the Pakistan-India border.

The corridor links Pakistan's Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, where the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev, lived and died at the start of the 16th century, to the Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab's Gurdaspur district. The 4 km-long corridor provides visa-free access to In-



dian pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib.

According to Narowal Deputy Commissioner Hasan Raza, hundreds of residents have also been evacuated from flooded areas after India released water into the Ravi, causing the river to swell beyond capacity.

The Ravi River, which can hold 150,000 cusecs, was flowing at 155,000 cusecs at Kot Nain in Shakargarh tehsil, he added.

On Sunday, India communicated flood warnings to Pakistan through diplomatic channels on "humanitarian grounds".

A day after the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, India took a series of punitive measures against Pakistan that included putting the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 in "abeyance". Usually, flood alerts are shared through the Indus Water Commission.

Thousands of acres of farmland have been submerged, damaging rice crops and animal

fodder, officials said.

Raza stated that heavy rains over the past 24 hours and overflow from drains in Auj, Bayan and Dek further worsened the situation, inundating villages and crop fields, forcing people to migrate to safer places.

Meanwhile, authorities have warned of a high flood in the River Ravi at Shahdara on Wednesday night as Punjab is facing an "exceptionally high" risk of flooding due to heavy rains and the water released by India from the dams, Geo News reported.

At Shahdara in Lahore, the river is currently flowing at 72,900 cusecs, putting low-lying areas, including Shahdara, Park View and Motorway-2 at risk of flooding.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired an emergency meeting on Wednesday to review the situation. He directed authorities to improve early warning systems to ensure timely alerts.

The provincial government called in army troops earlier in the day to help rescue people from already flooded areas in Punjab, and for relief and evacuation efforts.

Over 250,000 people have been evacuated from flood-prone areas to safer places across Punjab amid rising water levels in almost all eastern rivers. (PTI)

CM highlights ₹ 4,788-crore STDS project as backbone of reliable power, covering 16 districts with new substations and transmission lines

Arunachal making remarkable progress in power sector: CM

ITANAGAR, Aug 27: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday claimed that the state is making "remarkable progress" in the power sector under the Strengthening Transmission and Distribution System (STDS) scheme.

He called STDS a transformative step towards a reliable power supply to every corner of the state.

"Lighting up Arunachal, one corner at a time!" Khandu wrote on X, sharing details of the scheme.

He noted that the ambitious initiative has already covered 16 districts, bringing consistent power supply to remote households, towns, and institutions.

The Strengthening Transmission and Distribution System (STDS) scheme is a state government initiative aimed at modernising and expanding the power infrastructure to ensure a



reliable electricity supply across the state. The scheme focuses on upgrading transmission lines, constructing new substations, and improving distribution networks, particularly in remote and border areas where access to

power remains a challenge.

According to the chief minister, the project entails a ₹ 4,788-crore investment, creating a modern power backbone for the frontier state.

"We have commissioned one

220 kv substation and ten 132/33 kv substations under the scheme. Alongside this, more than 2,000 km of high-capacity transmission lines and 4,000 km of 33 kv lines have been laid across the state," he said.

Khandu said that an improved transmission network is not only about lighting homes but also about powering the state's aspirations.

"A robust power grid means industries can flourish, services can expand, and our youth can benefit from digital and economic opportunities," he added.

Officials said the scheme, being implemented in phases, will eventually cover the entire state.

"Arunachal's growth story rests on reliable power. We are committed to ensuring that every village, every household, and every institution has access to quality electricity," he added. (PTI)

DC East Siang stresses strict SOPs, skill-based rehab in Anti-Drug Drive

HT Bureau

PASIGHAT, Aug 27: Deputy Commissioner of East Siang, Sonalika Jiواني, on Wednesday reiterated the district administration's firm resolve to ensure strict implementation and monitoring of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in drug de-addiction and rehabilitation centres across the district.

Addressing the 12th meeting of the National Committee on Reforms in Drug Abuse (NCORD) held at the DC's Conference Hall here, she called upon NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), and civil society at large to shoulder collective responsibility in safeguarding the future of the youth by actively engaging in the fight against substance abuse, according to an official statement.

Jiواني underlined that rehabilitation and recovery processes must go beyond detoxification to ensure long-term reintegration of affected individuals into society.

"The onus of building a better future for our youth lies not just with the administration but with each one of us," she said, stressing that NGOs and community groups have a pivotal role to play in complementing government initiatives.

The DC also made it clear that all de-addiction and rehabilitation centres in the district must mandatorily follow the SOPs laid down by the state government, warning that failure to comply will attract strict action.

She directed the in-charges of these centres, many of whom were present at the meeting, to ensure full adherence to regulatory norms.

The district administration, she added, is committed to enforcing these rules through regular inspec-

tions and monitoring of facilities.

One of the key highlights of the meeting was the emphasis on incorporating skill development programmes into rehabilitation strategies.

Jiواني urged the Department of Skill Development and NGOs to work hand in hand to provide vocational training for recovered individuals.

She said vocational courses would enable them to become self-reliant and open up avenues for both self-employment and wage employment, thereby reducing the chances of relapse.

To strengthen this approach, she directed the Skill Development Department to prepare IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) materials on available trades and courses and to ensure their wide dissemination through social media, print, and electronic platforms.

This, she said, would motivate youth and their families to take advantage of skill development schemes as part of the recovery process.

The NCORD meeting, convened by East Siang Police, also conducted a detailed review of the ongoing initiatives and enforcement measures being taken in the district.

Among the major points discussed were the activities of the Voice Against Drug Abuse (VADA) Clubs, a flagship awareness campaign of East Siang Police that seeks to reach schools, colleges, and youth groups with anti-drug messages.

The meeting reviewed the progress of these outreach programmes, noting their impact in spreading awareness among students and young people.

Other measures discussed included the prohibition of drinking in public places, enhanced en-

forcement and patrolling in vulnerable pockets, and joint inspections of suspected illegal liquor outlets.

Officials also highlighted co-ordinated drives to identify vulnerable areas, conduct surprise checks, and crack down on networks supplying drugs and illicit alcohol.

The meeting was attended by a wide cross-section of stakeholders, reflecting the administration's multi-pronged approach to tackling the problem. Senior officers present included SP Pankaj Lamba, SDPO Dr Akansha Milind Tamgadge, ADC Mebo Nancy Yirang, Dy SP Ayub Boko, Joint DHS (T&R) Dr T Tali, and DMO Dr. Yagling Perme.

Superintendent of Tax and Excise Kangong Dai, officers from the Department of Industries, and police station in-charges were also present.

Importantly, the gathering also saw participation from representatives of community-based organisations and anti-drug groups such as the Anti-Drug Warriors, WASE, and ABAK (ESDU).

In-charges of de-addiction centres from across the district were part of the deliberations, ensuring that those directly responsible for rehabilitation services were included in the dialogue.

Officials agreed that collaboration among government departments, enforcement agencies, NGOs, and community organisations is essential in countering the drug menace, which has emerged as a serious social challenge.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to strengthen monitoring of de-addiction centres, expand skill-based rehabilitation, intensify awareness programmes, and enforce stricter measures to curb illegal drug and alcohol trade in the district.

4th cycle district-level Aadhaar monitoring committee meeting held in Tawang

HT Correspondent

TAWANG, Aug 27: The 4th cycle of the District Level Aadhaar Monitoring Committee (DLAMC) meeting was convened on Wednesday at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office in Tawang under the chairmanship of Assistant Commissioner and in-charge Deputy Commissioner, Tenzin Jambe. In his welcome address, Jambe highlighted the ongoing challenges faced in Aadhaar enrolment across the district and its subdivisions.

He stressed the importance of strengthening grievance redressal mechanisms and improving accessibility to Aadhaar services, especially for citizens living in remote and border areas.

During the meeting, according to an official statement, Tenzin Phuntso, In-charge ADES Tawang, raised concerns over the shortage of Aadhaar operators and enrolment kits at the Tawang Aadhaar Centre.

He pointed out that the lack of operators in sub-districts and circles compels residents to travel to the district headquarters for enrolment and updates, leading to inconvenience and delays.

A detailed presentation was delivered by Ananga Pathak, Assistant Manager, UIDAI Regional Office, Guwahati, who outlined the status of Aadhaar services in Tawang. His presentation explained the operational processes, availability of services, and best practices for overcoming existing challenges in the district.

Assistant Commissioner Tsering Chedon and Deputy Superintendent of Police Tasso Kato also highlighted the difficulties faced in Aadhaar seeding and called upon UIDAI to introduce simplified and practical solutions to make the process more user-friendly for both citizens and administrators.

Arunachal Congress slams Union min Rijiju over remarks against Rahul Gandhi

ITANAGAR, Aug 27: The Arunachal Pradesh unit of the Congress on Wednesday condemned Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju for his recent remarks against Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, terming it an "indecent personal attack and character assassination".

In a statement issued here, Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) general secretary Chera Taya alleged that Rijiju's comments were an attempt to divert public attention from "his own failures as a leader and a Union minister".

"It is unfortunate and shameful to hear a Union minister stoop to such a low level of discourse, which only reflects the true nature, behaviour, and political culture of the BJP," Taya said, adding that Rijiju, once seen as a national figure, had reduced himself to "using the language and tone of his right-wing brigade".

Rijiju, the Arunachal West MP, on August 23 hit out at Gandhi, saying that his own party MPs "get uncomfortable" when he speaks in Parliament and remain apprehensive that he will speak "anap-shanap baatein" (baseless talk) and the party will have to bear the consequences.

The APCC accused the BJP-led



government of electoral malpractices, claiming that "vote theft, booth capturing, cash-for-vote practices, and inaction of election officers" marred the polls in Arunachal Pradesh.

It further described Rijiju as the "Union Minister of Unparliamentary Affairs", alleging he had forgotten his role in governance and was still "manifesting his habitual role of opposition".

The opposition party also criticised the Centre and the state's BJP government on issues including border disputes with Assam, the construction of mega dams on the Siang River, and the "limited leg-

islative powers" of the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly under Article 371(H).

Taya urged Rijiju to focus on addressing unemployment, farmers' distress, and unfulfilled promises made by the Modi government instead of "parroting the hate-script of the BJP".

"Instead of indulging in personal attacks, Rijiju should explain to the nation about the failures and unfulfilled promises of the BJP. The people of Arunachal Pradesh and India deserve a politics of truth, fairness, and accountability, not hatred and character assassinations," the party added. (PTI)

First yarn depot of NE inaugurated in Itanagar



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 27: In a significant initiative to support the weaving community, the first Yarn Depot of the Northeast was inaugurated on Wednesday at Khinam Fashion House in Vivek Vihar, Itanagar.

The central government-sponsored facility is expected to serve as the sole source of yarn for weavers in Arunachal Pradesh while also promoting the government's "Vocal for Local" mission.

According to an official statement, the inaugural ceremony was attended by Arunachal Pradesh Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) Chairman, Maling Gombo, as the chief guest, alongside a host of dignitaries, social workers, public leaders, and indigenous weavers.

The function was organised by Khinam Fashion House Director, Vishal P Nabam.

In his address, Chief Guest Gombo termed the occasion a "historic day for the weavers of Arunachal Pradesh."

He lauded the efforts of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and the North East Handloom and Handicraft Development Corporation (NEHDC), Guwahati, led by Managing Director Mara Kocho and his team, for establishing the Yarn Depot in the state.

"With this facility in place, weavers across the state will now have access to quality yarn and raw materials directly from the depot, reducing their dependence on outside sources. This will not only inspire more individuals to take up weaving but also strengthen traditional practices while creating opportunities for self-employment," Gombo said.

He further informed that while the present Yarn Depot has been initiated by the Centre, the state government has also approved a similar project which will be established soon after completion of necessary formalities.

Highlighting future plans, Gombo noted that the

depot will not only ensure yarn availability but will also facilitate market linkages for handloom products in due course.

"We envision a system where local dresses and traditional products woven in Arunachal can be marketed across the state and beyond, providing economic upliftment to local artisans," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, NEHDC Managing Director, Mara Kocho, said the launch of the Yarn Depot in Arunachal marks a "historic milestone" for the state's weaving sector.

He said there has been growing demand for authentic yarn to produce traditional dresses of various tribal communities.

"Earlier, many weavers were cheated in the name of originality. This depot will ensure genuine yarn reaches them, and I appeal to all weavers to use only the original yarn being provided through this facility," Kocho stated.

He assured that similar depots would be opened in other northeastern states in the future and stressed the importance of entrepreneurship in the handloom and handicraft sector.

"We want local entrepreneurs to emerge as role models so that weavers across the region become self-reliant and economically sustainable," he said.

Kocho further added that NEHDC is prepared to provide extensive skill development training for weavers and youth willing to engage in the sector.

He urged Arunachali weavers to take advantage of government support in market linkage, which includes the provision of sales counters across major cities such as Guwahati, Shillong, Kolkata, and New Delhi, as well as during trade fairs, Ekta Mela, and national handloom exhibitions.

"We also plan to provide foreign exposure trips for active weavers to broaden their market perspectives," he announced.

The event also saw addresses from APKVIB Director Dorjee Phuntso, Assistant Director of Weavers Service Centre (WSC) Itanagar, Tilak Rai, NEHDC Senior Manager Gyanaandra Dwivedi, Officer Mrinal Saikia, and Khinam Fashion House Director, Vishal P Nabam. Proprietor Taba Yall Nabam also spoke on the importance of such initiatives for empowering local artisans.

Several NGOs and weaver representatives interacted with officials during the programme, raising issues related to yarn availability, production, marketing, and sale of handloom products.

The open dialogue was seen as a step forward in addressing grassroots concerns of the weaving community.

9-year-old girl missing from Dimapur rescued in Arunachal

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 27: A 9-year-old girl who went missing from Rengma colony in Dimapur on August 3 has been rescued by Dimapur police from Naharlagun in Arunachal Pradesh on August 22, Dimapur DCP (crime) said in a release on Wednesday.

The rescued child is currently housed at Child Welfare Committee Home, Dimapur.

Five accused, including a woman, involved in the case have been arrested.

The release said a team of investigating officers launched an operation, circulating WT messages across the Northeast and gathering vital information through local sources, after an FIR was lodged by the father of the missing child on the day of her disappearance at Dimapur women police station.

Police said two accused were apprehended from Diphu, two from Jorhat and one from Tezpur in Assam.

The two accused, who were arrested by Diphu police, are husband and wife and have been identified as Nitu Nath (31) and Protima Rajbongshi (30). The Dimapur women police station personnel took custody of the arrested couple from Diphu police station.

Workshop on mineral potential held in Arunachal Pradesh

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 27: A workshop on "Mineral Potential in Arunachal Pradesh: A Way Forward" was successfully conducted by the Department of Geology and Mining (DGM), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, in collaboration with the Geological Survey of India (GSI).

According to an official statement, the event was held on August 27 in hybrid mode from the conference hall of GSI Arunachal Pradesh and was attended by participants from central government departments, state government agencies, and Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEAs). It was organised as a follow-up to the outcome of the 2nd North East Mining Minister's Conclave held in Guwahati in June this year.

The workshop was inaugurated with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by Rajeeva Roy, Deputy Director General, GSI Arunachal Pradesh; Pee Lee Ete, IFS, DIGF (Central), Regional Office Shillong and in-charge Sub-Office, Guwahati, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India; in the presence of Suresh Chander, Director (TC) GSI, SU:AP; Parminder Singh Sethi, Director and Head of Office, GSI SU:AP; and Tasser Talar, Director, Department of Geology and Mining, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

According to the statement, the workshop aimed to bring together potential



stakeholders to explore and harness the mineral resources of Arunachal Pradesh.

The sessions included a series of presentations that highlighted the state's rich geological landscape and mineral potential, along with technical insights on the National Geo-Data Repository (NGDR) portal, facilities provided by the National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) in New Delhi, and emerging opportunities in the mining sector.

Officials noted that the workshop provided a platform for meaningful interaction between policymakers, technical experts, and private stakeholders.

An open discussion session was held to address queries raised by participants, fostering an exchange of ideas on sustainable exploration and future strategies for mineral development in the state. The official statement also underlined

that Arunachal Pradesh has been listed prominently on the mineral map of India. In 2024, four mineral blocks from the state were successfully auctioned, marking a significant step forward in resource utilisation and industrial development.

The Department of Geology and Mining emphasised that Arunachal Pradesh holds vast untapped mineral wealth, and initiatives such as this workshop are intended to encourage investment, promote scientific exploration, and ensure that resource development aligns with environmental and regulatory frameworks.

The day-long event concluded with consensus among stakeholders to continue collaborative efforts in developing Arunachal Pradesh's mining sector in a structured and sustainable manner.

No. e/DME/PG/2025/54490/3

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

COUNSELLING FOR DEPUTATION/ SPONSORED APPLICANTS FROM ASSAM FOR M. PHIL IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AT LGB REGIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH, TEZPUR

In pursuance of letter from the LGB Regional Institute of Mental Health, Tezpur vide No. LGB/ACA/AEEGU/2598/17/2025-26/CP/3484, dated 03/07/2025, this is for general information of all the concerned that **1 seat in M. Phil in Clinical Psychology** at LGB Regional Institute of Mental Health, Tezpur is kept reserved for candidates deputed/ sponsored from Assam.

Accordingly, a counselling is scheduled on **3rd September 2025 (1:00 pm)**, at the office of the DME, Assam, Sixmile, Khanapara, Guwahati-06, for interested eligible candidates including **in-service candidates** who are willing to undergo Post Graduate courses in M. Phil Clinical Psychology at LGB Regional Institute of Mental Health, Tezpur.

All interested candidates, including those who had applied in response to NHM advertisement vide no. 677586, dated 24/07/2025, are required to appear personally for the counselling on the scheduled date and time.

They must bring with them all original testimonials, e.g. PRC, recent passport size photo, etc. along with a set of photo copies of the testimonials. They should also bring with them a copy of the admit card and score card of GURET-2025.

The details of eligibility of candidates are available in the LGBRIMH prospectus which can be accessed through the following link https://lgbrimh.gov.in/resources/2025/admission/LGBRIMH_Prospectus-2025-26.pdf and the list of documents to be produced at the time of counselling is uploaded in the official website of this Directorate www.dme.assam.gov.in

NB: Preference will be given to in-service candidates and if the seat is not filled up by in-service candidate, then the seat will be opened for other candidates.

Sd/-

Director of Medical Education, Assam

DIPR /D/HLT/135/28-Aug-25

JK: Death toll mounts to 41 after record rains in Jammu

Jhelum breaches flood alert mark in Srinagar, Anantnag

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, Aug 27: After record rains wreaked havoc in Jammu and Kashmir over the past two days, the death toll in related incidents rose to 41, most of them victims of the landslide on a Vaishno Devi pilgrimage route, while there was some let-up in the showers on Wednesday, allowing relief efforts to pick up pace.

The water level in the swollen rivers across Jammu showed signs of receding from 11 AM, but the flood alert mark was breached by the Jhelum in Anantnag and Srinagar and water entered several residential and commercial areas.

Massive damage has been reported to public infrastructure, including several key bridges, private houses and commercial establishments, due to overflowing of water bodies and flash floods across the Union Territory, officials said, adding more than 10,000 people have been evacuated from low-lying flooded areas.

As torrential rains disrupted normal life, Education Minister Sakina Itoo announced that all

educational institutes will remain closed across Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday in view of the inclement weather.

The Northern Railways ordered the cancellation of 58 trains to and from Jammu and Katra stations, while 64 trains were short-terminated or short-originated at various stations in the division. Rail traffic, which was briefly restored on Wednesday morning with six trains departing from Jammu after a day-long suspension, has again been halted due to flash floods and heavy soil erosion in the Chakki river area, the officials said.

With the rain stopping in some areas, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah rushed to Jammu from Srinagar to personally review the situation in the region. Officials said that the phone and network services were restored across all networks on Wednesday, 24 hours after the damage to optical fibres caused outages in the Union territory.

The death toll in the Vaishno Devi landslide has gone up to 34 with rescuers pulling out more



bodies from under the debris, the officials said, a day after the disaster struck the route to the hilltop shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district.

At least 20 people were injured in the landslide triggered by incessant heavy rain and are undergoing treatment in different hospitals, the officials said, adding the landslide struck near the Inderprastha Bhoj-

nalaya at Ardhkuwari, about halfway along the winding 12-km trek from Katra to the shrine, at around 3 PM on Tuesday.

With more people feared trapped, rescue teams are continuing to dig through the mounds of rubble to look for survivors.

The pilgrimage to the shrine remained suspended for the second day. While the yatra had been

stopped on the Himkoti trek route since morning on Tuesday, it was going on the old route till afternoon when authorities decided to suspend it as a precautionary measure. Jammu has recorded 380 mm of rainfall in the past 24 hours ending at 8.30 AM on Wednesday, which is the highest for a 24-hour period since 1910 when the observatory was set up in the winter capital.

Four people, including three women, lost their lives in Doda district on Tuesday, while two bodies were found on Tuesday, including that of a BSF jawan in Pragwal. The other body found in Akhnour is yet to be identified. Body of an irrigation department employee was found in Lakhampur along the border of Punjab.

Heavy rains were also experienced in the Kashmir valley overnight, where the main Jhelum river has crossed the flood alert mark at Sangam in Anantnag district and at Ram Munshi Bagh in Srinagar this morning.

In Srinagar, water entered the residential areas in Kursu, Ra-

jbagh, Bemina and Sekidafar, while most places in main Anantnag town also saw flood waters enter residential as well as commercial areas, leaving markets submerged, they said. The waters also entered the district court complex in Anantnag district in south Kashmir, following which the district judge and other staff had to be evacuated by the SDRF personnel using a boat, the officials said.

The district administrations and police in Anantnag, Kulgam and Srinagar had to evacuate people living in low-lying areas to safety.

The Jammu-Srinagar national highway remained closed for vehicular traffic, along with over a dozen other roads struck by landslides over the past couple of days.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his prayers are for everyone's safety and well-being.

"The loss of lives due to a landslide on the route to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Temple is saddening. My thoughts are with the bereaved families. May the injured recover at the earliest. The administration

is assisting all those affected," he said in a post on X.

Chief Minister Abdullah said he has briefed Prime Minister Modi on the situation arising from heavy rains and flooding in the Jammu region and expressed gratitude for his assurance of continued assistance to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The chief minister said they were slightly relieved as the rain had stopped on Wednesday.

"As compared to yesterday, we have got slight relief today (Wednesday) with the fact that the rains have stopped. Water is slowly receding in low-lying areas," he said. Officials said said a flash flood washed away 10 residential houses and a bridge in the remote Margi area of Kishtwar district, but there was no immediate report of any casualties.

The rains continued non-stop in most parts of the Jammu region over the past 24 hours with almost all water bodies, including Tawi, Chenab, Ujh, Ravi and Basantar, flowing several feet above the danger mark, the officials said. (PTI)

Deletion of voters' names in Bihar worse than terrorism: Stalin

MUZAFFARPUR (BIHAR), Aug 27: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Wednesday asserted that the INDIA bloc will win the Bihar assembly polls "if the elections were free and fair", and described deletion of voters' names from electoral rolls as "worse than terrorism".

The DMK president flew down to the eastern state, along with sister and party MP Kanimozhi, where they joined Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and CPI(M) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya for the ongoing 'Voter Adhikar Yatra'.

Addressing a rally in Muzaffarpur, the largest town in north Bihar, Stalin delivered his speech in Tamil, which evoked applause from the crowds as it was translated into Hindi. "For the past one month, the entire nation has been looking keenly at Bihar... the Election Commission has become a remote-controlled puppet," alleged Stalin, who was impressed with the response to the yatra taken out in protest against the special intensive revision of electoral rolls.

"Is the deletion of names of 65 lakh people (from the draft electoral rolls) not worse than terrorism?" the Tamil Nadu CM asked.

When Rahul Gandhi raised doubts over the fairness of elections held in the past, he was challenged by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar to furnish an affidavit, Stalin said.

"But you cannot scare Rahul Gandhi," the DMK chief said, lauding his alliance partner.

"I have seen Rahul's camaraderie with Tejashwi, who ride motorcycles together. This friendship is deeper than a run-of-the-mill political partnership. And I am sure that if the elections are free and fair, the BJP-led NDA will be defeated," he asserted.

"I promise you that after the INDIA bloc wins the assembly polls, I will be back to attend the swearing-in ceremony," Stalin said. Bihar is the land where the foundation of this nationwide coalition (INDIA bloc) was laid, and this alliance succeeded in bringing down to 240 the tally of the BJP, which was boasting of winning more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls last year, he said.

The Tamil Nadu CM began his speech by recalling the close friendship between his late father K Karunanidhi and RJD president Lalu Prasad, the father of Tejashwi Yadav, whom he hailed for "tirelessly championing social justice and never getting cowed down by the BJP". The DMK president's reverence for Prasad was also evident in a post on his X handle, immediately after he landed in Bihar.

"Touchdown #Bihar. The land of respected @laluprasadrd greets me with fire in its eyes, the soil heavy with every stolen vote. Joined my brothers @RahulGandhi, @yadavtejashwi and sister @priyankagandhi as the #voteradikaryatra turns people's pain into unstoppable strength," he wrote.

Gandhi shared a selfie he took with Stalin and other prominent leaders and wrote, "Welcome to Bihar and the #VoterAdhikarYatra my brother Thiru @mkstalin. Your presence here strengthens our fight against Vote Chori in Bihar and the entire country."

Back in Tamil Nadu, where the DMK's main rival AIADMK is a BJP ally, the saffron party sought to highlight the troubled equations of the chief minister's party with migrants from Bihar. (PTI)

Sheer number of soldiers or weapon stockpiles no longer enough to win wars: Rajnath

MHOW (MP), Aug 27: India's armed forces must be prepared for all kinds of security challenges, from short-duration conflicts to even a five-year war, in view of an unpredictable geopolitical environment, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday.

In an address at the 'Ran Samvad' conclave here, Singh also said the sheer number of soldiers or the size of weapon stockpiles is no longer enough as cyber warfare, artificial intelligence, drones and satellite-based surveillance are shaping the wars of the future.

Precision-guided weapons, real-time intelligence and data-driven information have now become the cornerstone of success in any conflict, Singh said on the final day of the conclave at the Army War College. Delving into national security challenges, Singh said India does not want anyone's land, but it is ready to go to any extent to protect its territorial integrity.

"In today's era, wars have become so sudden and unpredictable that it is very difficult to predict when any war will end and how long it will last," he said, noting that the Indian military must be

prepared for every situation.

"That is, if any war stretches for two months, four months, a year, two years, even five years, then we should be fully prepared for it," he said in the presence of India's top military brass including Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh and Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi. The defence minister said modern battles are no longer confined to land, sea and air, and they now extend into outer space and cyberspace.

"Satellite systems, anti-satellite weapons and space command centres are the new instruments of power. Therefore, what we require today is not just defensive preparedness but also a proactive strategy," he said.

Elaborating on rapid changes in the military domain, the defence minister said the present era will be defined by non-linear warfare.

"The sheer number of soldiers or the size of weapon stockpiles is no longer enough. Cyber warfare, artificial intelligence, unmanned aerial vehicles and satellite-based surveillance are shaping the wars of the future," he said.

Jarange leaves for Mumbai, govt delegation to meet him near Pune

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, Aug 27: Maratha quota movement leader Manoj Jarange left for Mumbai on Wednesday to launch a fresh hunger strike, but agreed to meet a government delegation near Pune on his way to the state capital.

While the 43-year-old activist has announced that he would sit on an indefinite fast at Azad Maidan in Mumbai from August 29, police granted him permission to stage his agitation there only for a day, with the number of protesters not exceeding 5,000.

Speaking to reporters at his village Antarwali Sarathi in Jalna district, over 400 km from the state capital, Jarange assured that his supporters would protest peacefully and not disrupt the Ganesh festival. Jarange has been demanding that all Marathas be recognised as Kunbis — an agrarian caste included in the OBC category — which will make them eligible for reservation in government jobs and education.

The activist told reporters that he received a call from state minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, who heads a cabinet sub-committee on Maratha quota, informing him that a government team would reach Shivneri in Pune district for discussions.

"A delegation might come for discussion at Shivneri. I will not sit in any room, the discussion will take place in the open. No matter who comes for the talks, we will secure the Maratha quota this time," he said.

Vikhe Patil said the cabinet sub-committee, which held its first meeting on Monday, had deliberated on Jarange's demands concerning extending reservation benefits to close relatives of the Maratha community. He added that the Justice Shinde committee on Maratha quota has been granted a six-month extension, as Jarange had demanded earlier.

The Jalna police allowed Jarange and his supporters to proceed with their march after imposing 40 conditions, directing them

to avoid any law and order situations, not to cause disruptions to the movement of vehicles and desist from avoiding "objectionable" slogans.

The BJP which heads the ruling coalition as well as Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had on Tuesday urged Jarange to postpone his agitation in view of the Ganeshotsav beginning on August 27. "There will be attempts to provoke us, but we will continue our agitation peacefully at Azad Maidan. No matter how long it takes this time, we will ensure reservation for the Maratha community," the activist told reporters before leaving Antarwali Sarathi in the morning.

Hundreds of supporters from Beed, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Jalna and other districts in the Marathwada region reached the village in the morning. Before leaving for Mumbai, Jarange addressed his supporters and attacked Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, accusing him of being "anti-Hindu and anti-Maratha". "The ball is now in the court of Fadnis whether he gives us permission (for the protest) or not," he said.

"Eknath Shinde is not being allowed to speak (on the Maratha reservation) issue," he claimed.

In Mumbai, the senior inspector of Azad Maidan police station wrote a letter to the activist, granting him permission — in response to an application — to stage peaceful protests at Azad Maidan on August 29 between 9 am to 6 pm. At 6 pm, all protesters will have to leave the site, the letter said.

After entering Mumbai, from Wadi Bunder Junction only five vehicles of main protesters can head to Azad Maidan and the number of protesters there should not cross 5,000, it said.

The protest should not disrupt the Ganesh festival celebrations or cause traffic congestion, the letter instructed, while also warning the protesters not to incite communal hatred or hurt communal sentiments. (PTI)



"In the times ahead, the nation that masters the triangle of technology, strategy and adaptability will emerge as the true global power. To put it simply, this is the moment to learn from history and write a new one; this is the moment to anticipate the future and shape one," he said.

Singh argued that future wars will not merely be battles of weapons and they will be a combined play of technology, intelligence, economy and diplomacy.

He also noted that national security is no longer a matter of the military, but has become an issue

of a "whole-of-nation approach".

"We do not want anyone's land, but we are ready to go to any extent to protect our land," he said. The defence minister lauded the three services for Operation Sindoor and said it has emerged as a great example demonstrating the success of India's indigenous platforms, equipment and weapon systems.

"Its achievements have once again underlined that in the times to come, self-reliance is an absolute necessity. We have indeed made significant progress on the path of self-reliance, but there is still a long way ahead," he said. (PTI)

Mamata, Abhishek express concern over rain-triggered landslides in Jammu

KOLKATA, Aug 27: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday expressed concern over the devastation caused by rain and landslides in Jammu and Kashmir and extended her solidarity to the people there.

Relentless rain pounded large parts of Jammu province on Tuesday, causing havoc in the region that witnessed landslides, inundation of low-lying areas and the washing away of several roads and bridges.

A landslide on the route to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine has left 32 people dead, while four others were killed in Doda district in separate rain-related incidents.

"The natural disasters in Jammu and Kashmir (due to a landslide on the way to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Temple) have kept us worried, and I express my solidarity for the people there," Banerjee posted on X.

She expressed grief over the loss of lives, wished a speedy recovery for the injured, and prayed for the safety of those stranded.

"The loss of lives saddens me, and I extend my condolences to the bereaved families. I also pray for the injured and wish them a speedy recovery. May Maa Vaishno Devi give them speedy healing. Prayers for the affected and the stranded, too," she added.

Later, the party's national general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, also expressed concern over the tragedy and extended his condolences to the affected families. (PTI)

SC gets two new judges, Justice Pancholi in line to become CJI in 2031

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Bombay High Court Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Patna High Court Chief Justice Vipul Manubhai Pancholi were on Wednesday elevated as judges of the Supreme Court, the government said.

Their names were recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium on Monday and their appointments were announced by the Union law ministry on Wednesday.

Once the two take oath, the top court will function with its full sanctioned strength of 34 judges, including the chief justice of India (CJI).

Justice Pancholi will be in line to become the CJI in October 2031 after Justice Joydip Bagchi's retirement on October 2, 2031.

He would assume the CJI's office on October 3, 2031, and retire on May 27, 2033.

Born on April 13, 1964, Justice Aradhe was appointed as an additional judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on December 29, 2009, and as a permanent judge



on February 15, 2011.

He was transferred to the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and took oath on September 20, 2016.

He was appointed as the acting chief justice of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir on May 11, 2018. Justice Aradhe was transferred to the Karnataka High Court, where he took oath as a judge on November 17, 2018.

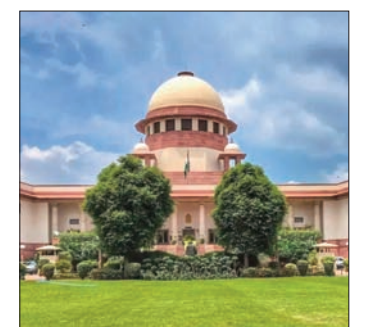
He assumed charge as the acting chief justice of the Karnataka High

Court on July 3, 2022, and functioned as such up to October 14, 2022.

He was appointed as the chief justice of the Telangana High Court on July 19, 2023, and took the oath of office on July 23, 2023.

Justice Aradhe was transferred as the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court and assumed charge on January 21 this year.

He was enrolled as an advocate on July 12, 1988, and dealt with



"Amongst these theories, reformative approach has become increasingly acceptable to the modern jurisprudence. Reformation is something always considered progressive," it said.

The bench said when there were mitigating circumstances, the court would lean towards reducing of the sentence and the focus was on the crime and not on the criminal.

"The society and system would nurture the guilt with positivity, while selecting the sentence," it said.

The appellant in the top court gave up the challenge to the conviction and her lawyer requested the court for reduction of sentence.

The bench observed conviction and sentence had respective realms.

"While the conviction would be recorded on the basis of evidence adduced before the court which would establish the implication of the accused in the offence, the guilty person or the convicted when to be awarded a sentence, a host of factors would operate to govern," it said.

The bench noted the woman, a widow, underwent imprisonment for 31 days.

"In the totality of the facts and circumstances, the imprisonment already undergone by her is treated to be adequate sentence," it said.

While increasing the fine amount, the bench ordered it to be paid by September 10. Upon failure to pay the fine amount, the original order of sentence would kick in and operate, rendering her liable to surrender before the authorities concerned. (PTI)

civil and constitutional, arbitration and company matters in the Madhya Pradesh High Court. He was designated as a senior advocate in April 2007.

Born on May 28, 1968, in Ahmedabad, Justice Pancholi was elevated as an additional judge of the Gujarat High Court on October 1, 2014, and was confirmed as a permanent judge on June 10, 2016.

He was transferred to the Patna High Court and took oath as a judge on July 24, 2023.

Justice Pancholi became the Chief Justice of the Patna High Court on July 21 this year.

He entered the Bar in September 1991 and started practice as an advocate in the Gujarat High Court.

He was appointed as an assistant government pleader and additional public prosecutor in the Gujarat High Court and served as such for seven years till March 2006.

He also worked as a visiting faculty at Sir L A Shah Law College, Ahmedabad, from December 1993 for 21 years. (PTI)

Mizoram reiterates reliance on 1875 colonial-era notification amid fresh flare-up on Assam border dispute

Mizoram sticks to stand that its border with Assam is based on 1875 notification: Minister

AIZAWL, Aug 27: Mizoram Home Minister K Sapdanga on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's stand that its boundary with Assam is based on a notification issued in 1875.

The assertion came days after a fresh tension on the Mizoram-Assam border.

Addressing the assembly on the first day of the monsoon session, Sapdanga said that the Mizoram government approved the areas demarcated in the 'Inner Line on the Southern Frontier of the District of Cachar', which was notified on August 20, 1875, as the state's actual boundary with Assam.

Assam, however, asserts that the border defined by a map prepared by the Survey of India in 1933 is its constitutional boundary with Mizoram.

According to the home minister, both Mizoram and Assam have held talks on more than 10 occasions since 1988 to amicably resolve the vexed border dispute.

The last official-level discussion between the two states on the boundary issue was held in Guwahati on April 25 to find an amicable solution to the long-standing dispute, he said.

Sapdanga said that the next round of official-level talks has



been proposed to be held in Mizoram, but the exact date of that is yet to be finalised.

Apart from ministerial-level and official-level talks, the two states are also taking steps to resolve the dispute by providing important border-related documents to each other, he said.

The home minister said that the Mizoram government formed a study team to task with collecting important documents to strengthen the state's claim.

Sapdanga also said that the state government has constructed and maintained border roads along the state border with Assam.

However, it has stopped maintaining or using some of those roads, as it can induce violation of

the status quo and an agreement signed by the two states in previous talks.

On August 15, police and forest department officials from Assam reportedly entered Saikhawhlir village in west Mizoram's Mamit district and damaged around 290 rubber plants being cultivated by the villagers. The area was claimed by both states.

The incident sparked tensions along the inter-state border, which was soon defused following a meeting between district officials and police officers of the two northeastern neighbours.

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma recently said that he spoke to his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma and both

agreed to continue to maintain status quo on the disputed areas along the inter-state border.

Three Mizoram districts — Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit — share a 164.6 km long border with Assam's Cachar, Sribhumi and Hailakandi districts.

The border dispute between the two northeastern states, which mainly stemmed from two conflicting colonial-era demarcations — one from 1875 under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation and another from 1933, is a long pending issue that has been unresolved till date.

The dispute escalated into violence on several occasions. A clash between police forces of both states near Mizoram's Vairengte village on July 26, 2021, resulted in the death of seven people, including six policemen from Assam. Since August 2021, the two Northeastern states have held four rounds of ministerial-level talks, besides negotiations and virtual meetings at official-level to resolve the decades-old border dispute.

In the last official-level talks held in Guwahati in April, both states agreed to maintain the status quo along the disputed areas and to expedite responses to claims made by Mizoram. (PTI)

'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod': Nagaland Cong stages rally against alleged poll fraud



DIMAPUR, Aug 27: The Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee (NPCC) on Wednesday held a rally in Dimapur under the slogan 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' (Vote thieves, vacate seat) to raise public awareness on alleged assaults on citizens' electoral rights.

Addressing the gathering, AICC in-charge Nagaland and MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka said all rights and privileges enshrined in the Constitution will be taken away by the BJP-led central government if citizens fail to protect it.

"They don't believe in the Constitution," he alleged.

Ulaka claimed that the Congress has "definite proof" of election manipulation in 70-80 Lok Sabha seats during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, asserting that the BJP did not have the real mandate to govern.

"They didn't have the mandate, but due to the Election Commission and 'vote chori', the BJP managed to win some seats. Otherwise,

Modi would not have become the PM," Ulaka claimed.

Stating that the struggle is currently political but will eventually turn into a mass movement, he said, "During the first phase, we fought in Parliament, and now we are taking it to the streets. Our fight is not only on media, but also on the ground to ensure the Constitution is protected."

The Congress, he said, is staging the campaign to protect citizens' electoral rights and warned that if such practices are not stopped, "they will hit the streets in Nagaland and throughout the country."

Ulaka said, "The people of Nagaland will definitely support the Congress, stand up for truth, and help save the Constitution."

He added that the Congress is reorganising its party workers, announcing that Rahul Gandhi will visit the state soon.

AICC secretary in-charge of Nagaland, Christopher Tilak, also ac-

cused the BJP of consistently damaging the values of the Constitution by placing "RSS-trained people" in key institutions.

"They try to dilute constitutional values, and today people have started losing hope in these institutions," he said.

Tilak added that while talk of saving the Constitution was earlier taken lightly, particularly by youngsters, the present is "the right time to convert the abstract concept of the Constitution into a concrete reality that connects with the youth."

NPCC president and Lok Sabha MP Supongmeren Jamir said the Constitution grants every citizen the right to vote, but this right itself is under threat under the present regime.

He asserted that the party is determined to fight and protect citizens' rights, declaring that it is "the only party that safeguards the Constitution, culture, and tradition." (PTI)

Four pistols, seven magazines seized in Tripura

AGARTALA, Aug 27: Four pistols and seven magazines have been seized in West Tripura district, police said on Wednesday.

Acting on a tip-off, police conducted a raid at a house in Madhyapara area under the jurisdiction of Amtali police station on Tuesday night and made the seizure, Superintendent of Police Namit Pathak said.

The house belongs to Dipankar Sen, a known offender against whom several cases, mostly under the Arms Act, have been registered.

Sen, who was arrested earlier in connection with arms-related offences, is currently in jail.

The seized firearms were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination.

Police said that further investigation will be conducted to ascertain whether the seized firearms were intended for local criminal networks or were part of a larger smuggling racket.

Over the last few years, security forces have intensified operations against the smuggling of illegal firearms and other contraband items through the India-Bangladesh border, they said. (PTI)

ED seizes cash, freezes bank accounts in ₹ 200 crore money laundering case linked to Tripura Man

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Aug 27: The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Agartala Sub-Zonal Office, has seized cash worth ₹ 7 lakh and frozen bank accounts containing around ₹ 60 lakh during search operations conducted on August 26 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The ED has carried out the search operation on August 26 in four locations of the Tripura including in the house of Utpal Kumar Chowdhury.

The searches were carried out at multiple locations in Tripura, Delhi, Haryana, and West Bengal in connection with an ongoing investigation against Utpal Kumar Chowdhury of Tripura.

According to ED, the probe began on the basis of several FIRs filed by West Bengal Police against Chowdhury. Investigations revealed that Chowdhury had floated a web of entities with names resembling reputed government departments and PSUs such as "Directorate of Higher Education, Tripura," "Bridge and Roof Company," and "Directorate of Apparel Council of India." By pos-



ing as a senior government official, he allegedly duped individuals and institutions by falsely promising government contracts, including mid-day meal tenders and student admissions.

Chowdhury also fraudulently took control of an NGO — M/s Chaitakhal Swamiji Seva Sangha, registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) — and used it to launder money. The ED's preliminary investigation found that over ₹200 crore was routed through this NGO to entities in Haryana, Kolkata, and Delhi under the guise of bogus rubber trade. The purported rubber transactions existed only on paper, with no evidence of actual transportation or sales.

During the searches, the ED seized incriminating digital and physical evidence, fake IDs of the Ministry of Home Affairs, stamps of various Tripura government departments and PSUs, and documents indicating investments in real estate and land across the state. The agency also found that Chowdhury enjoyed proximity to senior Tripura government officers, who allegedly introduced him to businessmen as a high-ranking official. Some of these officers are suspected of having received large sums of money.

Utpal Kumar Chowdhury is currently lodged in a jail in Haryana. The ED said further investigation is underway.

Drug worth ₹ 10 lakh seized in Manipur, woman held

IMPHAL, Aug 27: Security forces arrested a 49-year-old woman after drugs worth ₹ 10 lakh were recovered from her residence in Manipur's Churachandpur district, police said on Wednesday.

She was apprehended from her house at S Munnuam area in the district on Monday, a senior officer said.

"Psychotropic substances of WY tablets popularly known as Yaba tablets, numbering 1200 and worth approximately ₹ 10 lakhs, were seized from her possession," he said.

Yaba tablets, containing a mixture of methamphetamine and caffeine, also called the 'crazy drug', are banned in India.

Meanwhile, one active cadre of the banned Prepara (PRO) was arrested from Napet Pali in Imphal East district on Monday, police said.

Security forces have been conducting search operations in Manipur since ethnic violence broke out two years ago.

More than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in the ethnic strife between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023.

The Centre had imposed the President's rule in Manipur after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned.

The state assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation. (PTI)



Portion of landslide-hit NH in Kohima closed for vehicular traffic

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Aug 27: Kohima DC B Henok Buchem on Wednesday said National Highway 29 at Chainage KM 175.350, near the Old KMC dumping site, will remain temporarily closed for all forms of vehicular movement with immediate effect until further notice. The stretch of the road was damaged by landslides recently. In an order, Buchem said the condition of the affected portion of the highway was thoroughly assessed by the authorities and found to be unfit for vehicular traffic.

As an alternative arrangement, he said, light motor vehicles will be diverted through the Jotsoma Bypass Road. Heavy vehicles and other district-bound traffic, along with military and paramilitary vehicles, compact and mid-size pick-up trucks, and all types of heavy

and mid-size commercial passenger vehicles, will be diverted via the Peducha Bridge—Tsisema (10 Mile Road). The DC said any violation of this order will be liable for prosecution. In a separate traffic advisory on Wednesday, Buchem said a landslide on National Highway 2 at Chainage KM 12.900, near Tsisema Basa, resulted in the complete blockage of the highway. He said the road from High Court Junction, Meriema—Nagaland University Campus—Tsisema Basa, near 5 Sector Assam Rifles/Koinonia Prayer Centre junction, has been designated as the alternative route for light motor vehicles. The advisory said due to the narrow passage along this alternative route, traffic for heavy vehicles, including those bound for Manipur and Dimapur, will be regulated by the traffic police after assessing the condition of the road.

CM lays foundation stone for trauma centre at Tripura Medical College



AGARTALA, Aug 27: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for a trauma centre at Tripura Medical College (TMC) on the occasion of its 20th foundation day.

The centre will come up in a proposed G+13 building, marking a major step towards enhancing critical care facilities in the state.

"When the right people are placed in the right position, institutions thrive. Tripura Medical College is a perfect example," said Saha, who himself was a faculty member of the medical college before joining politics.

Highlighting the steady progress of the college, the CM credited its leadership for efficient management.

Saha emphasised the importance of

proper upkeep of medical infrastructure, suggesting that at least 10 per cent of departmental budgets should be earmarked for maintenance.

He also urged doctors to continuously upgrade their skills in line with evolving technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, which is increasingly impacting medical education and healthcare delivery.

Addressing concerns about patients seeking treatment outside the state, Saha reassured that Tripura is now equipped with most modern healthcare facilities.

"Many families used to sell their jewelry or property to send patients elsewhere for treatment. Now, they should know that almost all facilities are available within the state itself," he said.

On future expansion, the CM informed that there is a proposal to increase medical seats from 400 to 450, which the government is actively considering.

He also recalled with pride his association with the institution, quoting the governor's praise for the college's infrastructure during a recent visit. (PTI)

351 people died due to drug abuse in Mizoram since 2020: Minister



AIZAWL, Aug 27: At least 351 people, including 46 women, have died in Mizoram in the last five years due to drug abuse, state Excise and Narcotics Minister Lalnghinghlova Hmar informed the assembly on Wednesday.

In a written reply to a question from opposition Mizo National Front (MNF) member K Laldawngliana, Hmar said that 78 people out of 351 died of heroin abuse, while 273 people died due to abuse of multiple drugs, during the period from 2020 to August 8 this year.

He said that the victims were in the age group of 19-57 years.

During the period, the highest number of drug-related deaths was recorded in 2023 at 76, followed by 67 in both 2020 and 2024, he said.

A total of 51 people, including seven women, died of drug abuse from January

to August 8 this year, he said.

Among Mizoram's 11 districts, Aizawl reported the highest number of deaths due to drug abuse at 274, followed by the state's second-largest district of Lunglei, at 69. Champhai district, which borders Myanmar, reported 58 deaths, Hmar said.

Hnahthial district reported the lowest number of deaths at one, he said.

Hmar said that various drugs, including 212.987 kg of heroin, 568.991 kg of methamphetamine and 1,566.662 kg of ganja, altogether worth ₹ 152.43 crore, were seized by the Excise and Narcotics Department during the period.

A total of 4,400 people were also arrested and booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act during the period, he said.

On Tuesday, Home Minister K Sapdanga said that the state police, in coordination with the Excise Department and the state's largest civil society organisation, Young Mizo Association (YMA), will launch a massive fight against drugs.

He said that drug smugglers and addicts commit theft and other crimes, endangering society, which demands the need to fight against them.

Mizoram has been grappling with the menace of drug abuse and drug trafficking from the south-east Asian countries, particularly Myanmar with which it shares a 510-km-long porous border.

According to police data accessed by PTI, a total of 185 Myanmar nationals were booked for drug smuggling cases from 2020 to May 2025.

Recently, Chief Minister Lalduhoma linked the steady inflow of narcotics to Mizoram to the state's proximity to the 'Golden Triangle', a mountainous region in northeastern Myanmar, northwestern Thailand and northern Laos notorious for drug production and trade. (PTI)

Meghalaya educator selected for National Teachers' Award, CM hails recognition

SHILLONG, Aug 27: A school teacher in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district has been named among the recipients of the National Teachers' Award, officials said on Wednesday.

Heipor Uni Bang, principal and founder of K B Memorial Secondary School in the remote Wapung area, will receive the award from President Droupadi Murmu at an event in Delhi on Teachers' Day on September 5, they said.

Bang is among the 45 awardees from across the nation, including seven from the Northeast.

Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma congratulated the educator. Taking to X, he said the recognition "brings great pride to Meghalaya", and reflects his "unwavering dedication and impactful contribution to education".

Khliehriat MLA Kyrmen Shylla said that Bang began teaching in 2009 after completing an MSc in Botany and went on to establish the school in 2013 to provide affordable English-medium education, charging monthly fees of ₹ 200. The school offers free education to persons with disabilities.

Bang completed his PhD in environmental management in 2024.

Community leaders and educationists congratulated Bang, describing him as an inspiration and a shining example of vision and service in the teaching profession. (PTI)

COMPREHENSIVE MAINTENANCE AND SCHEDULE MAINTENANCE FOR INVERTERS

E-Tender Notice No. Sr. DEE/G&CH/LMG/20 of 2025-26, dated: 21-08-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:
SN.1: Tender No: EL/LMG/25-26/23.
Name of work: Comprehensive Maintenance and four monthly preventive schedule maintenance for 25 KVA inverters fitted in RMPU AC Coaches of M/s Autometers Alliance Ltd. make for a period of three (03) years. Tender Value: ₹2,01,03,028.02. Earnest Money: ₹2,50,500.00. E-tender will be closed at 11:00 hrs. on 12-09-2025 and Opened at 11:30 hrs. on 12-09-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 11:00 hrs. on 12-09-2025 on website <http://www.irops.gov.in>

Sr. DEE/G&CH, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers with a Smile

CARRYING OUT PERIODICAL MAINTENANCE AND ATTENDING FAILURES

E-Tender No.: SNT-19-LMG-2025-26 Date: 21-08-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:
Name of work & its location: Carrying out periodical Maintenance and attending failures of 85 Nos. Kirloskar make Environment friendly DG Sets (15 KVA 58 Nos & 7.5/5 KVA 27 Nos) for a period of 01 (one) year in Kamakhya-Jamguri section including Chaparmukh branch of Lumding Division. Tender Value: ₹30,94,511.38/- Earnest Money: ₹61,900/- Date & Time of closing of tender: 15:00 hrs. of 12-09-2025 & opening at 15:30 hrs. of 12-09-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.irops.gov.in

DSTE, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

Opportunities to do diverse roles don't come that often: 'Gullak' actor Vaibhav Raj Gupta

MUMBAI, Aug 27: A lot of hard work has gone into earning the trust of filmmakers and the audience, says actor Vaibhav Raj Gupta, who found his way into the hearts of fans with slice-of-life show "Gullak" and won praise for his gripping portrayal of a cop in "Mandala Murders". Gupta said it has been a game of patience to find good projects like "Mandala Murders", which released on Netflix in July. Now, he is happy that he was able to show his range as an actor in both comedy and drama.

"I was dreaming about this phase and finally I'm living it, where the work that you do gets appreciated. It feels beautiful and a lot of hard work has gone behind this. I've always believed in choosing the right work, which is why I don't do much work."

"For instance, I waited a lot to get something like 'Mandala Murders' where I can show that I can do both drama and comedy. But the opportunities to do something different won't come that often," the actor told PTI in an interview.

The Vaani Kapoor-fronted series revolves around a chilling conspiracy of ritualistic killings tied to a centuries-old secret society. Gupta's cop and Kapoor's investigative officer work together to crack the case.

Gupta, who hails from Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh, said he has always tried to do something different because "that's where the fun is and that's where you learn".

"Sometimes, you think that you're not making money, people aren't watching, you've been out of the industry for so many years, people forget but then it's okay. But then something like 'Mandala'

will come and it will change," the actor, who portrays Vikram Singh in the show, said.

After appearing in more than half a dozen short films, Gupta made his debut in Bollywood with a supporting role in the Sonakshi Sinha-starrer "Noor". He later appeared in a small role in Prime Video show "Inside Edge" and followed it up with appearances in web series "Good Bad Girl" and "Mai".

But it was "Gullak" that made him a household name as Annu Bhaiya. In the show, he plays the role of the resourceful elder son of the Mishra family at the centre of the story.

Next on Gupta's wish list are filmmakers like Imtiaz Ali, Vikramaditya Motwane, and Anurag Kashyap.

"I would like to work with Imtiaz sir on a musical romantic film, like 'Tamasha', 'Rockstar', I feel like there's so much in me, the romance part. I want to explore my negative side too. I want to work with Vikram sir, Anurag sir, and Amrit, who's directed 'Gullak'," he said.

When he is not acting, Gupta pens poems about his experiences. He finds it enriching as he believes it is an outlet to express himself creatively.

"I write every night, I love it, and enjoy my solitude where I'm writing about an observation, a thought. If my heart is broken, or something has happened, I write it. If I'm not writing anything for like a month or 15 days, I feel that urge to write. If I end up writing poetry, I feel like I've done my job. Poetry makes me vulnerable, and it makes me understand the energies. So, it helps me a lot in different ways," he said. (PTI)

FROM 'VAASTAV' TO 'ABCD 2': MEMORABLE GANPATI SONGS IN HINDI CINEMA

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: From soulful prayer tracks to high-octane numbers, songs dedicated to Lord Ganesha have become a staple in Bollywood, capturing both faith and festivity on screen.

Here's a look at some of the most memorable songs that capture the festive spirit of Ganesh Chaturthi.

"Shendoor Lal Chadhayo": A devotional aarti dedicated to Lord Ganesha, the classic track is from filmmaker Mahesh Manjrekar's gangster classic "Vaastav". Sung by Ravindra Sathe, the song captures Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations in Maharashtra.

Over the years, it has become a staple during Ganesh Utsav in households and pandals alike, often played in its original form as part of rituals.

"Deva Shree Ganesha": Composed by Marathi duo Ajay-Atul, the song often accompanies the festivities of Ganesh Chaturthi. The song is from the 2012 remake of "Agnepath", starring Hrithik Roshan, Sanjay Dutt and Priyanka Chopra. The video for the song captures a tense moment with the backdrop of the festival's celebrations.

The original 1990 hit "Agnepath", starring Amitabh Bachchan, also featured a popular track around the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi -- "Ganpati Apne Gaon Chale" -- sung by Sudesh Bhosle, Kavita Krishnamurthy and Anupama Deshpande.

"Gajanana": The song featured in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 2015 period epic "Bajirao Mastani", starring Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone and Priyanka Chopra. Sung by Sukhwinder Singh, the song is staged during a crucial moment where Peshwa Bajirao invokes Lord Ganesha amidst the roar of dhols and dramatic visuals.

"Mourya Re": A popular track from Farhan Akhtar's "Don" remake in 2006, this energetic track is sung by Shankar Ma-

hadevan. Featuring Shah Rukh Khan, the song blends his dance moves with the grandeur of Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations in Mumbai.

"Ganpati Aarti": Sung by veteran star Amitabh Bachchan, the song appears in his 2017 crime-thriller "Sarkar 3". It features Bachchan praying in front of the Lord Ganesha while the violence unfolds behind the scenes.

"Deva Ho Deva": Sung by Kishore Kumar and Asha Bhosle, the song from the 1989 film "Ilaaka" features Mithun Chakraborty and Madhuri Dixit dancing to its upbeat tune amid the festive celebrations.

"Sadda Dil Vi Tu" (Ga Ga Ga Ganpati): It is a standout song from the 2013 film "ABCD: Any Body Can Dance". The track is sung by Hard Kaur with music by Sachin Tiwari.

Featuring choreographer Ganesh Acharya alongside dance talents Dharmesh Yelande, Punit Pathak, and Lauren Gottlieb, the sequence showcases a Ganpati performance in the midst of a dance competition.

"Hey Gananaraya": "ABCD 2" also featured a popular track, centered around the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi. Pictured on Varun Dhawan and Shraddha Kapoor, the song is choreographed as a high-octane stage performance, blending devotional fervour with modern dance moves.

"Jai Ganesha": Sung and composed by Vishal Mehra, the song features in the 2023 film "Ganpath: A Hero is Born". The song sees actor Tiger Shroff, known for his dancing, shaking his leg in front of a Lord Ganesha idol.

"Suno Ganpati Bappa Morya": A fun and peppy track from the Varun Dhawan starrer Judwaa 2, the song is sung by Amit Mishra with music by Sajid Nadiadwala. Featuring Dhawan's character Raja, the video captures the high-spirited Ganeshotsav celebrations with youthful dance moves. (PTI)



Anupam Kher extends greetings on Ganesh Chaturthi

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Veteran actor Anupam Kher on Wednesday wished his fans and followers on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi.

The 70-year-old shared a video of him joining hands while a montage of the festival played in the background.

"Many many congratulations and best wishes to all of you on Ganesh Chaturthi! May Ganesh ji give you all the happiness and peace always! Ganpati Bappa Maurya," Kher wrote in the caption.

His "Tanvi The Great" co-star, Shubangi Dutt replied in a comment, writing, "Wishing you a very very Happy Ganesh Chaturthi to you and your family Sir!!"

Actors Kareena Kapoor Khan, Akshay Kumar, Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Anil Kapoor also conveyed greetings to their fans.

"Celebrations are always brighter with Bappa's blessings," Kareena wrote on Instagram Story.

Kher was last seen in "Tanvi The Great" which he also directed and produced. It focused on autism and the Indian army. He is set to appear next in the Vivek Agnihotri-directed "The Bengal Files". (PTI)



Ravi Teja's 'Mass Jathara' postponed post industry-wide strikes

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Telugu film "Mass Jathara", starring Ravi Teja and Sreeleela, is no longer releasing on August 27 due to industry-wide strikes, its makers said on Tuesday. The production house Sithara Entertainments, posted the news on its X handle. "Due to recent industry-wide strikes and unforeseen delays in wrapping up crucial content, #MassJathara will not be arriving on its planned date of Aug 27th."

"But the team is working relentlessly to bring you the BIGGEST MASS FEAST in theatres soon! New release date will be announced shortly," they added.

The Telugu Film Industry Employees' Federation called for a strike on August 4 owing to the longstanding demand for 30% increase in employee pay. The strike ended 18 days later with Telangana CM Revanth Reddy in-



tervening.

"Mass Jathara" is directed by Bhanu Bogavarapu and produced by Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas.

Teja was last seen in the 2024 film "Mr. Bachchan" and is also working on an untitled film with Tirumala Kishore. (PTI)

Opportunities to do diverse roles don't come that often: 'Gullak' actor Vaibhav Raj Gupta

MUMBAI, Aug 27: A lot of hard work has gone into earning the trust of filmmakers and the audience, says actor Vaibhav Raj Gupta, who found his way into the hearts of fans with slice-of-life show "Gullak" and won praise for his gripping portrayal of a cop in "Mandala Murders". Gupta said it has been a game of patience to find good projects like "Mandala Murders", which released on Netflix in July. Now, he is happy that he was able to show his range as an actor in both comedy and drama.

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something like 'Mandala Murders' where I can show that I can do both drama and comedy. But the opportunities to do something different won't come that often," the actor told PTI in an interview.

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the actor, who portrays Vikram Singh in the show, said.

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Inaugural Archery Premier League in Delhi from October 2-12, says AAI

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: The inaugural edition of the Archery Premier League will take place at the national capital's Yamuna Sports Complex from October 2 to 12, the sport's apex body said on Wednesday.

The Archery Association of India (AAI) also unveiled the league's logo, symbolising dynamism, focus and precision that define the precision sport.

Apart from supporting India's Olympic movement, the Archery Premier League also aims to intersect sports, entertainment, education in history and culture to differentiate itself from other sporting leagues, and increase the global popularity of the sport, the national federation said in a press release.

AAI president Arjun Munda said, "We are proud to host this landmark event at the nation's capital, reflecting our commitment to elevate the sport, both nationally and globally. The dates have been decided keeping multiple factors in mind, including the schedule and workload of archers and the weather conditions in the city."

"With this league, we aim to not only showcase top-tier talent from around the world but also highlight and celebrate India's rich archery heritage. The tournament will feature 36 Indian archers and 12 top global players divided into six franchises. The details regarding the franchises will be announced soon. (PTI)

Anish Bhanwala wins 25m rapid fire pistol silver at Asian C'ships

SHYMKENT (KAZAKHSTAN), Aug 27: India's Anish Bhanwala once again showed why he is the best rapid fire pistol shooter in the country, clinching the silver medal in the ongoing Asian Shooting Championships here on Wednesday.

The 22-year-old Olympian finished with a total of 35, just one shy of gold winner Su Lianbo of China. The bronze went to Korea's Lee Jaekyoon.

The Indian had a one-point lead after the first four series but fell behind after that.

Another Indian in the competition, Adarsh Singh, finished fifth. Bhanwala, the 2018 Commonwealth Games gold medalist, was placed sixth with a score of 290 after the precision round of 30 shots on Tuesday, but in the rapid fire round on Wednesday, the Haryana marksman shot a superb 293 to jump to fourth place, aggregating 583 points. (PTI)

Venus Williams will compete in women's doubles at the US Open with 2021 finalist Leylah Fernandez

NEW YORK, Aug 27: Venus Williams will compete in women's doubles at the U.S. Open after receiving a wild-card entry with 2021 singles runner-up Leylah Fernandez on Tuesday.

The 45-year-old Williams is appearing at her first Grand Slam tournament in two years after making a comeback to pro tennis in July following 16 months away from the tour.

She competed in mixed doubles last week, then in singles on Monday night — both also via wild-card invitations from the U.S. Tennis Association.

Williams exited in the first round each time, but was thrilled to be back out on court after dealing with injuries and illness. She had surgery for uterine fibroids last year, and spoke Monday following her three-set exit in singles against 11th-seeded Karolina Muchova about being relieved to be pain-free.

"Oh, what did I prove to myself?" Williams said, repeating part of a reporter's question at her postmatch news conference.

"I think for me, getting back on the court was about giving myself a chance to play more healthy. When you play unhealthy, it's in your mind. It's not just how you feel. You get stuck in your mind, too. So it was nice to be freer."

She was the oldest person to play singles at the U.S. Open

Chopra aims to end DL run with trophy in Final, eyes another 90m throw

ZURICH, Aug 27: Two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra seems primed to reclaim the Diamond League trophy with a repeat of the 90m show that has been the highlight of his season so far when the prestigious 14-leg series draws to a close here on Thursday.

There were four Diamond League meetings which featured men's javelin throw, and Chopra competed in only two, qualifying for the Finals at fourth place with 15 points.

He skipped the Silesia and Brussels legs on August 16 and August 22 respectively. He last won the DL trophy in 2022. The top six in the points table from the four meetings qualify for the Finals here.

Since there are 32 events, both male and female, the DL Final is spread over two days.

Six events men's and women's pole vault, men's and women's shot put, men's long jump, and women's high jump -- are being held on Wednesday, all street events in the Swiss city's Sechselautenplatz.

The remaining 26 events will, however, be held inside the Letzigrund Stadium on Thursday.

The winner of each event at Diamond League Final will be named this year's champion and get a DL trophy as well as prize money ranging from USD 30,000



to USD50,000 and wild card entries to next month's World Championships in Tokyo.

A thrilling contest is on the cards in men's javelin with Tokyo Olympics gold medallist and Paris Games silver winner Chopra facing defending champion Anderson Peters of Grenada as well as Germany's Julian Weber in the seven-man final.

Kenya's 2015 world champion Julius Yego, Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago, and Andrian Mardare of Moldova entered the field as athletes in the top-6 in the points table, while Simon Wieland of Switzerland was also added as the host country's entry.

Peters is also a two-time world champion though his form has not been the best in recent times. He has a season's best of 85.64m -- while finishing third in Doha -- so far. Weber has the longest throw of this year at 91.06m which he produced to beat Chopra in Doha DL on May 16.

Chopra finally breached the

90m mark at Doha with a 90.23m though he finished second behind Weber. The 27-year-old Indian superstar then won the Paris leg on June 20 with a throw of 88.16m while Weber finished second with 87.88m.

The Indian star's 90.23m in Doha DL is the third longest throw of the season.

Luiz Mauricio Da Silva has the second longest of the season -- 91m -- but he has not qualified for the DL Final. Only three javelin throwers could breach the 90m mark so far this season.

Chopra's last event was the NC Classic in Bengaluru on July 5 which he hosted and won with a throw of 86.18m.

Chopra and the 30-year-old Weber have finished 1-2 alternately in the two DL clashes this season, and the contest for glory here is also expected to be between the two.

It has been an eventful year for Chopra. He first achieved the long-awaited 90m throw early in the season, then realised his dream of hosting and competing in a quality event in front of home fans at the NC Classic on July 5 in Bengaluru. On Thursday, he will attempt to regain the DL Trophy which he had won in 2022. He finished runner-up in 2023 and 2024 to Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic and Peterson respectively. (PTI)

Coco Gauff's 1st match with a new serve coach at the US Open is a struggle but also a win

NEW YORK, Aug 27: Coco Gauff's first match since enlisting someone to help with her shaky serving got off to a rocky start at the U.S. Open on Tuesday night. She double-faulted in the very first game -- and a total of 10 times. She got broken in that game, too -- and a total of six times.

The only numbers that truly counted in the end, of course, were the ones on the Arthur Ashe Stadium scoreboard, and those showed that the No. 3-seeded Gauff held on for a 6-4, 6-7 (2), 7-5 victory over Ajla Tomljanovic to reach the second round at Flushing Meadows.

"It wasn't the best," Gauff said, "but I'm happy to get through."

Nothing came easily. Gauff twice led by a break in the second set but couldn't end things. She went up 5-3 in the third and served for the victory at 5-4, but double-faulted twice in a row and missed a pair of forehands to make it 5-all.

That could have been too much to take. Instead, Gauff steadied herself, broke right back, then was able to serve it out on her second

chance to do so, nearly three full hours after the contest began.

"I had so many chances. ... I was just like, Eventually, one of these is going to go my way," she said.

Gauff, who won the first of her two Grand Slam titles at the 2023 U.S. Open as a teenager, added Gavin MacMillan to her coaching team shortly before the start of this tournament. MacMillan is a biomechanics expert who helped current No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka retool her serve a few years ago, and he was in the first row of Gauff's guest box, seated right in front of her mother.

After beating Tomljanovic, Gauff called her practices with MacMillan "really tough" and "mentally exhausting."

"I'm trying to improve with each match," she said.

The problem for Gauff, in a nutshell, has been a propensity to accumulate double-faults. Her 320 entering the U.S. Open were the most on the women's tour this season -- and more than 100 more than anyone else. That included 23 in one match earlier this month, then 14 the next time out.



On Tuesday, as she dealt with the work-in-progress of a tweaked service motion, Gauff began with much slower offerings than she's capable of striking. As the match progressed, and the tension rose, the 21-year-old from Florida reverted to her customary pace, going from averaging just 88 mph on first serves in the first set, to 97 mph in the second and 101 in the third, when Ashe's retractable roof was closed. She cranked one in at 117 mph and even produced one second-serve ace.

What won this one against the 79th-ranked Tomljanovic, an Aus-

tralian best known for defeating Serena Williams at the 2022 U.S. Open in the 23-time major champion's final match of her career, was Gauff's exemplary court coverage and terrific backhand. Appropriately, a down-the-line backhand converted match point, and Gauff waved her arms overhead to rile up the crowd.

Even as Tomljanovic swung away on her big forehand, it was Gauff who got the best of their lengthy exchanges from the baseline.

She also fared well when she pressed forward, winning 12 of the 15 points she ended at the net, including one with a leaping, over-the-shoulder, back-to-the-net volley winner in the third set.

This was Gauff's first match at a Slam since stumbling to a first-round exit at Wimbledon in July, a setback that followed her championship at the French Open in June.

As Gauff moves forward at Flushing Meadows, there is a chance she can overtake Sabalenka and No. 2 Iga Swiatek in the rankings and rise to No. 1 for the first time. (AP)

AIFF faces ban threat as FIFA, AFC set Oct 30 deadline for ratification of constitution

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Indian football is staring at an international ban with world governing body FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation issuing a stern ultimatum to the embattled AIFF that it must adopt and ratify a new constitution by October 30 or risk suspension.

In a hard-hitting two-page letter on Tuesday, addressed to AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey, the two international bodies expressed "profound concern" at the federation's failure to finalise its constitution despite the matter being pending in the Supreme Court since 2017. The top court is scheduled to take up the matter on Thursday.

A suspension would mean national teams and clubs being barred from all international competitions, besides throwing into uncertainty, India's ambitious bid for the 2036 Olympic Games in Ahmedabad.

FIFA and AFC have directed the Chaubey-led AIFF to secure a "definitive order" from the Supreme Court approving the revised constitution, align it with the mandatory statutes of FIFA and AFC, and ratify it at the next General Body meeting before the October 30 deadline.

"Failure to meet this schedule will leave us with no alternative but to refer the matter to the relevant FIFA decision-making body for consideration and decision... including the possibility of suspension," the letter mentions without any ambiguity.

The missive is jointly signed by FIFA Chief Member Associations Officer Elkhan Mammadov and AFC Deputy General Secretary (Member Associations) Vahid Kardany.

This is not the first time Indian football has faced such embarrassment.

In August 2022, FIFA had suspended India for "third-party interference" after a Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) temporarily ran the AIFF.

That ban, imposed when the nation was celebrating its 75th year of independence, was lifted within two weeks after the CoA was dissolved and elections were held when Chaubey defeated football icon Bhaichun Bhutia in a lopsided result.

The world bodies expressed concern at the "continued failure to finalise and implement the revised Constitution of the All India Football Federation (AIFF), a matter that has remained under consideration since proceedings before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in 2017." "Despite repeated assurances, the absence of a clear and compliant governance framework has now created an untenable vacuum and legal uncertainties at the heart of Indian football," it stated.

Calling it a "prolonged impasse"

that has "precipitated a governance and operational crisis," the letter said: "Clubs and players remain uncertain regarding the domestic competition calendar."

"Commercial partnerships beyond December 2025 remain unconfirmed; and essential functions relating to development, competitions, and marketing are increasingly compromised."

Lambasting the lack of financial stability and its "profoundly negative impact on India's football ecosystem", the two bodies said they are worried about the impact on footballers employed by clubs participating in the Indian Super League.

"We have received concerning reports from FIFPRO of the unilateral termination of players' employment contracts by various clubs, as a direct consequence of the current impasse, affecting the players' livelihoods and careers," the letter stated.

Accordingly, the AIFF has been directed to take three immediate steps by the deadline.

"Secure a definitive order from the Supreme Court of India approving the revised AIFF Constitution. Ensure full alignment of the AIFF Constitution with the mandatory provisions of the FIFA and AFC Statutes and regulations."

"Obtain formal ratification of the AIFF Constitution at the next AIFF General Meeting."

Failure to adhere to this obligation may result in sanctions outlined in the FIFA and AFC Statutes, "including the possibility of suspension."

"A suspension of the AIFF would result in the loss of all of its rights as a FIFA and AFC member, as defined in the FIFA and AFC Statutes," it added.

The Supreme Court is set to hear the matter relating to the Master Rights Agreement between AIFF and its commercial partner Football Sports Development Limited on Thursday.

The agreement expires on December 8.

The FSDL last month put the upcoming season "on hold" citing uncertainty over MRA renewal.

That decision forced at least three clubs to suspend operations or delay salaries, and prompted all 11 ISL clubs to warn of an "existential crisis." On August 22, the Supreme Court permitted AIFF and FSDL to hold talks to work out interim measures so that the season can start on time.

Chaubey said the federation would "endeavour to arrive at mutually agreeable measures" with FSDL in good faith, while clubs pressed for an early judgment as it had paralysed the entire football calendar, threatening the survival of players, staff, among others. (PTI)

Plenty to play for as Duleep Trophy returns to its traditional format

BENGALURU, Aug 27: The fringe and aspiring bunch will look to own the elevated Duleep Trophy stage as the red-ball competition returns to its traditional zonal format and marks the start of India's domestic cricket season.

Six zonal teams will take part in the competition that was introduced in the 1960s. The stakeholders were not happy when the event was played among haphazardly arranged India A, B, C and D teams last season before expectedly reverting to the old format.

The tournament, which did not create much buzz earlier, has regained relevance with the BCCI making it mandatory for its star players to take part in domestic events if not on national duty or injured.

Shardul Thakur, who was a part of India's Test squad in England, will captain the West Zone side that includes Shreyas Iyer, Sarfaraz Khan and Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Iyer, who has lost his place in the Indian red-ball team, will be looking to make a mountain of runs. Same is the case for Sarfaraz, who was overlooked for the recent tour of England.

Not being picked for Asia Cup T20 will provided an extra dose of motivation for Iyer, whose exclusion has divided opinions. Jaiswal too was ignored from the Asia Cup squad despite no fault of his own.

His red-ball performances have been special for India, both at home and overseas, and he would be looking to rack up the runs in the middle to kickstart his season.

In the south zone squad led by Tilak Varma, the focus will be on

R Sai Kishore who missed the Buchi Babu tournament due to a hand injury. The likes of K L Rahul and Sai Sudharsan are not featuring in the tournament.

Devdutt Padikkal will be returning to action from an injury and impactful performances may push him back into the national reckoning again. He had made his debut against England last year before losing his place following the Australia tour.

Abhimanyu Easwaran, who warmed the bench for the entire England tour, will be captaining the East Zone unit in the absence of an injured Ishan Kishan.

Understandably, Easwaran would be itching to get in the middle and pile on the runs after enduring his time on the sidelines in the UK.

Despite being part of the Indian squad on multiple occasions, Easwaran has not managed to make his debut and all he can do is continue amassing the runs like he has been in domestic cricket.

In the bowling department, Mohammed Shami's red ball fitness will be judged after he lost his place in the Test side due to lingering injury concerns.

The 34-year-old was not a part of the tours of Australia and England and last played a Test in 2023. Only long spells and plenty of wickets can force the selectors to take note of the skillful operator, who seems to be past his prime.

Shubman Gill was picked to lead North Zone but he is not available for the opening game due to a bout of illness. Vice-captain Ankit Kumar is expected to lead the side



in Gill's absence.

The presence of India's new Test captain in Duleep Trophy would have created a lot more interest in the tournament but he is unavailable for now.

Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana, two pacers who are a part of the Asia Cup squad, would probably play only in the opening game before linking up with the UAE-bound T20 squad.

Arshdeep sat out of all five Tests in England while someone like Anshul Kamboj was able to make his debut despite being a late addition to the squad.

The left-arm pacer is desperate to play Test cricket and for that, he must perform when given an opportunity in domestic red-ball events.

Rana has dropped from the national selectors' radar in the longest format and therefore, he has enough reasons to push himself in

Singh, Snehal Kauthankar.

East Zone: Abhimanyu Easwaran, Sandeep Patnaik, Virat Singh, Denish Das, Sridam Paul, Sharandeep Singh, Kumar Kushagra, Riyan Parag, Utkarsh Singh, Manishi, Suraj Sindhu Jaiswal, Mukesh Kumar, Akash Deep, Mohammed Shami.

West Zone squad: Shardul Thakur, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Aarya Desai, Harvik Desai (wicket-keeper), Shreyas Iyer, Sarfaraz Khan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Jaymeet Patel, Manan Hingrajia, Saurabh Nawale (wicket-keeper), Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Dharmadrashin Jadeja, Tushar Deshpande, Arzan Nagwaswala.

North Zone squad: Shubham Khajuria, Ankit Kumar, Ayush Badoni, Yash Dhull, Ankit Kalsi, Nishant Sandhu, Sahil Lotra, Mayank Dagar, Yudhvir Singh Charak, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Anshul Kamboj, Auqib Nabi, Kanhaiya Wadhawan.

Central Zone squad: Dhruv Jurel, Rajat Patidar, Aryan Juyal, Danish Malewar, Sanjeet Desai, Kuldeep Yadav, Aditya Thakare, Deepak Chahar, Saransh Jain, Ayush Pandey, Shubham Sharma, Yash Rathod, Harsh Dubey, Manav Suthar, Khaleel Ahmed.

NorthEast Zone: Jonathan Rongsen, Akash Kumar Choudhary, Tech Doria, Yumnum Karna-jit, Sedezhaliye Ruperu, Ashish Thapa, Hem Bahadur Chettri, Jehu Anderson, Arpit Subash Bhatwara, Pherojiam Jotin Singh, Palzor Thangam, Ankur Malik, Bishworjit Singh Konhoujam, Aryan Borah, Lamabam Ajay Singh. (PTI)

Amateur Mannat Brar takes first round lead at WPGT

HOSUR (TAMIL NADU), Aug 27: Amateur Mannat Brar struck a purple patch in the middle of the opening round with four birdies in a row and grabbed the first round lead in the 12th leg of Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Wednesday.

Playing in the ₹ 15 lakh prize money event, Mannat shot 2-under 70 for the only under par round of the day at the Clover Greens.

Mannat, who was tied eighth last week in the 11th leg at Prestige Golfshire, was two shots clear of the trio comprising Kriti Chowhan, Jasmine Shekar and Ananya Garg, all of whom shot even par 72.

Mannat opened with a birdie and then dropped shots on the fourth and the sixth to go to 1-over. She then produced four birdies in a row from the ninth to 12th. The birdie run stopped as she had five pars in a row, but unfortunately closed with a bogey at the tricky Par-3 18th.

Kriti, looking for her maiden win on the WPG Tour, birdied the second and the third, but gave back both those shots on the seventh and the eighth. She parred her last 10 holes for her 72.

Jasmine, a multiple winner on the Tour, had an early birdie on the fifth, and then three in a row from the 11th to the 13th. She bogeyed the eighth, ninth, 14th and the 16th for a par score.

Ananya, also in the hunt for her first pro title, had three birdies against three bogeys.

Another amateur Aaradhya Shetty and pro Rhea Jha carded 1-over 73 each to occupy the fifth place.

Last week's runner-up amateur Lavanya Gupta, who is due to attend college in the US soon, and four others -- amateur Diya C Patil, Karishma Govind, Ravjot K Dosanjh and Ananya Datar -- were tied for seventh place with scores of 2-over 74 each.

Lavanya had a good start with birdies on the second and the third but was unable to keep the momentum going. Overall, she had three birdies against five bogeys. (PTI)

Ashwin announces retirement from IPL, says time to become explorer of other leagues



CHENNAI, Aug 27: Veteran India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Wednesday announced his retirement from the Indian Premier League, bringing the curtains down on a 16-year-long association with the tournament months after saying goodbye to international cricket.

Ashwin made the announcement through a social media post.

"They say every ending will have a new start, my time as an IPL cricketer comes to a close today, but my time as an explorer of the game around various leagues begins today," Ashwin posted on X.

"Would like to thank all the franchisees for all the wonderful memories and relationships over the years and most importantly the IPL and the BCCI for what they have given me until now. Look forward to enjoying and making the most of what's ahead of me," he added.

In the IPL, he was one of the brightest minds to play the game, making his debut for Chennai Super Kings in 2009. His last appearance too came in the yellow jersey in IPL 2025, after rejoining CSK for ₹ 9.75 crore following a

decade-long gap.

CSK paid an emotional tribute in a social media post.

"Chepauk's own. The carrom-ball thirupura-sundaran! From your first run-ups in Yellow to the dusty tracks of Anbuden to absolute spin domination in the world's grandest arenas, you've given us everything.

"You've pillared our legacy and made Fortress Chepauk roar like no other! You truly have the streets, Ashwin!" the franchise posted.

The announcement came amid speculations earlier this month that were rife over Ashwin's future at Chennai Super Kings after an underwhelming IPL 2025 season, where he played only nine matches -- his second lowest in a season since he featured in just two games in his debut in 2009.

Amid talk of a possible trade involving Rajasthan Royals skipper Sanju Samson, the veteran off-spinner had admitted he had sought clarity from CSK on his role.

"Last year, I played only nine games; in all my years of playing in the IPL, that was the first year I played just nine games. I always used to play every game... so it was

my first experience like that.

"I asked for clarity from my side, but I asked for it during the IPL season itself," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel in a podcast with Sanju.

The 38-year-old acknowledged the buzz around a possible trade with Samson but stressed that much of it was outside the players' control.

"If Samson's trade is to happen, CSK will have to keep 18 crores free, and then you have to see who you can release to make that space," he said.

"If tomorrow I'm not in the CSK team, it might benefit them -- there's no doubt about that. But it can't all be about me. Right now, there is nothing in my hand. And all these rumours do not come from the player... there are a lot of layers to this."

Ashwin had retired from international cricket in December last year during the tour of Australia after a decorated career that saw him become India's second-highest wicket-taker (537) in Tests behind Anil Kumble (619).

Overall, he featured in 221 IPL matches, taking 187 wickets at an

average of 30.22 with best figures of 4/34. With the bat, he scored 833 runs with a highest of 50 and an average of 13.02.

Ashwin was an integral member of CSK's successive title-winning campaigns in 2010 and 2011 and also turned out for the now defunct Rising Pune Supergiant, Punjab Kings, Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan Royals during his long career in the league.

Some of Ashwin's finest IPL moments came in his early years with CSK, especially bowling in the Powerplay against marauding batters like Chris Gayle and keeping them quiet.

It was in his first three seasons under MS Dhoni that Ashwin's carrom ball flourished, eventually propelling him into the Indian team.

In the later years, Ashwin switched franchises as there were captaincy ambitions and he even briefly captained Punjab Kings.

But as the league evolved, his attacking mindset and constant experimentation sometimes came at a cost with his stock falling in the later years.

With IPL batters adopting an attacking philosophy, franchises increasingly favoured wicket-to-wicket left-arm orthodox spinners who could also chip in with the bat. It was an area where Ashwin's returns dipped with the bat.

Despite that, his comeback to CSK in 2024-25 after a decade following an intense bidding war was one of the big stories of the mega auction, driven largely by CSK patriarch N Srinivasan's wish to bring one of the franchise's protégés back.

Ashwin's IPL career also had its share of controversy.

The 2019 'Mankad' dismissal of Rajasthan Royals' Jos Buttler while playing for Kings XI Punjab sparked a widespread debate on "spirit of cricket."

The two later buried the hatchet when Ashwin joined Buttler at Rajasthan Royals in 2022. (PTI)

Gill, Rohit continue to top ODI batting chart



DUBAI, Aug 27: Indian batting mainstays Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma continued to remain at the top of the rankings for ODI batters with Virat Kohli at number four, even as Australian players made big gains after feasting on South Africa in the recent series finale in Mackay.

Gill (784 rating points) and Rohit (756) held the number one and number two spot respectively with Pakistan's Babar Azam (739) rounding out the top three. Kohli has got 736 points.

The Indians have not featured in ODIs in recent months but Kuldeep Yadav (650) and Ravindra Jadeja (616) still remained static at number three and number nine in the latest ODI rankings for bowlers.

While Rohit and Kohli have retired from T20Is and Test cricket, both remain active in the ODI format.

Both Rohit and Kohli last played ODIs in February 2025 during the ICC Champions Trophy in the UAE, where they played pivotal roles in India's title-winning campaign.

Australia amassed an imposing 431/2 in the 50-over match at Mackay with a trio of their batters in Travis Head (142), Mitch Marsh (100) and Cameron Green (118 not out) cashing in with a century.

All three made good ground on the rankings as a result, with Head gaining one place to move to equal 11th, Marsh jumping four rungs to move to 44th and Green rising a whopping 40 slots to be 78th.

Australian teammate Josh Inglis also made ground on the list, with the right-hander improving 23 spots to move to 64th as a result of his innings of 87 during the second match of the series against the Proteas.

The competition is tighter at the top of the rankings for ODI bowlers, with Sri Lanka spinner Maheesh Theekshana joining fellow tweaker Keshav Maharaj at the top on 671 rating points following the completion of the series between South Africa and Australia.

Maharaj lost ground after picking up figures of 1/57 in the series finale, with his rating dropping equal with Theekshana even as the Sri Lankan spinner didn't feature across the week.

The biggest mover on the ODI rankings for bowlers came via Lungi Ngidi, with the South Africa speedster gaining six places to move to 28th following his series-high seven scalps across the three games against Australia.

Australia duo Sean Abbott (up nine places to equal 48th) and Nathan Ellis (up 21 spots to 65th) also made ground on the list for following some decent showings during the series with the Proteas. (PTI)



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