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NATION

7

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- Latest data showing 7.8 pc GDP growth 'hardest slap of reality' for Rahul Gandhi: BJP
- 11 dead in cloudburst, landslide in J-K's Reasi, Ramban districts
- BJP workers storm Bihar Cong HQ over 'abusive language' targeting PM
- AICC general secy Saptagiri Ulaka praises Rahul's efforts to safeguard Constitution



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'Push back' is happening on two fronts in state, says Assam CM Himanta claims Centre's support to eviction drives

GUWAHATI, Aug 30: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday claimed that the Centre 'completely supports' the state government's eviction drive, which was "evident" from Union Home Minister Amit Shah's speech here the previous day.

Shah made it clear that Assam and the entire country will be freed of illegal infiltrators, and the BJP government in the state had launched a drive to clear encroachments, which was "opposed by the Congress", Sarma said at a press conference.

"The Centre completely supports the Assam government's eviction drive, and will extend all possible help to ensure its logical conclusion," he said.

Evictions will continue in the state as "we are committed to free encroached land", the CM said.

Sarma had claimed over 160 sq km land has been cleared of en-



croachment since his government took over in May 2021.

He had said that all unauthorised occupation of forest land, VGR (Village Grazing Reserve), PGR (Professional Grazing Reserve), Satras, Namghars, and other public areas would be cleared in a phased manner.

Most of the people displaced due to the eviction drive are from the Bengali-speaking Muslims community, who claim that their ancestors had moved and settled in the areas where drives were carried out after their land in the 'Char' or riverine areas were washed away, due to erosion by the Brahmaputra river.

Regarding the issue of infiltration, Sarma said the 'push back' is happening on two fronts in the state, with action being taken against both fresh immigrants and those residing after entering post-1971.

"Foreigners who have come post-1971 and residing inside the state are being pushed back under the Immigrant Expulsion Act, which empowers us to do so," he said.

In the case of fresh immigrants, "we are pushing them back as soon as they are attempting to enter the state from neighbouring Bangladesh", the chief minister said.

"The process of push back is on and will continue," he asserted.

Sarma said the home minister also asserted that Assam cannot be ruled by people who make frequent visits to (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Abuses against PM: Himanta slams unapologetic Cong

GUWAHATI, Aug 30: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday claimed that the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi, instead of apologising for the alleged abuses against Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar, are trying to 'politicise' the matter.

BJP leaders have been attacking the Congress after a purported video showed an unidentified person using a Hindi expletive against Modi from a dais raised during the yatra in Darbhanga town, from where Rahul Gandhi, her sister Priyanka Vadra and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav had left for Muzaffarpur on motorcycles on Wednesday.

PTI could not independently verify the authenticity of the video.

"Far from apologising, the Congress is trying to give a political colour by alleging that a BJP

worker from Madhya Pradesh was arrested in this connection," Sarma said at a press conference here.

The Bihar government has already arrested one person in this connection, and the search is on for another named Naushad, he said.

Sarma also claimed, "The Congress cannot imagine that anyone other than those from the Gandhi family can become a prime minister in the country. This is the Congress mentality, and Rahul, Sonia and Priyanka think the PM's chair is for them."

Modi has "demolished their arrogance" and the PM chair is "not reserved for the Gandhi family", Sarma claimed.

Asserting that the PM has taken India to "great heights" in the last 11 years of the NDA rule at the Centre, the Assam CM alleged that Congress leaders with their 'feudal

mentality' are "not able to tolerate" the country's rise in the world.

"For the last 11 years, our PM has been welcomed across the world in a manner that the Gandhi family could have never imagined," he said.

People will give a befitting reply to the Congress in the Bihar elections, he said.

"Earlier, too, they had given a reply to the Congress and will continue to do so in the future," the CM added.

Speaking on Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind president Maulana A Madani's allegation that Sarma was systematically targeting Muslims through the state's eviction drives, the CM claimed, "Forces like him and others are trying to make Assam an Islamic fundamentalist state."

On Madani's claim that he had written to Sonia Gandhi not to give Sarma a (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

After a gap of 7 years, PM Modi lands in China All eyes on Modi's talks with President Xi Jinping today



TIANJIN, Aug 30: After a gap of over seven years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in China on Saturday evening on a keenly watched visit that assumed greater significance in view of a sudden downturn in India-US ties triggered by Washington's policies on trade and tariff.

Modi is visiting this northern Chinese city primarily to attend the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on August 31 and September 1.

However, his scheduled meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sunday on the margins of the summit has assumed greater significance in the face of Washington's tariff tussle that has impacted almost all leading economies across the world.

In the talks, Modi and Xi are expected to take stock of India-China economic ties and deliberate on steps to further normalise relations that came under severe strain following the eastern Ladakh border row.

"Landed in Tianjin, China. Looking forward to deliberations at the SCO Summit and meeting various world leaders," the prime minister said in a so-

cial media post, shortly after arriving here from Japan in his second and final leg of his two-nation trip.

Modi was accorded a warm welcome at his hotel by a group of artists with Indian classical music and dance.

The prime minister is also expected to hold bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and a number of other leaders on the sidelines of the SCO summit.

Ahead of his trip to Tianjin, Modi said it is important for India and China to work together to bring stability to the world economic order.

In an interview with Japan's The Yomiuri Shimbun, Modi said stable, predictable, and amicable bilateral relations between India and China can have a positive impact on regional and global peace and prosperity.

"Given the current volatility in the world economy, it is also important for India and China, as two major economies, to work together to bring stability to the world economic order," Modi said in the interview published on Friday.

Modi's trip to China comes less than a (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam govt provides scooters to over 9,700 community cadres

GUWAHATI, Aug 30: The Assam government on Saturday provided scooters to more than 9,700 community cadres under the 'Sakhi Express' initiative to strengthen activities of self-help groups (SHGs).

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma distributed the two-wheelers at a function here, urging the 'Jeevika Sakhis' and 'Bank Sakhis', among others, to ensure a thriving SHG ecosystem in the state.

"CM Dr. @himantabiswa today distributed scooters to 9,704 Community Cadres under the 'Sakhi Express' initiative at Khanapara. The CM also launched the Livelihood Rural Express Scheme to provide 51 business vehicles to Cluster-Level Federations," the chief minister's office (CMO) said in a post on X.

Both initiatives aim to strengthen SHG activities and promote women empowerment in rural areas, it added.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarma said the scooters are being provided to make work easier for the community cadres, who have to travel to re-



mote areas.

"To empower them and ensure their hassle-free and safe travel while on duty, I distributed scooters to over 9,700 community cadres. The over 20,000-strong team of community cadres will also automatically get Orunodoi, our monthly financial assistance scheme," he said.

The chief minister emphasised that the 'Jeevika Sakhis', 'Bank Sakhis' and others, who are part of the broader community cadre

framework, play an important role in ensuring that the SHG ecosystem thrives.

"These cadres are the backbone of the SHGs," Sarma stressed.

"This initiative is both a tribute to their dedication and a significant step towards empowering women," he added.

The chief minister urged all the Sakhis to wear helmets while riding scooters and said the government will also give ₹ 500 every month for fuel.

Sarma stressed the role of women in the development and progress of a state, and said the government has adopted several schemes for women empowerment such as Orunodoi, Nijut Moira and Mukhya Mantr Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan.

As a result of various efforts of the state government, a new generation of women has come forward who have become role models in the society, he added.

The chief minister said that the efforts of the Jeevika Sakhis have led to the inclusion of around 40 lakh women in SHGs and they are engaged in various productive activities.

He said that about 3 lakh SHGs have received revolving funds worth ₹ 556 crore, more than 2 lakh SHGs have received community investment funds worth ₹ 1,089 crore while about 7.50 lakh SHGs have received bank loans worth ₹ 16,000 crore.

Nearly 99 per cent women beneficiaries of SHGs have repaid their bank loan, he added. An official statement said that the state government had (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Two wardens held for drug smuggling at Nagaon Central Jail

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Aug 30: Two wardens of Nagaon Central Jail have been arrested on charges of smuggling drugs into the prison, Nagaon police said on Saturday.

The accused, identified as Upen Hazarika and Biraj Patangia, were allegedly involved in bringing in banned substances, including ganja, and selling them to inmates.

Police said the arrests followed a surprise inspection of the jail on Thursday by Nagaon Deputy Commissioner Debashish Sarma and Superintendent of Police Swapnil Deka, during which evidence of a drug trade inside the facility was detected.

Following the inspection, the DC wrote to the Jail Superintendent and the Home Department seeking action.

Ajit Doley, Deputy Inspector General of Prisons, Jorhat Range, also visited the jail on Friday to conduct an inquiry into the matter. Police said (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Massive transformation of healthcare sector in last 10 years: Sonowal

GUWAHATI, Aug 30: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday said the country's healthcare sector has undergone a major transformation over the last decade, with focus on infrastructure, accessibility, affordability and innovation.

The expansion of the AIIMS network to different corners of the country has brought quality health services to the doorstep of people, he maintained.

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways was speaking at the inauguration of the INI Radiology Update 2025, organised by the Radiological Forum for Institutes of National Importance (INIs) in collaboration with AIIMS Guwahati, an official statement said.

The conclave brought together radiologists, clinicians, researchers and scientists from across India and abroad.

Held under the theme 'Advancing Imaging & Interventional Radiology', the meet seeks to promote collaboration and innovation in radiology and allied disciplines.

The three-day INI Radiology Update 2025 will feature lectures, panel discussions and workshops on recent innovations in imaging, interventional radiology and artificial intelli-

gence applications in healthcare.

Sonowal said the conclave is a landmark initiative that not only strengthens academic exchange but also reinforces India's vision of accessible and innovative healthcare.

Highlighting the transformation of the country's healthcare sector since 2014, he said the system has been reshaped from infrastructure to access, from affordability to innovation.

Noting the expansion of the AIIMS network, Sonowal said from seven such institutes in 2014, it has now increased to 23, including AIIMS-Guwahati, which has brought world-class healthcare to the doorstep of the people of the North East.

He also mentioned of schemes such as Ayushman Bharat-PM Jan Arogya Yojana, which has provided financial protection to over 55 crore citizens, and the Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana, which with more than 11,000 kendras has brought affordable medicines to millions of families.

Sonowal maintained that medical education has also witnessed expansion, with the number of colleges and MBBS seats more than doubling in the last decade, thereby addressing the shortage of doctors and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Vrindavani Vastra depicts episodes from the life of Lord Krishna British Museum to loan 'Vrindavani Vastra' to Assam in 2027: Himanta

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 30: In a historic cultural development, the famed Vrindavani Vastra — a 16th-century silk textile created under the guidance of Vaishnav saint Srimanta Sankardeva — will return to Assam on loan from the British Museum in London for an 18-month display in 2027, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Saturday.

The Chief Minister said that the agreement followed years of persistent efforts and came with specific conditions laid down by the British Museum. Among them is the requirement of a state-of-the-art museum with advanced environmental and security measures to preserve the priceless textile during its stay in Assam.

"The British Museum has agreed to loan the textile, provided that a museum meeting international standards is created. We have been striving for this moment for a long time, and today,



we are moving towards realising our cherished dream," Sarma said.

He added that the JSW Group has stepped in to build the proposed museum as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative. The state government has already allotted land

for the project.

Officials of the British Museum had inspected existing museums in Assam but found none suitable for the delicate display. This led to the decision to construct a brand-new facility. The Chief Minister said he has written to the

Centre seeking a "sovereign guarantee" — a formal assurance that the textile will be returned to the British Museum after 18 months without damage.

The Vrindavani Vastra depicts episodes from the life of Lord Krishna, interwoven with portions of Sankardeva's devotional poetry. Commissioned by Koch king Nara Narayan in the 16th century, the textile is nearly 9.5 metres long and made of multiple silk drapes. Originally comprising 15 pieces, it was later assembled into one exhibit.

The artwork travelled from Assam to Tibet before being acquired by the British Museum in 1904. Considered a testament to Assam's weaving tradition, the Vrindavani Vastra also reflects influences from diverse artistic styles.

"This is not just about a textile," Sarma noted. "It is about reconnecting Assam with its cultural and spiritual heritage."

ComMin working on short, medium, long-term steps to shield exporters from US tariffs

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: The Commerce Ministry is working on short, medium, and long-term action plans, including proposals such as easing norms for SEZ units and allowing an inventory model for e-commerce exports, to help exporters cope with the steep 50 per cent US tariffs, an official said.

The official said that to safeguard the domestic industry and absorb production displaced from exports, the government is considering domestic demand outlets for SEZ and DTA (domestic tariff area) manufacturers that are impacted by order cancellations.

At present, sales from SEZ to DTA are allowed after payment of duties. Units in these zones have requested to allow sales on a duty foregone basis. Exports from these zones stood at USD 176.6 billion in 2024-25.

"Alongside, the inventory model for e-commerce exports would allow third-party facilitation entities to manage compliance and logistics, easing the burden on MSMEs and enabling them to focus on quality and branding," the official said.

For this, the government may have to allow FDI in the inventory-based model of e-commerce for exports purposes as at present 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) is permitted under the automatic route only in the market-



place model of e-commerce, but it is not prohibited in the inventory-based model of e-commerce.

As part of the immediate or short-term response, the government is considering several steps to ease liquidity, prevent insolvencies, and provide greater flexibility for units in SEZs, and promote targeted import substitution, the official said. In the medium term, the focus will shift towards leveraging India's free trade agreements (FTAs), intensifying buyer-seller outreach, and strengthening GST reforms to enhance competitiveness. To increase utilisation of these agreements, the commerce ministry is planning intensified outreach on FTA benefits as many MSMEs remain unaware of specific tariff advantages; large-scale

buyer-seller meets in India and abroad, and sending exporter delegations to FTA markets like, Australia for apparel, the UAE for gems, and the UK for leather to establish direct relationships with buyers. India has so far implemented trade pacts with over a dozen countries and regions, including Australia, the UAE, Japan, Korea and ASEAN bloc.

In the long term, the government is committed to building a resilient, diversified, and globally competitive export base, anchored in the export promotion mission (EPM), SEZ reforms, and supply chain resilience initiatives.

It is anticipated that exporters may face delayed payments, stretched receivable cycles, and cancelled orders due to the tariff

shock. To prevent working capital stress and protect employment, the government is considering several steps.

The proposed GST rationalisation is expected to generate demand in the domestic market and this has the potential of not only creating opportunities for exporters to sell more in India to cater to this increased demand.

Further, the ministry has prepared a phased export diversification framework in response to US tariffs, mapping critical HS (harmonised system) codes, clusters, and alternate markets.

This strategy is two-pronged - scaling up exports to existing markets like the EU, UK, UAE, Japan, Canada, and Australia; and entering new and untapped markets in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and East Asia.

"The Government of India is proactively responding with a timely, well-calibrated, and comprehensive multi-tiered strategy designed not only to safeguard Indian exporters but also to strengthen our long-term competitiveness in global markets," the official said.

The USA's 50 per cent tariffs on a wide range of Indian-origin products may affect almost USD 49 billion worth of exports to America, which is over 55 per cent of India's shipments to this market. (PTI)

Govt working overtime to cushion export sector from US tariffs: CEA

KOLKATA, Aug 30: Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) Anantha Nageswaran on Saturday said that the Centre, along with various stakeholders, was actively working overtime to cushion the export sector from the tariffs imposed by the United States.

The imposition of an additional 25 per cent tariff by the US has raised the overall duty to 50 per cent.

Speaking virtually at an event organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, he said crises, whether minor or major, often act as catalysts, providing focus and purpose for all segments of society -- including the government, private sector, and households -- to undertake necessary actions that might otherwise have been delayed.

Since the tariffs took effect on August 27, "conversations have been happening in the last three to four days" involving exporting bodies, private sector promotion agencies, and the ministries concerned, he said.

The Ministry of Finance and other ministries are "working overtime" to formulate a strategy, aimed at providing both a "time cushion" and a "financial cushion" for the affected sectors so they can "weather the present storm and also emerge stronger".

On the trade front, Nageswaran said a proposed agreement with the US, negotiated "in good faith" and close to conclusion, had been delayed due to "unexpected developments", though not denied.

He also referred to India facing a penal tariff for purchasing Russian crude oil, which the Ministry of External Affairs has described as unreasonable.

He expressed hope that tariffs would be "short-lived" and that "an understanding of the importance of the larger dimensions of the India-US relationship will eventually prevail".

The CEA highlighted several "silver linings" that point to a robust and improving economic environment. India's real GDP grew by 7.8 per cent year-on-year in the first quarter of the current financial year, supported by the "GDP deflator", he said.

Nominal GDP growth came in at 8.8 per cent, exceeding private sector economists' fears of 8-8.2 per cent, he added.

Nageswaran attributed the lower nominal GDP growth compared to previous quarters to "good deflation" -- a decline in input costs such



as crude oil, industrial metals, and raw materials -- while enterprises' pricing power remained intact.

The manufacturing sector's Gross Value Added (GVA) rose by 10.1 per cent in nominal terms and 7.7 per cent in real terms, reflecting its strength and providing hope that full-year nominal GDP growth will stay near the 10.1 per cent assumed in the Union Budget.

Nageswaran said a "huge tax cut" announced in February for middle and upper-middle-income households means a family of two earners with annual income up to Rs 26.7 lakh will pay no direct income tax, already visible in higher advance tax payments, he said.

Further relief is expected through rationalisation of GST rates, reduction in the number of slabs, and simplification of processes, he said.

He highlighted the employment-linked incentive scheme announced in the July 2024 budget, which rewards both employers and employees. For employees, it offers a one-time reward for taking up full-time jobs and assistance with relocation expenses, while employers receive cash incentives to continue hiring.

He said the scheme is crucial for striking the right balance between job creation and competitiveness in the age of AI.

The CEA noted India's credit rating upgrade by Standard & Poor's, the first in 30 years, and expressed confidence that other agencies such as Fitch may follow.

He underlined that fiscal prudence -- cutting the fiscal deficit from 9.2 per cent in 2021 to an estimated 4.4 per cent this year -- has reduced the 10-year bond yield risk premium from 500-600 basis points in 2014 to about 230-240 points now, even reaching a low of 180 points recently after it hardened a bit recently. (PTI)

Indian economy to sustain high growth momentum in coming quarters: CEA Nageswaran

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: Pinning hopes on underlying resilience of the Indian economy, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran on Saturday said the high growth momentum exhibited in the first quarter of the current fiscal is expected to continue in the coming quarter as well, with a downward bias emanating from high US tariffs.

The Indian economy reported a stronger-than-expected 7.8 per cent growth in April-June, its fastest pace in five quarters.

"I think the first quarter numbers for the fiscal year were definitely better than expected. A lot of people attributed the fact that the GDP deflator was much weaker this year compared to last year... in some sense, the GDP deflator being on the weaker side was a good thing and was not an unknown aspect. That was factored into the consensus expectations of Indian economists in the private sector."

"Yet the GDP growth number for the first quarter in the current fiscal year was much better than expected... it attests the underlying resilience of the Indian economy in general and the lagged effects of various initiatives that the government has been undertaking since its beginning in 2014 and more so in the last two Budgets continued its momentum in the second fiscal quarter as well," Nageswaran told PTI. Further elaborating, he said, the trade imbalance with the United States is continuing for the moment, so there will be some impact in the second quarter, as increased tariffs on Indian shipments took effect in August.

A steep US tariff of 50 per cent on goods from India took effect on August 27. The tariffs -- among the highest in the world -- include a 25 per cent penalty for buying crude oil from Russia. On August 7, the Trump administration enforced a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods, citing India's persistent oil imports from Russia and long-standing trade barriers.

"There were two parts of the US tariffs. Both will have an impact in the second quarter and possibly a little bit into the beginning of the calendar fourth quarter or the fiscal third quarter," he said.

But, he said, "I think some of these tariff measures will be short-lived and there are a lot of conversations going on between India and the US government. And I do believe that a resolution will be found sooner rather than later. (PTI)



numbers, our assessment so far is that we will be able to achieve the target," she told PTI in an interview.

The Centre estimates the fiscal deficit during 2025-26 at 4.4 per cent of the GDP, or Rs 15.69 lakh crore.

Thakur emphasised that the fundamentals of the economy remain strong even private consumption numbers which came out yesterday are showing positive movement.

The gross capital formation numbers also showed that both

public and private capex are strong and there is an anticipation these should be steadfast in the coming quarters as well.

"Government capex has been a big factor in holding up our numbers so far and not only on the fiscal deficit side but the growth numbers also remains robust as of now," she said.

Commenting on the Q1 FY26 GDP growth of 7.8 per cent, Thakur said it reflects the broad-based nature of the economic expansion.

Ather unveils next-gen EL scooter platform, new tech upgrades

GUWAHATI, Aug 30: Ather Energy, one of India's leading electric two-wheeler manufacturers, has unveiled its next-generation scooter platform, EL, at the third edition of Ather Community Day 2025.

The company described the development as a major step toward versatility, scalability and cost optimisation in its product range, according to an official statement. The EL platform is Ather's first new vehicle architecture since the launch of the 450 series.

Built on insights from over 26 lakh kilometres of field data, it features a redesigned chassis, powertrain and electronics stack.

The company said the platform allows faster assembly, up to twice as quick periodic servicing, and supports multiple scooter form factors for different customer segments.

Safety has been enhanced through the Advanced Electronic Braking System (AEBS), while convenience features include an integrated onboard charger

and motor controller. The company also showcased "Redux," a concept moto-scooter blending scooter agility with motorcycle dynamics.

Built with lightweight materials and featuring adaptive ride dynamics, posture-based transformation, and an intelligent Morph-UI interface, Redux represents Ather's vision of future performance-oriented EVs.

In addition, Ather announced AtherStack 7.0, the latest upgrade to its proprietary technology suite.

The update introduces voice-enabled interaction, rider safety features such as pothole and crash alerts, and enhanced theft-protection systems.

According to the company, AtherStack 7.0 will roll out as an over-the-air update to existing scooters, including the Rizta Z and Ather 450X (Gen 3 onwards).

The company also introduced Infinite Cruise, an advanced cruise control system for Indian conditions, and announced updates to the Rizta Z, including a touchscreen interface, Eco Mode, and a new Terra-cotta Red finish.

Contd. from Page 1...

Massive transformation of

specialists. He said modern diagnostic facilities are being set up across AIIMS and district hospitals to strengthen early detection and treatment of diseases such as cancer, stroke and cardiac conditions.

The Union minister also stressed the government's focus on green and sustainable healthcare, citing AIIMS-Guwahati as a model of eco-friendly hospital design that reflects a balance between progress and environmental care. He added that with improved connectivity, new medical institutions and enhanced healthcare schemes, the North East is poised to emerge as a medical hub of South East Asia. (PTI)

After a gap of 7

fortnight after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited India. Following Wang's wide-ranging talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, the two sides unveiled a series of measures for a "stable, cooperative and forward-looking" relationship between the two sides. The measures included joint maintenance of peace along the contested frontier, reopening border trade and resuming direct flight services at the earliest.

In the last few months, both sides have initiated a series of measures to reset their ties that came under severe strain following the deadly clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in Galwan Valley in June 2020.

The prime minister last visited China in June, 2018 to attend the SCO summit. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited India in October 2019 for the second "informal summit".

The eastern Ladakh face-off effectively ended following completion of the disengagement process from the last two friction points of Demchok and Dipsang under an agreement finalised on October 21 last year. (PTI)

Trump 'no longer has

was there any discussion, at any level, on an India-US trade deal, or any proposal for a mediation by the US between India and Pakistan.

The discussion to cease military action took place directly between India and Pakistan through the existing channels of communication between the two armed forces, and it was initiated at Pakistan's request. Prime Minister Modi firmly stated that India does not and will never accept mediation, Misri had said.

The NYT article said that during the June 17 phone call, Trump said again how proud he was of ending the military escalation and mentioned that Pakistan was going to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize, an honour that has been bestowed on former US President Barack Obama and one for which Trump has been "openly campaigning". "The not-so-subtle implication, according to people familiar with the call, was that Mr Modi should do the same," and also nominate Trump for the Nobel, the paper said.

"The Indian leader bristled. He told Mr Trump that US involvement had nothing to do with the recent ceasefire. It had been settled directly between India and Pakistan," the NYT said.

"Trump largely brushed off Mr Modi's comments, but the disagreement -- and Mr Modi's refusal to engage on the Nobel -- has played an outside role in the souring relationship between the two leaders, whose once-close ties go back to Mr. Trump's first term," the NYT said.

The NYT noted that the White House did not acknowledge the June 17 call, nor did Trump post about it on his social media accounts. Trump has repeated his claim of stopping the conflict between India and Pakistan over 40 times since May 10.

"And it is also the tale of an American president with his eye on a Nobel Prize, running smack into the immovable third rail of Indian politics: the conflict with Pakistan," it added.

The report added that, as Trump imposed additional tariffs of 25 per cent on India for its purchases of Russian oil, "the colossal penalties on India in particular appear to be punishment for not falling in line rather than any kind of cohesive effort to reduce the trade deficit or cut off funding for" Putin's war.

The NYT article quoted chair on India at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Richard Rossow, as saying that it was "about more than just Russia."

"If this was a real change in policy in trying to squeeze Russia, Trump could have put his weight behind legislation that would have imposed secondary sanctions on countries that buy Russian hydrocarbons. The fact that they have uniquely targeted India says this is about more than just Russia," Rossow was quoted as saying.

The NYT article further said that Trump, "frustrated by the tariff negotiations", reached out to Modi several times, but the Indian leader "did not respond to those requests." (PTI)

Assam govt provides scooters

announced Sakhi Express scheme to provide scooters to all Jeevika Sakhis in 2020-21.

In 2022-23, the initiative was expanded to include all cadres -- Jeevika Sakhis, Pashu Sakhis, Bank Sakhis, Master Book Keeper, Internal Mentor, MSP Trainer and BDSP Trainer, among others -- as community cadres.

Altogether 10,908 scooters were given to the community cadres in 2020-21 and 2021-22, and 9,706 in the years 2024-25 and 2025-26. (PTI)

Two wardens held for

the wardens had turned the jail into a hub of illicit trade by supplying drugs to prisoners in exchange for money. Civil society organisations have expressed outrage over the incident and demanded a high-level probe as well as strict punishment for those involved.

A case (No 697/25) has been registered at Nagaon Sadar Police Station, and the arrested wardens are being interrogated for further leads, police said.

Prohibitory orders imposed

in view of preventing any untoward incidents and maintaining peace and tranquility in the district as well as ensuring smooth conduct of the BTC elections in Kokrajhar.

Elections to the 40-member BTC will be held on September 22, with counting of votes on September 26. Besides Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri and Tamulpur districts are under the jurisdiction of the BTC. (PTI)

Himanta claims Centre's

Pakistan, apparently referring to state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi's alleged links with the neighbouring nation. "Shah had said it in Parliament and he again repeated the same thing here yesterday about the visit of the Congress leader to Pakistan. If a wrong statement was given in Parliament, a privilege motion can be brought, but the leader has taken no action," he said.

It is now obvious 'how serious the matter is. It was being highlighted by the state government so far, but now even the home minister has said the same', Sarma said.

The Assam CM and the BJP have been attacking Gogoi, the Deputy Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha, over his British wife's alleged connection with Pakistan's spy agency ISI.

Sarma had claimed that Gogoi's wife Elizabeth Colburn had travelled 19 times between India and Pakistan. Shah had set the ball rolling for BJP's election campaign for the state assembly polls in 2026, asserting that the NDA will form the third consecutive government in Assam next year, riding on the back of the massive development work initiated by the prime minister and implemented by Sarma.

Sarma claimed the Congress is no match for the NDA's organisational strength, and this was evident in the results of the panchayat polls held in the state this year.

"We are prepared to face any challenge that comes our way," the CM asserted. (PTI)

Abuses against PM

ticket because he had an 'RSS mindset', the CM said this makes it clear that 'his (Madani's) views are considered in election ticket distribution of the Congress'.

Sarma was a Congress leader before he joined the BJP in 2015.

Madani has been 'after me since 2011, when I became the education minister and had initiated the TET recruitment drive, and he had told then Chief Minister late Tarun Gogoi to stop it', the CM claimed.

"Gogoi had called the concerned official and directed that the recruitment drive be stopped, but I took a stand and did not allow this to happen", he said.

"Since then, Madani and his gang have been attacking me. Some others and I could not continue with Congress due to them. I ensured that their agenda was not fulfilled and the recruitment took place," Sarma claimed.

The CM also alleged, "People like Madani are out to 'weaken Assam, but we (the BJP) are standing as a deterrent against them."

During the last 15-30 days, a lot of "people with this mindset, like Harsh Mander, Syeda Hameed, youth and activists involved in the Shaheen Bagh protests against CAA, are coming to Assam to create disturbances", Sarma claimed. Asserting that the BJP is "very strong", he said, "These people will be able to do nothing but if they may indulge in some incidents, we are prepared to deal with this play," he added. "We have work on the NRC, continue to carry out evictions and many other programmes," the CM asserted. (PTI)

On track to achieve fiscal deficit target of 4.4pc for FY26: DEA Secy Anuradha Thakur

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: Dispelling fears that the government may miss its ambitious fiscal deficit target of 4.4 per cent for the current financial year, Economic Affairs Secretary Anuradha Thakur on Saturday said the government is on track to meet the goal set in the Budget despite temporary mismatches which may have been exhibited in the latest monthly numbers.

The statement from the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) Secretary assumes significance in the light of Centre's fiscal deficit rising to 29.9 per cent of the full-year target at the end of July as against just 17.2 per cent of the Budget Estimates (BE) in the same period of the last financial year.

"So this question (of achieving the target) has been coming up because of the latest numbers. I would like to say that quarter-by-quarter or month-by-month assessments of fiscal deficit numbers may not give a correct picture because of temporal mismatches, which may come in on the receipt and expenditure side.

"On the overall fiscal deficit

NDA sets target to win 100 seats in Assam assembly polls next year

Congress did 'decentralisation of corruption', says AGP president Atul Bora

GUWAHATI, Aug 30: Several NDA leaders in Assam, including Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal and AGP chief Atul Bora, have slammed the Congress over alleged corruption during its tenure and set a target of winning 100 of the 126 assembly seats in next year's elections in the state.

Addressing a rally of panchayat representatives here on Friday in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Sarma appealed to all to take a pledge of protecting 'jati, mati, bheti' (community, land, foundation) of Assam.

"We will give land to our known people and will take away every inch of land from the unknown people. We will not settle down until we achieve our objectives," he added.

Sarma also alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, along with "Islamic scholar Madani", threatened him in recent times.

"Madani and Rahul Gandhi came and threatened me. We know how to use 'heng-dang' (Ahom sword) and give a befitting



reply. We need to fight the battle of Saraihat again.

"I challenge Madani and Rahul Gandhi to fight with the Assamese people. We will

fight and win this battle," he added.

Slamming the opposition party, Sonowal alleged that the Congress tenure was marked with "neglect, terrorism and disturbances".

"Forget about development, Congress had kept the Northeast in darkness. They don't have any right to question the BJP government. If the Congress had worked even 5 per cent of what the Narendra Modi government has done, the Northeast would have developed by now," he claimed.

The former Assam CM asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "freed the Northeast from darkness and backwardness, and there is peace and development everywhere in the region nowadays".

Bora, a state minister, alleged that the fundamentalist forces had expanded during the Congress tenure.

"But now, there has been an overall improvement in law and order. Many peace accords have been signed with insurgents under the NDA government," he added.

The developmental work in Assam during the tenure of Himanta Biswa Sarma has been very rapid, Bora said.

Claiming that the Congress did "decentralisation of corruption", the AGP president said, "We all will have to work hard with a target of winning 100 seats for the NDA in next year's assembly polls."

During the rally, Shah also said that the BJP-led NDA will form the third consecutive government in Assam next year, riding on the back of the massive development work of Modi and Sarma.

The Assam Assembly, with 126 seats, is likely to go for elections in March-April next year.

Presently, the ruling BJP's strength in the 126-member Assam Assembly is 64, while its allies AGP has nine MLAs and UPPL has seven.

In the opposition camp, the Congress' strength is 26, AIUDF has 15 members, BPF has three and CPI(M) has one MLA. There is one Independent legislator as well. (PTI)

Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC) stage protest against derogatory remarks

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 30: In line with the statewide protest against the derogatory remark made by BJP Assam Minister Ashok Singhal for allegedly comparing the Congress to an animal, the Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC) staged a protest on the streets of Diphu town here on Saturday. Sat under the ongoing construction flyover in front of Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) were attended by strong party supporters and workers. Among the prominent leaders include former MLA Jagatsing Engti, former EM, KAAC Bidyasing Rongpi, vice presidents KADCC, Anil Borah, Sanjeeb Teron and Surendra Singnar, APCC, secretary Purnima Ronghangpi and KADCC general secretaries Jameson Ronghang, Satra Teron and Hukleswar Bey.

The KADCC president, Raton Engti participating in the protest demonstration has strongly condemned the minister's remarks as disrespectful and an affront to the dignity of the Congress party. Engti emphasized the importance of maintaining respect in political discourse for the strengthening of democracy.

Engti said Minister Ashok Singhal should not have said something like this. It is an insult to the Congress. The Congress has made an immense contribution to the country. It was the Congress that brought independence. Insulting the Congress means insulting the great national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel and many more, Engti said.

The KADCC president also stated that Assam is popular for 'guru chor.' Engti has meant the BJP party. What people can expect from a guru chor party, Engti asked.

Engti also said Congress national leader Rahul Gandhi has openly pointed out about BJP as 'vote chori' party. Singhal has made such a statement in order to divert the 'vote chori' from people's attention.

Engti also stated that there is a section of godi media, where news of Congress party is being censored. This is aided by CEM, KAAC Tuliram Ronghang not to air or publish Congress news in several news channels. Engti also accused Ronghang of purchasing huge bighas of land including rubber plantation and tea garden from his ill-gotten money.

Sonitpur District BJP Mahila Morcha Secretary Bobby Mahanta Das passes away

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 30: Secretary of the Sonitpur District BJP Mahila Morcha Bobby Mahanta Das passed away on Friday evening here after being admitted to a private hospital following her health issues. A dedicated social worker Bobby Mahanta Das had been a resident of Ketekibari near Tezpur and wife of the District BJP Vice President Michael Das.

Her sudden and untimely demise has evoked deep sorrow among people across the district. Tezpur MLA Prithviraj Rabha, AMTRON Vice Chairman Ritubaran Sharma, former MP Pallab Lochan Das, District BJP President Madhusmita Hazarika Deka, former Municipal Chairperson Pushpa Deka, Tezpur District Sports Association President Jiten Borthakur, Tezpur Development Authority Chairman Bishwadev Bhatlacharya, former Sonitpur Archery Association Secretary Surajit Deka, former District BJP President Dipamoni Saikia and former Assam BJP Mahila Morcha President Swapna Bania among others expressed profound grief and extended condolences to the bereaved family.

At the time of her demise, she left behind her husband Michael Das, Vice President of Sonitpur District BJP and their only son, a student of Class X along with other family members.

MP Rwngrwa Narzary inaugurates central election steering committee office in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 30: The ruling United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) has prepared necessary strategy and arrangements to contest the upcoming BTC elections scheduled to be held on September 22 across the region.

The UPPL party has formed central election steering committee for smooth functioning of the ensuing BTC elections with Joyanta Basumatary, Lok Sabha MP as chairman and Rudir Kumar Daimary as chief convener along with members.

The office of the election steering committee was inaugurated on Saturday amidst presence of party leaders and workers at Bhawanipur Titaguri along the JD Road in Kokrajhar.

Rajya Sabha MP and UPPL working president, Rwngrwa Narzary cut the ribbon to inaugurate the office in the presence of

party general secretary Raju Kumar Narzary, MP Joyanta Basumatary, and several senior party leaders followed by a general meeting of the party.

MP Rwngrwa Narzary stated that the UPPL party is fully prepared to contest the upcoming BTC elections, and so far declared 18 candidate's names for the elections. He said that the UPPL party is so far received a huge response cutting across the communities in the region. He is confident of winning of majority seats in the elections, and forming the second consecutive term government in BTC.

Narzary told that also the UPPL party is participating the council elections under the leadership of Pramod Boro, the CEM of Bodoland Territorial Region, and getting mass support across the communities. He informed that the electioneering campaign is so far started from the party.

CRPF, Birla Plywood Factory celebrates national sports day

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 30: The 20 Battalion, CRPF, Birla Plywood Factory Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam, took time to celebrate the National Sports day by organising games and sports for children and teachers of Adarsh Vidyalaya, Lumbanjong organised at the unit campus at Birla Plywood here yesterday. Yogesh Kumar, Deputy Commandant, 20 Battalion CRPF along with Subordinate Officers and jawans arranged multiple fun games like sack race, jalebi race, spoon race, one leg race, and musical chair etc. for school children as well as teachers in the unit campus, Birla Plywood, here.

Prizes were distributed by the chief guest Neha Bordoloi, a prominent power lifting sports girl from Diphu. She was three times gold medalist in state level and two times gold medalist in national level powerlifting competition. Teachers and students enjoyed a lot and also presented a Nukkad Natak based on "Operation Sindoor". Sh. Prasanna Nath, Principal of Adarsh Vidyalaya applauded the efforts of 20 Bn. CRPF for arranging such grand & beautiful event. The event was also graced by Sh. Mukti Shyam, Gym trainer at KASA Stadium. Sh. Yogesh Kumar, Deputy Commandant, delivered a speech elaborating the importance of the day i.e. National Sports Day 2025 and contribution of Major Dhyanchand to the sports in India. He also told that sports are a very important factor which unites our Country.

Oil thieves Jelil and Hamid arrested in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 30: Oil thieves Jalil Ahmed and Hamid Ali were arrested in To grai, Tinsukia by a police team from Sivasagar led by IBI inspector Utpal Dutta, and Jyotisman Bora, OC Jaysagar PS. Jalil and Hamid were on the run for 22 days to evade arrest following an incident in their Bogidoul Singhaduar hidden crude oil depot in which two people were seriously injured on August 9.

KADCC condemns remarks of Assam's Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Irrigation

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Aug 30: The Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KA-DCC) organized a protest on Saturday near its office in Diphu as part of a statewide agitation, condemning Assam's Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Irrigation, Ashok Singhal, for his controversial remark likening the Congress party to an "animal." The statement, made during a public meeting in Dhekiajuli, sparked outrage among Congress leaders and workers.

Raton Engti, President of KA-DCC, criticized Singhal's derogatory comment, stating, "We have seen in the news that Minister Singhal said he has never seen the 'animal' called Congress. Such remarks are unacceptable and insulting to our party and its workers."

The protest saw participation from key Congress lead-

ers, including Ratan Engti (President, KA-DCC and former EM), Jagat Sing Engti (former MLA and Vice President, KA-DCC), Bidya Sing Rongpi (former EM and Vice President, KA-DCC), Purnima Ronghangpi (Secretary, APCC), Charisma Rongpi (Chairperson, Media Department, KA-DCC), Sanjeeb Teron (former MLA candidate, Howraghat LA), and Juniti Teronpi (Bokajan Assembly Youth President), along with several vice presidents, general secretaries, and secretaries of KA-DCC.

The leaders and workers united in their condemnation of Singhal's remarks, demanding an apology and urging respect for political discourse. The protest highlighted the Congress party's resolve to counter such statements and continue its advocacy for the people of Assam.

NEATEHUB concludes five days training

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 30: The North East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs Hub (NEATEHUB), Assam Agricultural University, successfully concluded its 5-day intensive incubation workshop today, bringing together promising agritech startups from across the Northeastern region.

As part of this initiative, 16 startups were awarded funding support totaling ₹1.61 crore under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). The grants were distributed across three categories - seed stage (Saranya), ideation stage (Isanya), and student-led innovations (Navyam).

The workshop, held from August 26 to 30 was designed to provide hands-on mentoring, business development support, and scaling strategies for early-stage ventures in agriculture and allied sectors.

The valedictory ceremony was held today afternoon in the presence of distinguished guests Tapan Kumar Gohain, Registrar, Assam Agricultural University; Dr. Prasanna Kumar Pathak, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Assam Agricultural University; Akash Jyoti Gogoi, Founder of Bahubali Eggs and Xaj; Dr. Arifa Montaz Begum, Senior Scientist, Assam Agricultural University; Dr. Dasish Tamuly, Dr. Luna Dutta Baruah, Bidyut Bikash Rajkonwar and NEATEHUB staff were also present during the occasion. Representational cheques were given to the grantees.

Startups selected for Seed Stage Grants (up

to ₹25 lakh each) are House of Anirban Sidharth, Ayanant Ventures, Bor Noi Organics, 7 Agrotech, Blue Planet Amalgamated, Madhuri Food Products, Dream Hives, Northeast Climate & AgriTech Research. Startups selected for Ideation Stage Grants (up to ₹5 lakh each) include Biocircular Innovations, Aiseng Winery, Poohar Essence and Green Fiber Innovates. Student-led Innovations awarded grants (up to ₹4 lakh each) include Enviroshell, Green Basket, Farm Buddy and Green Wrap.

These startups represent a diverse range of innovations in agriculture and allied fields - from climate-smart farming, organic food products, and sustainable materials, to technology-enabled agribusiness solutions.

Speaking at the occasion, dignitaries emphasised the importance of nurturing entrepreneurship in the Northeast, highlighting how programmes like RKVY-RAFTAAR and incubation platforms like NEATEHUB are catalyzing the transformation of agritech in the region.

The North East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs Hub (NEATEHUB), hosted at Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, is a leading agribusiness incubator committed to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the agriculture and allied sectors across the Northeastern states of India. Through funding support, mentoring, infrastructure, and market linkages, NEATEHUB empowers startups to build scalable solutions addressing the challenges of farmers and rural communities.

KAAC Reschedules school timings for all categories of schools effective Sept

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 30: In a fresh order issued by the department of school education, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) yesterday (August 29) order No. K A A C / E d n - 02/MISC/Genl.C/Part/2015-16/2/3/ has rescheduled the school timing as per the academic calendar for all categories of schools effectively from September 1, 2025. As per the order the school timing for LP schools is from morning 9.00 a.m. to evening 2.05 p.m., for M.E schools is from morning 9:00 a.m. to evening 3.25 p.m. and for high schools, higher secondary schools and senior secondary schools is from morning 9.00 p.m. to evening 3.25 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Whereas a One Man Inquiry Commission headed by Justice Anima Hazarika, former Judge of the Gauhati High Court, has been constituted by the Governor of Assam to investigate into the incident of Umrangso Mines Tragedy and fix responsibility on concerned officers, individuals, mining companies and institutions if any?

- To ascertain the facts, circumstances and causes leading to the incident of the tragedy resulting in the reported death of 4 (four) persons and several others missing.
- To ascertain person(s)/organization(s) responsible for the illegal activities if any of rat-hole mining in the area.
- To determine if there were any lapses on the part of any Authority, and, if so, to fix responsibility thereof;
- To suggest measures so that such situations/ incidents are dealt with effectively in future.
- Any other matter relevant to the subject matter of the inquiry.

Whereas the One Man Inquiry Commission shall record the evidences, statements etc. in order to conduct the Inquiry in the Room No.212 of the Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022 on 09-09-2025 and 11.09.2025 from 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Now therefore, if any person(s), organization(s), family members of the victims have any information about the incident or is/are willing/desirous to give oral evidence/material evidence before the Inquiry Commission he/she/they is/are requested to appear before the Commission at Room No.212 of the Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022 on 09-09-2025 and 11.09.2025 from 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m for recording the same.

(Kulen Sharmah, ACS),
Secretary,

One Man Inquiry Commission headed by
Justice(Retd.) Anima Hazarika
"Meenakshi", House No. 41, Ambikagiri
Nagar, R.G. Baruah Road, Guwahati-24

DIPR /D/HLT/137/31-Aug-25

E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR SALE OF RAILWAY SCRAP MATERIALS

The E-Auction programme for sale of railway scrap materials under the jurisdiction of Lumding Division for the month of September/2025 has been fixed as under:-

SN	Month	Fixed Dates
1	September/2025	09-09-2025, 16-09-2025 & 23-09-2025

Interested bidders are advised to bid through IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in for registration, training, participation in e-auction.

Sr. Divisional Materials Manager, Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

No.E-533429/9

NOTICE

The Directorate of Social Justice & Empowerment, Assam invites applications from reputed registered voluntary organizations who are running special schools for differently abled students to provide **Grants-in-Aid** under the Scheme "Assistance to Voluntary Organizations working on special schools for differently abled students" for the financial year 2025-26. Therefore, interested organizations are requested to submit their applications along with proposals on or before **20th September, 2025** to the concerned District Social Welfare Officers of the Districts. The District Social Welfare Officer of the concerned district will verify the proposals and place before the **District Level Committee** for recommendation.

After completion of entire process of recommendation and selection of the proposals the District Social Welfare officers shall have to submit the same to this Directorate within **10th October, 2025**.

The final selection will be done by the **state level scrutiny committee**, Social Justice & Empowerment, Assam. The committee reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal as recommended by the district level committee without assigning any reason.

Terms and Conditions:-

- The NGO must have up to date registration certificate under The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 and should have preferably at least three years' work experience in the field of Special education.
- The organization should be financially sound. The organization/NGO shall have to submit updated Bank Statement along with audit statement of last three years with the proposal.
- Any organizations/NGOs who received Grants-in-Aid to run "Special schools for differently abled students" for the FY 2024-25, under the Directorate of Social Justice & Empowerment, Assam, also have to submit ongoing proposals following the criteria mentioned in this advertisement.
- The organization seeking Grant-in-Aid should also certify that it has not obtained or applied for grants for the same purpose or activity from any other Ministry or Department of Government of India or Government of Assam.
- The selected organizations/NGOs will be allowed to run only one special school in their respective headquarter district.
- The infrastructure and location of the special school should be easily accessible to the general public and should be preferably in the district Headquarter.

The proposal must contain the following particulars:-

- Valid registration Certificate under Societies Registration Act.
- Valid registration Certificate under RPWD Act 2016
- Certified copy of the Constitution & Memorandum of the Organization.
- Brief history of the organization.
- Geo-tag photograph of the building/Organization.
- Objectives of running Special School.
- Project methodology along with the budget estimate.
- Annual report/audited statement of last three years. i.e. 2022-23, 2023-24 & 2024-25.
- List of President, Secretary and Executive Members of the organization/NGO.
- List of moveable and immovable properties.
- Details of Land, if organization functioning from own building.
- Building agreement, if organization functioning from rented building.
- Bank details with IFSC code.
- Inspection report of concerned District Social Welfare Officer.
- Organizations are required to submit details of their students along with photographs.
- List of staff along with photograph, contact number, address etc.
- Self-declaration by the President/Secretary of the Organization/NGO in the form of a notarized Affidavit.

Note: - Proposals to be mandatorily submitted through the District Social Welfare Officer not to be directly submitted to the Directorate of Social Justice & Empowerment, Assam.

Sd/-
Director,
Social Justice & Empowerment,
Assam, Beltola, Guwahati-28.

DIPR /D/HLT/139/31-Aug-25



By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Bhaona is an invaluable asset of Assamese life, reflecting, over several centuries, our religious beliefs, cultural identity, and social cohesion. This art form, a remarkable creation of the great saint Srimanta Sankardeva, not only introduced a new genre of theatrical performance but also imbued Assamese society with a fresh dimension of spiritual and cultural vitality. In the 15th century, through the propagation of Neo-Vaishnavism, Sankardeva initiated a revolutionary transformation in society. Through Bhaona, he dispelled the darkness of ignorance and superstition, illuminating the minds of the masses with the light of devotion to Lord Krishna. By breaking down barriers between various castes and communities, Bhaona fostered unity and harmony, weaving a vibrant tapestry of togetherness. Centered around Namghars and Satras, this art form has earned an immortal place in the cultural life of Assam. The harmonious blend of music, dance, dialogue, and instrumental accompaniment has elevated Bhaona to the status of a holistic art form. Through this medium, Assamese society has cultivated not only religious wisdom but also an exemplary model of social harmony and unity. Even amidst the transformed lifestyles of the modern era, Bhaona remains an inseparable part of Assamese life.

However, the influences of modernity and commercialization have posed new challenges to its traditional essence. Amid these challenges, the need to preserve Bhaona's spiritual and cultural values remains paramount. This tradition is an invaluable part of Assamese cultural identity. It is not merely an art form but a sacred practice embodying the spiritual, social, and cultural life of Assam. Through this creation of Sankardeva's Neo-Vaishnavism, various sections of Assamese society have been united, playing a pivotal role in building a stable and enriched community. The collective participation of rural communities in Bhaona performances has transformed it into a social festival, fostering unity and creating a festive atmosphere where religious and social harmony converge beau-

tifully. Even in the modern era, Bhaona's social and religious significance remains intact. However, the impact of modernity has brought changes to its traditional form. The use of modern technology, commercialization, and an excessive focus on popularity have affected its core spiritual and cultural values. In this context, preserving Bhaona's traditional ethos is of utmost importance. As a symbol of Assamese pride, Bhaona enables the community to present its unique cultural identity to the world. By maintaining its traditions while adapting to modern times, Bhaona can remain an everlasting treasure of the Assamese people.

The origins of Bhaona trace back to Srimanta Sankardeva's first theatrical creation, "Chihnajatra". Through this innovative art form, he ushered in a new chapter in Assamese theatre. By creating this novel medium, Sankardeva awakened religious consciousness among the masses. He personally crafted visuals on palm leaves using natural pigments like hengl and haital, created the clay-based "khol" instrument, and blended music, dance, and dialogue to stage these performances. This theatrical form evoked awe and devotion in the audience, creating a unique amalgamation of wonder and spirituality. The primary objective of Sankardeva's creation was to convey the message of Neo-Vaishnavism to the illiterate and common people in a simple, accessible manner. His "Ankiya Nats" (one-act plays), composed in Brajavali—a blend of old Assamese, Maithili, and the language of Braj—enriched the literary value of these works. Through this language, Sankardeva not only inspired religious awakening but also bestowed a distinct prestige upon Assamese literature. Bhaona united people from diverse castes and tribes, fostering a cohesive Assamese society. Performed in the sacred ambience of Namghars, this theatrical form has secured an eternal place in the heart of Assamese life. Even today, Bhaona performances in villages create a festive atmosphere, uniting people from all walks of life and strengthening social and religious bonds. The holistic structure of Bhaona has established it as an invaluable component of Assamese culture.

Bhaona: Modernity and Commercialization

The modern era has profoundly impacted Bhaona's traditional form. Traditionally, Bhaona was an elaborate event, with its narrative, music, dance, and dialogue performed in their full depth, evoking devotion and bringing the story's nuances to life. However, in today's fast-paced lifestyle, such lengthy performances are no longer feasible, and Bhaona's duration has been reduced to three to four hours. This truncation has somewhat diminished the depth of the narrative, devotional essence, and spiritual message. The modern audience's inclination toward entertainment has introduced new dimensions to Bhaona performances. Traditional music, dance, and instruments have been partially replaced by modern music, lighting effects, and dramatic elements

Through this art form, Assamese society has crafted a unique cultural identity, expressing not only religious messages but also a renewed sense of unity and Assamese nationalism. Performed in the sacred environment of Namghars, Bhaona remains an integral part of Assamese life, its music, dance, dialogue, and instrumental accompaniment conferring upon it the status of a comprehensive art form.

The role of the "Sutradhar" (narrator-director) in Bhaona performances is of immense significance. Beyond merely directing the play, the Sutradhar establishes a spiritual connection with the audience. Through their dance, music, and dialogue, the narrative comes alive. The Sutradhar undertakes various roles, from delivering the play's prologue to announcing its conclusion. Their melodious dialogue and dance evoke devotion in the audience's hearts. The Sutradhar of Sankardeva's "Ankiya Nats" draws influence from the Sutradhar of Sanskrit dramas, the mediator in "Ojapali" performances, and the "Bhagavata" of Yakshagana, lending a unique stature to this role. Through their performance, the Sutradhar conveys the play's religious message, enhancing its charm with a harmonious blend of music, dance, and dialogue. Their dance enlivens the play's prologue and character introductions, while their prose sections conclude the performance, urging the audience to seek divine refuge. The Sutradhar's dance is an indispensable part of Bhaona, deeply reflecting its spiritual and cultural values in the audience's minds. Their distinctive attire, graceful dance movements, and eloquent dialogue further enrich Bhaona's artistic value, strengthening the social and religious bonds of Assamese society. This pivotal role underscores

music, and instrumental performance. Their performance sets a sacred tone at the outset of Bhaona, creating a devotional atmosphere. Dressed in special attire, the Gayan-Bayan perform synchronized dances to the rhythm of "khol" and "tal" (cymbals). Their rendition, combining various forms of music and dance, enhances the play's aesthetic appeal and evokes devotional sentiments in the audience. This performance is regarded as an integral part of Bhaona, with their dance movements, melodious tunes, and rhythmic accompaniment enriching its artistic value. The "khol" instrument, created by Sankardeva, resonates with praises of the divine, creating a sacred ambience. Through their performance, the Gayan-Bayan duo shapes a distinct identity for Assamese culture, their costumes, graceful movements, and musical harmony elevating Bhaona to the status of a holistic art form.

The modern era has profoundly impacted Bhaona's traditional form. Traditionally, Bhaona was an elaborate event, with its narrative, music, dance, and dialogue performed in their full depth, evoking devotion and bringing the story's nuances to life. However, in today's fast-paced lifestyle, such lengthy performances are no longer feasible, and Bhaona's duration has been reduced to three to four hours. This truncation has somewhat diminished the depth of the narrative, devotional essence, and spiritual message. The modern audience's inclination toward entertainment has introduced new dimensions to Bhaona performances. Traditional music, dance, and instruments have been partially replaced by modern music, lighting effects, and dramatic elements. While these changes have made Bhaona more acces-



turn affects Bhaona's spiritual essence. The use of modern technology has enhanced Bhaona's visual appeal but has also influenced its traditional beauty and distinctiveness. The incorporation of modern musical instruments has reduced the prominence of traditional instruments like the "khol", "tal", and "nagara", impacting Bhaona's inherent dignity and aesthetic charm.

In recent times, commercialization has significantly influenced Bhaona. Traditionally, it was a community-centric, religious activity, with people from all walks of village life participating in its organization, from costume preparation to rehearsals and performances. This collective effort transformed Bhaona into a social festival, fostering devotion and social unity. However, in modern times, Bhaona has become part of commercial activities, performed in festivals, competitions, and cultural programs with a focus on prizes, promotion, and financial gain. This shift has altered performance standards, with competition and popularity overshadowing the traditional spirit of devotion.

Professional troupes, performing for remuneration, have made Bhaona more polished but have impacted its community-centric character. The reliance on professional artists has reduced the participation of ordinary villagers. However, commercialization and professionalization have opened avenues for young talents, with social media playing a key role in promoting Bhaona's music, dance, and performances, enabling new artists to gain recognition and financial opportunities. While this is a positive development, care must be taken to ensure that Bhaona's distinctiveness and dignity are not compromised.

Bhaona is not merely a theatrical form but a symbol of Assamese identity, culture, and spirituality. This unparalleled creation of Sankardeva's Neo-Vaishnavism united Assamese society, offering a vision of a pure and meaningful life. In the modern era, efforts to popularize Bhaona must prioritize preserving its core values. By retaining traditional music, dance, dialogue, and instruments, Bhaona's spiritual and cultural essence can be safeguarded. Educational programs, workshops, and training initiatives can raise awareness about Bhaona's significance among the younger generation. Including its history, style, and cul-

tural importance in school and college curricula can foster interest. Satras and Namghars should promote traditional Bhaona performances, playing a crucial role in preserving its spiritual and cultural values. Competitions and cultural events can spark interest among the youth, but they must emphasize maintaining Bhaona's traditional style and dignity. Striking a balance between preserving its traditional values and adapting to modernity will ensure Bhaona's enduring relevance. Attention must also be paid to preserving its artistic value. Traditionally, Bhaona's costumes, masks, instruments, and stage decorations were crafted through community efforts, fostering a sense of collective involvement. However, modern commercial costumes, artificial masks, and technological decorations have reduced the traditional aesthetic. The use of modern instruments has diminished the prominence of traditional ones, affecting Bhaona's unique identity. Emphasizing traditional costumes, masks, and instruments is essential to preserving its distinctiveness and dignity.

Maintaining a harmonious balance between preserving Bhaona's traditional values and embracing modernity is crucial. Modernization efforts have created opportunities to bring Bhaona to younger audiences, and digital platforms have enabled its global reach, contributing positively to the promotion of Assamese culture. However, this process raises concerns about preserving its core spiritual and cultural values. Excessive use of modern lighting, instruments, and dramatic effects has impacted Bhaona's traditional dignity and beauty. Prioritizing traditional music, dance, instruments, and dialogue is essential to maintaining its distinctiveness. By achieving a balanced integration of tradition and modernity, Bhaona's relevance will endure.

Bhaona is a golden edifice of Assamese glory. This unparalleled creation of Sankardeva has united Assamese society, offering a vision of a pure and meaningful life. Even today, in every village and Namghar across Assam, Bhaona performances continue to flow as a sacred practice of rural social and religious life. By maintaining a harmonious balance between preserving its traditional values and adapting to modernity, Bhaona will remain an eternal symbol of Assamese pride, flowing ceaselessly through time.



why Bhaona is considered a priceless treasure of Assamese culture.

The role of the "Gayan-Bayan" duo in Bhaona performances is equally significant. Created by Sankardeva, this duo represents a sublime integration of dance,

sible to younger audiences, they have impacted its core spiritual dimension. The Sutradhar's role, traditionally central to engaging the audience, has been reduced to a formality in modern times, diminishing its depth and artistic value, which in

Radha: The eternal flame of love, Devotion and Divine energy

By: Lalit Garg

The eighth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada in the Hindu calendar brings with it a festival of love, devotion, power, and surrender—Radhashtami. This day is celebrated as the divine birth of Goddess Radha. It is not merely the celebration of the birth of a woman who epitomizes the summit of devotion, but the adoration of that supreme energy which gave Lord Krishna's life its unique height and completeness. On this day, devotees worship Radha and Krishna together, observe fasts, and pray for happiness, prosperity, and good fortune. Especially in Braj, and most vibrantly in Barsana, the festival is observed with great fervor. Radha is the symbol of love, devotion, and the inner energy of Krishna. She is worshipped as the pinnacle of divine love, the goddess of devotion, and the soul-force of Krishna Himself. If Krishna is the embodiment of divine play (leela), sweetness, and compassion, then Radha is the very essence of that play, the depth of that sweetness, and the soul of that compassion. Thus, the Bhakti tradition proclaims: "Radhe bina nahin Krishna, Krishna bina nahin Radhe"—without Radha there is no Krishna, and without Krishna there is no Radha.

Radha is not just the name of a woman in Indian culture; she is the

supreme manifestation of love and the highest expression of devotion. Her love is not worldly or bodily, but the mystical union of soul and Supreme Soul. It is a love free from selfishness and possession—a love of pure surrender and complete identification. Radha's life is an extraordinary confluence of sacrifice and deep spiritual attachment. She never desired anything for herself; her every thought, every breath, was absorbed only in Krishna. This is why the great poet-saints have revered her as the very embodiment of devotional rasa and the presiding goddess of divine love. Surdas beautifully wrote: "Prema bhaya manu bhava samana, Radha tana mana Krishna bakhana"—true love is that state where body, mind, and soul are completely identified with Krishna. Indeed, the relationship between Radha and Krishna is not that of an ordinary lover and beloved. It is far more profound: the eternal dialogue of the soul with the Supreme Soul. This relationship is spiritual, not worldly; it is a timeless communion devoid of attachment, selfishness, or desire. Radha gives completeness to Krishna's personality. Krishna is the center of divine play, yet without Radha that play remains incomplete. Hence, in devotional traditions, Krishna's name is always preceded by Radha's—"Radhe-Krishna", "Shyama-Shyam". This sequence itself conveys a deep

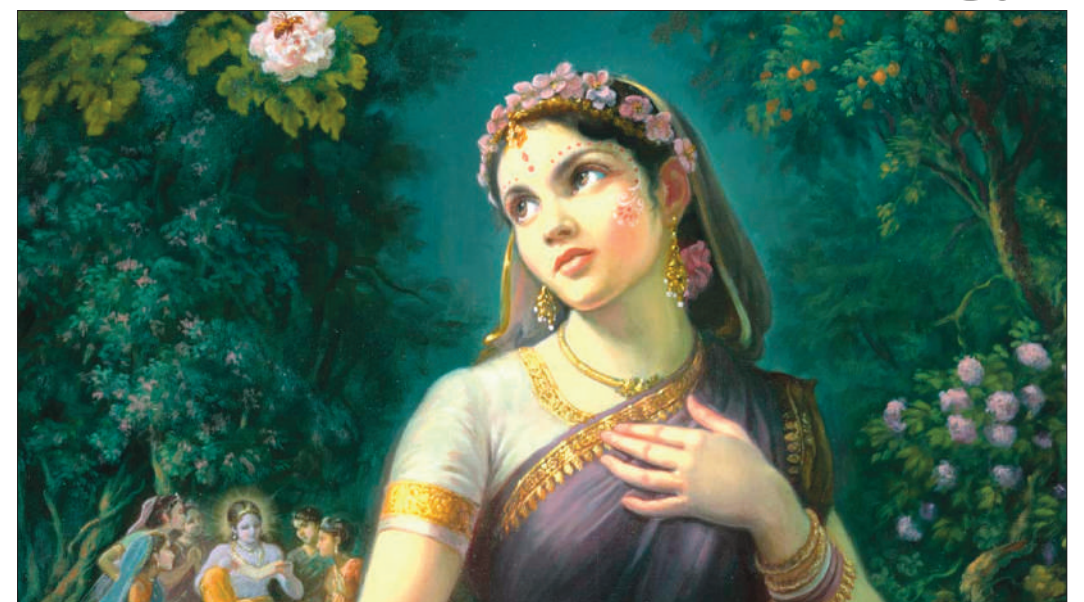
philosophical truth—that the path to God always passes through the bridge of love and devotion exemplified by Radha. Radha is not merely Krishna's consort; she is His strength and His inspiration. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna speaks of two forms of nature—apara (lower) and para (higher). Radha is regarded as the embodiment of para prakriti, the higher nature that leads life towards spirituality. She is the soul of Krishna's divine play, the foundation of His worship. In Radha's love there is no demand, only surrender. Her message is that true love lies not in possessing, but in giving. It is this spirit of giving that elevates life to sublime heights.

The Bhakti tradition considers Radha's devotion supreme. Her love is selfless and entirely Krishna-centered. She merged her very existence into Krishna. Hence, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu immersed himself in the devotion of Radha, declaring, "In Radha's devotion I see Krishna, and in Krishna's devotion I see Radha." Saints like Surdas, Ras Khan, Vidyapati, and Mirabai expressed the deepest forms of love and devotion only through Radha. When Mirabai declared, "Mere to Giridhar Gopal, doosro na koyi" ("My only beloved is Krishna, there is none else"), the echo of Radha's sentiment reverberated through her words. In today's age, when relationships are increasingly tainted

with selfishness, calculation, and transience, Radha's life offers a new illumination. True love is that which is marked by surrender, trust, and sacrifice. Where families and societies are disintegrating, Radha's example becomes ever more relevant. She teaches that as long as relationships are measured only in terms of gain and loss, they cannot endure. Endurance and permanence arise only when there is surrender like Radha's.

On the level of devotion too, Radha inspires us. Today, religion often appears confined to rituals and external ostentation. Radha shows us that true devotion resides in the depth of the heart—where the difference between devotee and God vanishes. When, like Radha, we surrender selflessly to the Divine, every difficulty appears trivial and we attain profound peace. Radha's life reminds us that the ultimate purpose of human existence is not material wealth or achievements, but the union of soul with the Supreme. Devotion is not just prayer and ritual, but the deep identification of the heart with God. In times when humanity struggles with conflict, stress, and loneliness, Radha teaches that the true solution lies in love and surrender. If we imbibe her message, our personal relationships, our social fabric, and our spiritual journey can all be infused with new energy and peace.

The scriptures describe Radha



as the eternal energy of Krishna, the very soul of His being. Hence, Krishna's worship is considered incomplete without Radha. The Devi Bhagavatam narrates that Lord Narayana Himself told Narada that without Radha's worship, one does not even have the right to worship Krishna. Even Lord Shiva confessed to Narada that he was incapable of describing Radha's beauty and virtues fully—such is her ineffable glory, beyond the comprehension of even the greatest beings. Her beauty enchants even Krishna, the charmer of the three worlds. According to

the scriptures, worship of Krishna is incomplete without Radha. Therefore, Radhashtami holds profound significance. Observing fasts and worship on this day brings blessings of Goddess Lakshmi in the form of prosperity, fortune, and happiness. Married women observe the fast for the blessings of marital bliss and children. Yet, Radhashtami is not merely a birthday celebration—it is a reminder of what true love and devotion mean.

According to legend, Radha was born in Barsana to Vrishabhanu and Kirti Devi. She is revered as

the divine energy of Lord Krishna. It is believed that pleasing Radha automatically pleases Krishna Himself. Radha teaches us that love is a realization of the soul, a bridge to the Divine. She is the eternal flame of love, illuminating not only Krishna but all of humanity. In today's time, her relevance is even deeper. She shows us a path of love without selfishness, surrender without demand, and union without desire—only the meeting of the soul with the Supreme Soul. This is the true message of Radha, and this is the real significance of Radhashtami.

Silhouette

By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

Ranjha opened the door after his return from evening walk. Even last month he went with his wife Heera for evening stroll. Today the room is dark. There is none to make tea with onion pakora for him. Heera had a valve problem. All hoped she would survive after the valve transplantation. Daughter came from England to Bangalore direct but Heera by that time was taken to operation theatre. Doctors could not do more delay for her reaching from airport. Ranjha was alone waiting outside the operation theatre. Daughter saw her mother after the operation. But she was no more alive.

Those days are still vividly painful in his memory. Rituals continued for the whole last month. Today, for the first time, Ranjha came outside home for an evening walk. A person's presence is felt most when she or he is no more living. Now Ranjha feels the valued presence of his wife in his life—how much, why, how much—it is the whole space she occupied after their daughter left for studies in England.

The daughter had got a job, then married, and later purchased a beautiful house. Ranjha and Heera had once gone to England for a long ninety-day trip. They passed those days together, and their little granddaughter became the centre of all attraction and happiness. The snowy streets of London, the Avon river, the underground metro along the Thames—all were still vivid memories. Heera enjoyed the best time of her life then.

Now all of that feels like a faded photograph. Ranjha placed his walking stick near the corner and slowly lowered himself into the armchair. The silence of the house throbbed like a pulse in his ears. For decades, the home had been alive with Heera's voice—her calling him for tea, her humming an old Lata Mangeshkar tune in the kitchen, her scolding him gently when he misplaced his spectacles. All that remained now was a silhouette—her shape imprinted on walls, chairs, and shadows.

He glanced at the tea table. For years, Heera had placed two steaming cups every evening. He had protested many times, "Don't make tea for me on summer evenings." And she would laugh, "Without tea, how will your heart walk with mine?"

Tonight, there was only one cup, hastily made by himself before the walk, half-empty and cold.

The days after her death had been a haze. Relatives had come, neighbours had lit lamps, priests had recited prayers. Yet when the rituals ended, people departed, and the house was locked again in silence, he felt as though life had truly ended for him that very moment.

Evenings were the worst. Shadows lengthened and stretched like Heera's sari pallu dragging across the floor. Ranjha would almost imagine hearing her bangles clinking in the kitchen. More than once, he had spoken aloud, asking her whether she would like the window closed or left open. Silence had been the only reply.

His daughter, Radha, called often from England. She urged him to visit. "Papa, come stay with us. You'll have company, you'll play with Meera. It will be good for you."

But Ranjha only smiled weakly at the phone. "This is my house, beti. These walls are filled with your mother's laughter. If I leave, I will lose her silhouette too."

Radha cried quietly over the phone. She understood, yet feared his loneliness.

One evening, Ranjha opened the old photo album. The images blurred through his tears—Heera in her bridal sari, shyly holding his hand; Heera standing near the Taj Mahal, her dupatta flying in the wind; Heera feeding pigeons at Trafalgar Square, giggling like a little girl.

Suddenly, he touched one photograph where she was holding baby Radha. His fingers trembled. "How much space you filled, Heera. Without you, I am like an empty house echoing only with my steps."

The next day, Ranjha resumed his evening walks. He found himself walking to the neighbourhood park where children played cricket. Heera had always loved watching children. She would stop, clap for a good shot, and ask their names. Tonight, as Ranjha sat on the bench alone, a little boy offered him a toffee.

"Uncle, you look sad. Want one?" Ranjha smiled faintly and accepted it. The boy ran away, but for a moment Ranjha felt as though Heera had sent him—her invisible way of telling him not to be swallowed by grief.

Slowly, the park became his anchor. Each evening, he sat there watching lives unfold. Young couples walked hand in hand. Elderly men played cards. Dogs barked, children laughed. Life went on, indifferent to loss, yet somehow embracing it too.

One day, a widower named Yusuf, who often



sat beside him, said, "Grief never leaves, friend. But it softens. Like the evening sun—bright at first, then a gentle silhouette."

That word struck Ranjha. Silhouette. Yes—that was Heera now. Not gone entirely, but a shadow carved into his existence.

Months passed. On their wedding anniversary, Ranjha placed fresh marigolds beside her photograph. He brewed tea and made onion pakoras, just as she used to. When he tasted them, they were clumsy and half-burnt. But he smiled, "Forgive me, Heera. You always said I couldn't fry without burning." The room, for a fleeting second, filled with the aroma of their old evenings.

One late night, Ranjha dreamed. He was walking along the snowy streets of London with Heera. She wore a red shawl and held his hand tightly. "See, Ranjha," she said, pointing to Christmas lights, "isn't life beautiful?"

When he woke, he whispered, "Yes, Heera, life is still beautiful—because you left your silhouette in it."

Gradually, Ranjha began to write letters to his

granddaughter Meera. He told her stories of Heera's childhood, her favourite recipes, her songs. "When you grow up, remember your dadi not only as a photograph but as a melody in your life." Writing these letters became his new companionship.

Radha noticed the change. "Papa, you sound happier these days."

"I am not happier, beti," he replied softly. "But I am less alone. She is with me in every shadow, every cup of tea, every memory."

Winter arrived. On New Year's Eve, the neighbourhood invited Ranjha to join their celebration. He hesitated at first, but then remembered Heera's words during one of their London nights: "We must never stop living. Even pain can be softened with people around us." So he went. Children burst crackers, women served sweets, men laughed and sang. For the first time in months, Ranjha clapped with others, though his eyes glistened. When he looked up at the sky, the fireworks lit it in dazzling colours. Among the lights, he felt Heera's presence like a silhouette of stars.

As days turned into a year, Ranjha realized something profound. Death does not erase love. It only changes its form. Heera was now in the silence of his evenings, in the shadows of his home, in the laughter of his granddaughter, in the kindness of strangers, in the rhythm of his beating heart. He no longer waited for her footsteps. Instead, he listened to the silence, and in that silence, he heard her still.

On the anniversary of her passing, Ranjha walked to the park at dusk. The sunset spread across the horizon in orange and crimson hues. He closed his eyes and murmured, "You are here, Heera. You will always be here."

When he opened them, he saw a faint silhouette on the bench beside him—not flesh, not illusion, but memory alive. He smiled.

For love, he understood now, is never lost. It only changes into a silhouette that follows us faithfully till the end. (International Tagore Award Poet and Writer Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University USA. Email profdratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)

Barnam's 'Madhyakarshan'



By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The 'Barnam' theatre group of Biswanath Chariali has carved a distinctive niche in the history of Assam's theatre movement. Established on August 25, 2005, this group has, over the course of two decades, left an indelible mark on Assam's cultural landscape through its unwavering commitment to theatre arts. Through regular performances, Barnam has not only demonstrated dedication to the art form but also created opportunities for profound reflection by presenting thought-provoking plays that address various societal issues with sensitivity and insight. Over the past decade, the group has organized theatre festivals with participation from national and international troupes, fostering cultural connections between Assam's theatre scene and artists from other regions of the country. Alongside this, Barnam has nurtured interest in theatre among the younger generation through workshops, discussion forums, and, more recently, the establishment of a theatre school. This school has provided the youth of Biswanath Chariali and surrounding areas with theatre education, offering a fresh perspective on the art form.

On August 25, marking Barnam's twentieth anniversary, the play 'Madhyakarshan' was staged, offering theatre enthusiasts in the region a new intellectual experience. Written by Assam's renowned playwright Pankajyoti Bhuyan and directed by Kushal Deka, this play uses satire to portray contemporary societal issues, engaging audiences with humor while providing food for thought.

While the play's narrative evokes laughter, it unveils critical societal concerns. It effectively highlights the commercialization of Bihu competitions, the erosion of morality driven by the lure of awards, and the loss of the true essence of cultural festivals. 'Madhyakarshan' is a satirical work centered on Assam's vibrant Bihu festival. The play casts a sharp gaze on the commercialization of Bihu competitions, vividly depicting how the festival's true spirit and joy are overshadowed

by ostentatious contests. Playwright Pankajyoti Bhuyan skillfully employs satire to address this sensitive issue. The story revolves around a youth organization named Seven Sisters, which has been organizing Bihu competitions for years but has faced only financial losses and disappointment. This time, the organizer plans a grand Bihu Kuwori (Bihu Queen) competition with an innovative idea, announcing land from three places in Assam



as prizes. This announcement transforms the competition's dynamics, with 592 dancers participating, attempts to influence judges, and even entries from neighboring countries, symbolically underscoring humanity's deep attachment to 'land.' This 'land' is not merely a geographical entity but a metaphor for human greed, selfishness, and competitive mentality. The playwright presents this theme in a manner that compels audiences to confront harsh societal truths through laughter. The narrative's depth paints a broader picture, from the commercialization of Bihu to the erosion of cultural values, shedding light on a society that hesitates little in turning its cherished festivals into marketable commodities.

In terms of staging, the experienced direction of Kushal Deka is a notable highlight. His direction achieves a perfect balance between the play's humor and its profound social commentary. Each scene leaves a lasting impression on the audience, as the director skillfully harmonizes the narrative with the stage setting, performances, and technical aspects. Milan Das's portrayal of Mrinal vividly brings to life the mindset of an ambitious organizer. Ganesh Singh's adept perform-

ance as a judge effectively raises questions about the impartiality of competitions and captures the judge's internal moral conflict. Nivedita Bharali as Makhni and Barnali Phukan as Madhusmita reflect the ambitions of Bihu dancers in today's competitive environment, showcasing a willingness to go to any lengths for recognition. Meanwhile, Prabal Saikia's mature performance as Tridip wins the audience's hearts. Khanjan Bora as Sagar and Bhaskar Talukdar as Milan Gogoi deliver effortless performances. Jnanavi Bora and Mitali Roy Das portray Fatema and Rahima with heartfelt authenticity, leaving a lasting impact on the audience. The off-stage technical aspects also play a crucial role in the play's success. Tapan Goswami's lighting design lends a vibrant quality to the stage, enhancing the emotional depth of the narrative. Kushal Deka's music planning, combined with Trishagni Baruah's vocals, makes the play's moments even more captivating.

In essence, through 'Madhyakarshan', Barnam Theatre Group not only delivers an entertaining performance but also provides intellectual fodder on sensitive societal issues. The play's success lies in its satirical presentation, powerful performances, and impeccable directorial coordination. Barnam's endeavor signals a new direction for Assam's theatre landscape while reaffirming efforts to revitalize cultural consciousness.

In alignment with Barnam's twentieth anniversary, a state-level solo acting competition was held on August 24, with around thirty participants from various parts of Assam. On the evening of August 25, before the staging of the play, students of Barnam Theatre School performed dance, music, and solo acts, enlivening the evening. In conclusion, we hope that in the years to come, Barnam Theatre Group will continue to enrich Biswanath Chariali and Assam's theatre scene with innovative ideas, delivering more robust and successful productions. Our best wishes remain with them.



First Lecture Day

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: The journey of the centenary year and its meaningful contribution to the society

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.

AN INDIAN SPEAKS

By: Bipul Chandra Kalita

I am an explorer of love
In its spiritual
And earthly forms
In my land's soulful soil;
I love my India
With my indivisible spirit.

Divisive parts made their separate homes,
Trying to snatch her peace
Frying their conscience
To patron and glorify terrorism in their soil.

My land won't have any cowardly sleep
Nor would my land's antique civility lose
Its solemn spirits,
Deeply rooted and glorified,
When uncivil forces try to darken its soil.

My land is my spiritual strength,
Source of valour;
Foes get rooted out,
Fiends highly adored;
Motherly light is her global flight!

Proud of being this land's child,
A worshiper of Truth,
Glorifier of Peace and Justice
Whose patriotism feeds spiritual insight.



The First Flood

By: Aniruddh Oghori

This is the first flood
Rain come so cruel some times
Fifth rises to touch the feet
For the first time, in the first flood
It rained cats and dogs
Pork and Chicken
Beef and Mutton
Terrible darkness at our homes
Cockroaches swarm all around
It is a dull Pandora's rain outside
Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide
Your noble loneliness, the same plight
The snails you saw on the walls
Or used to behold with curious eyes
They now have disappeared
What can the flood offer now,
But snakes?



Latest data showing 7.8 pc GDP growth 'hardest slap of reality' for Rahul: BJP

Only thing 'dead' is Rahul Gandhi's credibility, says minister

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: The BJP on Saturday said the latest data showing India's economy grew by a stronger-than-expected 7.8 per cent in April-June came as the "hardest slap of reality" for Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who recently "declared" India a "dead economy".

According to government data released on Friday, the Indian economy grew by 7.8 per cent in April-June -- the highest in five quarters -- before the disruptive US tariffs were imposed.

The GDP growth in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal was mainly due to good performance by the farm sector.

Commenting on the GDP data, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said, "Those who call it a 'dead economy' should now understand that India is a 'long live economy', which is on the path to realising the dream of a developed and fully self-reliant India."

"The sweat of the Indian farmers, the hard work of our scientists, and the 140 crore Indians have demonstrated their capabilities," Chouhan said in a post on X.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is



moving forward to fulfil the resolve of a developed India, the minister said.

Latching on to the government data, BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya said, "For the acerbic, delusional, frustrated, and rejected Rahul Gandhi -- the same man who declared India a 'dead economy' -- the latest GDP numbers are the hardest slap of reality."

"India has just clocked 7.8 per cent GDP growth in Q1 of FY 2025-26, leading the world's major economies," Malviya said in a post

on X. The only thing "dead" is Rahul Gandhi's credibility, he claimed.

In another post on X, Malviya said India is not just growing but also proving the "doomsayers wrong, quarter after quarter".

"The same purveyors of the 'India is a dead economy' narrative are now scrambling to hide their faces," he claimed.

BJP's national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said the Indian economy is "rewriting" global benchmarks, with data showing

7.8 per cent growth in the first quarter of FY 2025-26.

"Rahul Gandhi said the economy is dead. 'Dead nahi, deadly hai' (India's economy is not dead, it's deadly)," Poonawalla said in a post on X.

"This momentum shows that the so-called 'dead economy' is in fact alive, thriving, and deadly strong," he added.

Attacking the government over US President Donald Trump's criticism of the Indian economy, Rahul Gandhi recently said that everybody except Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman knew that the country's economy was "dead".

The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha also alleged that the BJP-led government at the Centre destroyed the country's economic, defence and foreign policies, running India "to the ground".

The Congress leader took on the government after Trump last month called India a "dead economy", hours after announcing 25 per cent tariffs on the import of Indian goods along with an unspecified "penalty" for buying "vast majority" of Russian military equipment and crude oil. (PTI)

11 dead in cloudburst, landslide in J-K's Reasi, Ramban districts

JAMMU, Aug 30: At least 11 people, including seven of a family, died in two incidents of cloudburst and landslide triggered by heavy rains in remote villages of Reasi and Ramban districts, as Jammu and Kashmir, beset by a series of natural calamities in the past fortnight, labours to bring life back on track.

The Union Territory has been reeling under a series of cloudbursts and landslides since August 14. With the latest incidents, 130 people have lost their lives and 140 were injured in Jammu, while 32 pilgrims are still missing.

The pilgrimage to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine atop Trikuta hills in Reasi district remained suspended for the fifth day on Saturday. As many as 34 pilgrims died when a landslide struck about halfway along the winding 12-km trek route from Katra to the shrine on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has directed officials to ensure round-the-clock monitoring of the situation and carry out timely evacuation of people from risk-prone zones.

The record rainfall across the Jammu region earlier this week left a trail of devastation, with hundreds of properties damaged and dozens of roads and bridges washed away, forcing the suspension of traffic on key highways, besides virtually paralysing the rail

traffic.

Early on Saturday, a landslide flattened a house in the remote Badder village in Reasi district, killing seven members of a family, officials said. The deceased have been identified as Nazir Ahmad (38), his wife Wazira Begum (35) and their sons Bilal Ahmed (13), Mohd Mustafa (11), Mohd Adil (8), Mohd Mubarak (6) and Mohd Wasim (5).

Nazir and his family were asleep when their house on a hill slope came under the debris brought down by the landslide, burying them alive, the officials said, adding the locals frantically searched the debris and were later joined by police, but only managed to pull out the bodies.

In Ramban district, four people, including two brothers, died after a cloudburst struck a remote village, damaging two houses and a school. The cloudburst triggered flash floods in the mountainous Rajgarh, located about 25 kilometres from the district headquarters, around 11.30 pm on Friday.

"Bodies of four people were recovered from underneath the debris after a hectic search by rescuers, comprising local volunteers, police and SDRF," Deputy Commissioner of Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan, told PTI.

Khan, along with Ramban Senior Superintendent of Police Arun Gupta, reached the site in the early

hours to supervise the rescue and relief operation.

The officials identified the deceased as Ashwani Sharma (24), his brother Dwarka Nath (55), niece Virta Devi (26) and their guest Om Raj (38), a resident of Banshara in Rajgarh. The rescuers are searching for Sharma's sister-in-law, Bidya Devi (55).

"The cloudburst happened on the hilltop village near the primary school and created a fast-flowing stream through the Drubla-Gudgram village, washing away two residential houses, a cowshed and the school building," Ajay Kumar, a local, said.

He lauded the district administration and the quick reaction team of local volunteers led by Bashir Ahmad Magray for the prompt response to the calamity.

"The district administration is on high alert and is extending all possible assistance to the affected families," Khan said.

Union minister Jitendra Singh, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have expressed grief over the incidents and assured all possible assistance to the affected families.

Taking note of the incessant heavy rains, the chief minister appealed to people to remain alert, avoid vulnerable areas, and strictly adhere to safety advisories. (PTI)



অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ

ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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ADVT. NO.29/2025

No.42PSC/DR-26/2025-26

Assam Public Service Commission invites application from Indian Citizens as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India for the under-mentioned posts under Assam Government in the scale of pay as indicated below and carrying usual allowances as admissible under Rules of the Govt. of Assam.

- (1) (i) **Name of the Post** : Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade-III) - Civil Engineer/Public Health Engineer as per Assam Urban Engineering Service cadre under Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of Assam.
(ii) **Name of the Post** : 10 (Ten) Nos.
(iii) **Reservation of Posts**:

Name of the Service/Post	Open category		Reserved for OBC/MOBC		Reserved for SC		Reserved For STP		Reserved For STH		Grand Total		Post reserved for PwBD & Type of Disability	Ex-Servicemen
	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW		
Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade - III) - Civil Engineer/ Public Health Engineer	6	2	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	10	3	Low Vision - 1	1

*PwBD-Persons with Benchmark Disabilities; RFW-Reserved for Women.

*Reservation as per draft advertisement received from Government against total numbers of posts in the cadre.

NB: The Ex-Servicemen must upload Ex-Servicemen Identity Card issued by Zila Sainik Welfare Office of the state of Assam and Discharge Book while applying for the reserved post.

- (2) (i) **Name of the Post** : Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade-III)-Mechanical Engineer as per Assam Urban Engineering Service cadre under Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of Assam.
(ii) **Name of the Post** : 16 (Sixteen) Nos.
(iii) **Reservation of Posts**:

Name of the Service/Post	Open category		Reserved for OBC/MOBC		Reserved for SC		Reserved For STP		Reserved For STH		Grand Total		Post reserved for PwBD & Type of Disability	Ex-Servicemen
	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW		
Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade - III) - Mechanical Engineer	8	2	4	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	16	4	Hearing Impairment - 1	0

*PwBD-Persons with Benchmark Disabilities; RFW-Reserved for Women.

*Reservation as per draft advertisement received from Government against total numbers of posts in the cadre.

NB: The Ex-Servicemen must upload Ex-Servicemen Identity Card issued by Zila Sainik Welfare Office of the state of Assam and Discharge Book while applying for the reserved post.

- (3) (i) **Name of the Post** : Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade-III)- Electrical Engineer as per Assam Urban Engineering Service cadre under Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of Assam.
(ii) **Name of the Post** : 11 (Eleven) Nos.
(iii) **Reservation of Posts** :

Name of the Service/Post	Open category		Reserved for OBC/MOBC		Reserved for SC		Reserved For STP		Reserved For STH		Grand Total		Post reserved for PwBD & Type of Disability	Ex-Servicemen
	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW		
Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade - III) - Electrical Engineer	5	2	3	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	11	3	Locomotor Disability - 1	0

*PwBD-Persons with Benchmark Disabilities; RFW-Reserved for Women.

*Reservation as per draft advertisement received from Government against total numbers of posts in the cadre.

NB: The Ex-Servicemen must upload Ex-Servicemen Identity Card issued by Zila Sainik Welfare Office of the state of Assam and Discharge Book while applying for the reserved post.

- (4) (i) **Name of the Post** : Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade III) - Environmental Engineer as per Assam Urban Engineering Service cadre under Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of Assam.
(ii) **Name of the Post** : 6 (Six) Nos.
(iii) **Reservation of Posts**:

Name of the Service/Post	Open category		Reserved for OBC/MOBC		Reserved for SC		Reserved For STP		Reserved For STH		Grand Total		Post reserved for PwBD & Type of Disability	Ex-Servicemen
	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW		
Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade - III) - Environmental Engineer	3	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	2	0	0

*PwBD-Persons with Benchmark Disabilities; RFW-Reserved for Women.

*Reservation as per draft advertisement received from Government against total numbers of posts in the cadre.

NB: The Ex-Servicemen must upload Ex-Servicemen Identity Card issued by Zila Sainik Welfare Office of the state of Assam and Discharge Book while applying for the reserved post.

5. **Scale of Pay:** Pay scale+ Grade Pay Other allowances as admissible to the Assam State Government employees from time to time (per month).

Pay scale	Grade Pay	Pay Band
Rs. 30,000/- to Rs. 1,10,000/-	Rs. 12,700/-	Pay Band-4

BEFORE FILLING UP THE APPLICATION FORM, CANDIDATES MUST NOTE THAT THE REQUIRED CERTIFICATES RELATING TO AGE, CASTE AND MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION WILL BE FETCHED FROM THE OTR PROFILE. CANDIDATES ARE TO UPDATE THE OTR PROFILE IF ANY ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE UPLOADED IN SUPPORT OF THE ADVERTISED POST.

6. Eligibility Criteria:

The candidate must be an Indian Citizen as defined in Article 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India and must be a permanent resident of Assam.

As a domicile proof of the candidate, he/she must upload a copy of the valid Permanent Resident Certificate issued in Assam for educational purpose/Employment Exchange Registration Certificate will be treated as proof of residency. (Upload necessary documents)

7. Education Qualification:

- (i) **For Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade III) Civil Engineer/Public Health Engineer as per Assam Urban Engineering Service cadre under Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of Assam.**
B.E/B.Tech in Civil Engineering (Full time) from any All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognised university/institute.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Civil Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31.05.2013

(Upload relevant all semester/year mark sheet/certificate reflecting the subjects)

- (Upload All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognised certificate of respective university/institute.)
(ii) **For Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade-III) Mechanical Engineer as per Assam Urban Engineering Service cadre under Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of Assam.**
B.E/B.Tech in Mechanical Engineering (Full time) from any All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognised university/institute.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Mechanical Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31.05.2013

(Upload relevant all semester/year mark sheet/certificate reflecting the subjects)

- (Upload All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognised certificate of respective university/institute.)
(iii) **For Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade III)- Electrical Engineer as per Assam Urban Engineering Service cadre under Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of Assam.**
B.E/B.Tech in Electrical Engineering (Full time) from any All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognised university/institute.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Electrical Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31.05.2013

(Upload relevant all semester/year mark sheet/certificate reflecting the subjects)

- (Upload All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognised certificate of respective university/institute.)
(iv) **For Urban Technical Officer (Junior Grade III) Environmental Engineer as per Assam Urban Engineering Service cadre under Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of Assam.**
B.E/B.Tech in Environmental Engineering (Full time) or B.E/B.Tech in Civil Engineering (Full time) with Masters in Environmental Science/ Environmental Engineering from any All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognised university/institute.

OR

Candidate must have passed (Part A & B) of AMIE (India) in Environmental Engineering or in Civil Engineering with Masters in Environmental Science/Environmental Engineering if he/she had enrolled in AMIE course on or before 31.05.2013

(Upload relevant all semester/year mark sheet/certificate reflecting the subjects)

(Upload All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognised certificate of respective university/institute.)

8. Age:

The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01-01-2025. The upper age limit is relaxable:

- (i) By 5 years for SC/ST candidates, i.e. upto 43 years.
(ii) By 3 years for OBC/MOBC candidates i.e. upto 41 years as per Govt. Notification No. ABP. 6/2016/9 dated Dispur the 25th April 2018.
(iii) For Ex-Servicemen, the maximum age shall be 50 years as on 01-01-2025 for open category, relaxable further by 3 (Three) years for OBC/MOBC candidates and 5 (Five) years for SC/ST candidates as per provisions laid down in the Assam Ex-Servicemen (reservation of posts in Group-1 & Group-2 in State Service) Rules, 2022.
(iv) Persons with benchmark disability (PwBD) 10 years irrespective of SC/ST/OBC and UR Category of candidates as per Govt. Memorandum No. ABP 144/95/121 dated Dispur the 28th October, 2015.
The age limit of the candidates will be calculated on the basis of the Class-X/Class-XII Examination Admit Card/Pass Certificate/Marksheet issued by a recognized Central/State Board/Council where Age/Date of Birth (DOB) is clearly reflected. No other document shall be accepted in lieu of the above mentioned documents for age proof.

9. ForPwBD Category Candidate:

To be eligible for consideration under PwBD category, a candidate must possess Benchmark Disability and must produce necessary certificate issued by the competent authority.

(Upload relevant documents)

10. For Government Employees of the state of Assam:

Candidates, already in regular Government service, whether in permanent or temporary capacity other than casual/ad-hoc/daily wages/hourly paid/contract basis, in order to prove their employment, must upload a certificate against the applied post, issued by the competent authority under which he/she is working.

However, candidates, seeking pay protection, continuation in service etc., must upload 'NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATE (NOC)' against the applied post, issued by competent authority under which he/she is working.

(Upload relevant documents)

11. The Small Family Norms:

As per Govt. notification No. ABP.69/2019/17, dated Dispur, the 6th November/2019, candidates have to submit a declaration regarding "The Small Family Norms" in Form - A at the time of applying for the post.

(Upload necessary documents)

The advertisement has been issued as per draft advertisement furnished by the Government.

(i) **STARTING DATE FOR ONLINE APPLICATION:- 05-09-2025**

(ii) **CLOSING DATE FOR ONLINE APPLICATION: 25-09-2025**

(iii) **LAST DATE FOR PAYMENT OF APPLICATION FEE:- 27-09-2025**

NB: For detail advertisement please visit APSC's official website www.apscrecruitment.in (Recruitment Advertisement link).

Sd/-

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

DIPR /D/HLT/138/31-Aug-25

Rahul Gandhi's 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar Arunachal BJP condemns alleged abuses at PM



ITANAGAR, Aug 30 : Arunachal Pradesh's BJP unit on Saturday condemned alleged abuses hurled at Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Rahul Gandhi's 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar, calling them "highly unethical and disrespectful."

Talking to reporters, party spokesperson Tabom Dai dis-

missed the Congress-led 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' as "political drama" irrelevant to issues concerning Arunachal Pradesh.

He highlighted the state's progress under Chief Minister Pema Khandu and said people continue to place their faith in the BJP's leadership.

The party objected to the re-

peated use of expressions like "Pradhan Mantri Chor", recalling that Gandhi had previously apologised before the Supreme Court for similar remarks.

BJP leaders accused the Congress and its INDIA bloc partners of undermining constitutional institutions with "baseless" allegations of EVM manipulation and

"vote chori," calling it an attempt to cover up their "impending defeat" in Bihar.

Earlier in the day, the party organised a massive protest rally in Itanagar, condemning remarks by Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

The rally, spearheaded by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha and Mahila Morcha, began from Ganga Market and culminated at the Tennis Court at IG Park, here.

A large number of workers and supporters joined to express solidarity with the prime minister and denounce the statements of the Congress leadership.

Speakers at the rally underlined that such remarks were not only an insult to the PM, but also to the sentiments of the nation.

They reaffirmed BJP's commitment to safeguarding the dignity of the country's highest office and to upholding respectful political discourse. (PTI)

AICC general secretary Saptagiri Ulaka praises Rahul Gandhi's efforts to safeguard Constitution



AGARTALA, Aug 30: AICC general secretary Saptagiri Ulaka on Saturday praised party leader Rahul Gandhi for his consistent efforts to "safeguard the Constitution and democracy" in the country.

Addressing the state-level 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' rally at Radhanagar here, Ulaka said the people who claimed they would rule this country for the next 50 years are now terrified of their future.

"They (BJP) declared they would win 400-plus seats in the last Lok Sabha elections and even change the country's constitution, but they fell well short of that target. Because of this fear, the ruling government has been using central agencies to put pressure on opposition parties," he added.

"Around 95 per cent of the total cases initiated by central agencies

were against opposition parties, yet the conviction rate remains at zero," Ulaka said, adding that the party was confident that the results in Maharashtra and Haryana did not reflect the true will of the people.

Speaking about the ongoing 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' campaign, Ulaka said a party survey on the Bengaluru Parliamentary seat had identified the "vote chor" (vote thief), prompting Rahul Gandhi to launch the rally in Bihar.

Ulaka urged the people to strengthen the hands of Gandhi be-

cause he has been working to safeguard the constitution and democracy.

"The Congress will not remain silent if the BJP steals votes with the help of the Election Commission. That's why the party has

launched the statewide 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' rallies", he said.

Ulaka also expressed his frustration with the last-minute venue change for the rally.

The 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' rally was initially scheduled to be held in front of the statue of Mahatma Gandhi (Circuit House), but police denied permission on the grounds of law and order. Eventually, we were allowed to address the rally at Radhanagar, under tight security".

Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president Asish Kumar Saha claimed the party has started gaining strength as people want to teach a lesson to the BJP.

Senior Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman was seen engaged in a heated exchange of words with police officials for not allowing the party to organise the rally at the scheduled venue.

However, BJP state vice-president Papia Dutta described Roy Barman's behaviour with police as a drama.

"The Congress MLA might have planned to create chaos at the Circuit House, where BJP workers were already worshipping Lord Ganesh with prior permission. I heard the police didn't grant permission to Congress. Now, he's staged this drama to grab media attention." (PTI)

44 die of TB this year in Mizoram: Officials



AIZAWL, Aug 30: At least 44 people have died of tuberculosis (TB) and 1,492 have been diagnosed with the disease in Mizoram in the current year so far, officials said on Saturday.

According to the health department's data, a total of 463 people have died due to the disease in more than five years since 2020.

Thirty-one people lost their lives due to tuberculosis in 2020, 46 in 2021, 87 in 2022, 119 in 2023 and 136 in 2024, it said.

Altogether 10,870 people have been diagnosed with the infectious disease during the same period, with the highest cases reported in 2024 at 2,307, followed by 2,115 in 2023.

Of the 1,492 people diagnosed with TB in the current year, 1,010 were from Aizawl district, 108 from Kolashib, and 90 from Sihaia, the data said.

Officials also said that more than 100 people have registered to adopt TB patients or donate to them through the online platform "Nikshay" under the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

The programme was launched nationwide by President Droupadi Murmu in September 2022.

It is a programme to augment community involvement in meeting India's commitment to eradicate TB by 2025, ahead of the global target of 2030. (PTI)

Nagaland medical students stage protest against govt decision to regularise 280 health workers

KOHIMA, Aug 30: Medical students in Nagaland on Saturday staged a protest here against the state government's move to regularise 280 contractual health workers without conducting competitive examinations.

The agitators, under the aegis of Nagaland Medical Students' Association (NMSA), staged the demonstration outside the Department of Health and Family Welfare office in Kohima.

The demonstration comes in the wake of the state government issuing a notification on August 18, announcing the regularisation of 280 COVID-era appointees, including medical officers, dentists, Ayush practitioners, and nurses, through a departmental screening.

The NMSA contended that this bypasses constitutionally mandated recruitment processes and violates the Nagaland Health Service Rules, 2006, which require all Class-I gazetted officer posts to be filled up through the Nagaland Public Service Commission (NPSC).

"This decision undermines meritocracy and violates Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution, which guarantee equality before law and equal opportunity in public employment," NMSA president Pito S Rochill said during the protest.

The student body demanded an immediate revocation of the August 18 notification and insisted that all future appointments in the health sector be conducted through open competitive examinations via NPSC.

"We are not against those who served during the COVID-19 pandemic. But if regularisation must happen, it should be done through fair and open procedures," NMSA



general secretary Bonoto P Zimo said.

They argued that the government's decision to bypass written exams for Class-I posts sets a dangerous precedent. Under the Nagaland Health Service Rules, recruitment for such posts requires 100 per cent selection through NPSC.

"Why are recruitment rules in place if they are not to be followed?" asked Rochill, calling the move "illegal and arbitrary."

When asked about reports of a court ruling related to the issue, NMSA leaders clarified that while a previous plea was "dismissed", the court did not issue any directive allowing or endorsing the regularisation by the department.

"The case was dismissed without direction. That does not mean the government can proceed unchecked," the NMSA president added.

Asked if they are seeking legal course, Rochill said they are in the process of appealing and will explore legal remedies if necessary.

While the Department of Health and Family Welfare was yet to issue a public response, sources said that the regularisation process, including medical fitness tests and

interviews, have begun since August 27.

NMSA leaders expressed disappointment that no advance information about the interview dates was made available, and alleged that the entire process lacks transparency.

The protesters appealed to civil society, student bodies, NGOs, and the general public to join their demand for justice and transparency.

"If we allow this to happen, we are accepting a system that ignores merit and institutional integrity. We will continue this protest with our members, parents, and supporters until the order is revoked," Rochill said.

The NMSA has vowed to continue peaceful demonstrations and is considering legal escalation. Leaders emphasised that they are exercising their democratic rights and will not relent until fair recruitment norms are upheld.

During the protest, they held banners and placards demanding justice while also shouting slogans seeking free, fair and equal opportunity to all aspiring candidates through competitive exams.

Department officials could not be contacted for their comments on the matter. (PTI)

Sikkim transport dept asks vehicle owners to settle pending fines by today

GANGTOK, Aug 30: Sikkim's transport department has asked all vehicle owners to settle pending fines under a scheme by August 31 and said strict action would be taken against those who fail to comply with the instructions, officials said on Saturday.

The vehicle owners can easily check their pending fines by visiting the official portal: www.challan.sntd.in by entering their vehicle number, they said, adding that all RTO offices across Sikkim will remain open August 31.

"The transport department reminds all citizens that the One Time Settlement Scheme (OTSS) will expire on August 31 by which all vehicle owners with pending fines must make payments without any further delay," an official said.

All motor vehicle inspectors will be on duty to support and assist citizens in settling their dues, he said.

The non-payment of fines will lead to seizure of documents and impounding of vehicles, another official said.

"Any vehicle owner, who believes that he/she has been wrongly fined, should visit the respective RTO office with valid documents," he said.

All are strictly required to ensure that the registered mobile number associated with their vehicle is valid and updated, the officials said. (PTI)

3 cadres of banned outfit arrested

IMPHAL, Aug 30: Security forces arrested three cadres of a banned outfit from Kakching and Imphal East districts for their alleged involvement in extortions, police said on Saturday.

Three active cadres of Kangleipak Communist Party (PSC) including a mother-son duo was arrested on Thursday from Minuthong and Hiyanglam Awang Leikai in Imphal East and Kakching districts respectively.

Security forces also seized one .303 rifle, two 5.56 INSAS rifles and one 9mm pistol from Chagem Lokchao in Imphal East district on Friday, they added. (PTI)

Tripura govt begins distribution of PVC ration cards among PDS beneficiaries



AGARTALA, Aug 30: Tripura's Food and Civil Supplies Department has started giving PVC ration cards to beneficiaries of the public distribution system (PDS), replacing the old paper books, an official said on Saturday.

Of the 9.91 lakh family ration cards, 4.87 lakh PVC documents will be distributed in the first phase, and the remaining ones will be given in a phased manner after e-KYC are done by the cardholders, he said.

"As part of the modernisation plan, we have already started the distribution of PVC ration cards, replacing the old paper-made documents. In the first phase, we have prepared 4.87 lakh PVC ration cards, and these will be given to the respective cardholders," Food and Civil Supplies Director Sumit Lodh told PTI.

He said the remaining PVC ration cards will be distributed in a phased manner because several beneficiaries have not completed e-KYC.

According to Lodh, the PVC cards have durability with little chance of getting dirty or damaged, even during the monsoon.

The department has decided to convert 600 government fair price shops, out of the total of 2,072, as model outlets for the convenience of consumers.

"We have already provided ₹ 5,000 to each ration dealer to transform their shops into model outlets, catering to the basic needs of the consumers. The decision has been taken keeping in mind the convenience of ration cardholders", he said.

Food and Civil Supplies Minister Sushanta Chowdhury on Thursday made it clear that the department did not compromise with the quality of food items.

The minister's assertion came amid outrage over the distribution of poor-quality pulses through the PDS system.

"The department did not compromise with quality. We procure pulses in bulk, and some consignments of the total procured quantity may be damaged. The department was asked to look into the matter. We are committed to providing the best quality items through ration shops," he said.

Currently, consumers get rice, sugar, flour, kerosene and tea leaves from ration shops at subsidised rates. (PTI)

Arunachal Health Min seeks Centre's support for Super Speciality Hospital

ITANAGAR, Aug 30: Arunachal Pradesh Health minister Biyuram Wahge has sought the Centre's support for strengthening healthcare facilities in the state, particularly the establishment of a Super Speciality Hospital in the Itanagar Capital Region.

During a meeting with Union Health Minister J P Nadda in New Delhi on Friday, Wahge stressed that Arunachal Pradesh, being a border state with difficult terrain, needs advanced medical facilities to reduce the burden of patients travelling outside the state for specialised treatment.

He pointed out that the proposed Super Speciality Hospital would serve as a referral hub not only for Arunachal Pradesh but also for neighbouring states in the North East, officials said on Saturday.

Wahge also deliberated on the upcoming North East Regional Conference of the health department, scheduled to be hosted by the state in October this year.

The conference will bring together health ministers, commissioners, secretaries and mission directors from all the Northeastern states for policy discussions, experience sharing and collaborative planning.

Wahge said that Nadda has graciously consented to attend the event, which is expected to give a major push to the health sector in the region.

Expressing gratitude, the minister said Nadda's support and guidance would play a vital role in further strengthening healthcare infrastructure and delivery services in Arunachal Pradesh.

He added that the Centre's backing will help realise the state government's vision of providing accessible and advanced healthcare to people in even the remotest corners of the state. (PTI)

IMD forecasts heavy rain, thunderstorms across Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Aug 30: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday forecast widespread rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms over several districts of Arunachal Pradesh for the next few days, cautioning residents to remain prepared for possible disruptions.

According to the district-wise forecast, heavy to very heavy rainfall with thunderstorms is very likely over West Kameng, East Kameng, Papum Pare, Namsai, Lohit, Anjaw, East Siang, Upper Subansiri, Dibang Valley and parts of Lower Subansiri in the next 24 hours.

Papum Pare has been placed under red alert (take action) due to the likelihood of intense rain with thunderstorms, while East Kameng, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, Namsai, Lohit and other adjoining districts remain under orange alert (be prepared).

Moderate to widespread rainfall activity is expected in Tawang, West Kameng, Kurung Kumey, Kra Daadi, East Siang, West Siang, Shi-Yomi, Lower Dibang Valley, and Changlang districts, according to a bulletin issued by the meteorological centre here.

Districts including Tirap and Longing are likely to receive light to moderate rainfall.



The five-day outlook indicates that rain activity is expected to subside gradually from September 1, with most districts shifting to scattered or isolated showers.

By September 2 and 3, no major warnings have been issued, and conditions are likely to

improve across the state.

Authorities have advised residents, particularly in vulnerable districts, to remain alert to the risks of waterlogging, landslides, and disruption of transport and communication due to heavy downpour and lightning. (PTI)

Special convoy of 192 tankers heading towards Manipur

IMPHAL, Aug 30: The Manipur government on Saturday said all necessary measures will be taken to meet the fuel requirements for the people of the landlocked state.

A special convoy of 192 tanker trucks, including 158 diesel and 29 LPG tanker trucks, left Jiribam town bordering Assam's Cachar district on Friday to ensure adequate availability of fuel for the state's domestic and commercial requirements, an official statement said.

The convoy is expected to reach the state capital within two or three days, it said.

The special convoy was arranged following a meeting on Friday by Manipur governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla to review the stock position of fuel and LPG in the state.

The development came in the wake of depleting fuel stocks "on account of transit bottlenecks arising from frequent landslides on both the national highways of the state NH-2 and NH-37," it said. (PTI)



The governor's comments came while participating in a badminton match at Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU) near here, as part of the three-day National Sports Day celebrations.

Parnaik, who is also the Chief Rector of the central varsity, said bids for global sporting events like the 2036 Olympic Games, are not merely a matter of national pride but also a call to action, according to a Raj Bhavan statement.

"Sports and fitness are not just for athletes, but for every citizen. A healthy nation is built not only by champions, but by a society that values fitness and well-being as a way of life," the CM said. (PTI)

GILL, ROHIT TO UNDERGO FITNESS TEST IN COE WITH BUMRAH, JAISWAL

BENGALURU, Aug 30: India Test skipper and T20 vice-captain Shubman Gill reached the BCCI Centre of Excellence here for fitness assessment and preparations ahead of travelling to Dubai for the upcoming Asia Cup.

The Indian squad members are scheduled to assemble at Dubai on September 4 ahead of their tournament opener on September 9 against the hosts United Arab Emirates.

Senior batter Rohit Sharma and pacer Mohammed Siraj too have checked into CoE for pre-season fitness assessment.

The process might take place by Sunday, and it will be interesting to see how Rohit, who has retired from T20Is and Tests, approaches the new season.

The 38-year-old is likely to tour Down Under in October for an ODI series (19, 23, 25), but it remains to be seen whether Rohit will turn out for India A in three one-day matches against Australia A on September 30, October 3 and 5 at Kanpur.

In case of Gill, a bout of flu had forced him to skip the ongoing Duleep Trophy quarterfinal against East Zone, where he was named as the North Zone captain.

Gill was recovering from the illness at his Chandigarh home before flying out to Bengaluru.

It's possible that Gill may fly out of Bengaluru to Dubai as this time the players will reach Dubai in a staggered manner from their respective locations unlike in the past when the team would assemble in Mumbai before travelling en bloc.



Apart from Gill, wicket-keeper-batter Jitesh Sharma too has arrived at the CoE for pre-tournament preparations.

PTI understands that lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah, Washington Sundar, Yashasvi Jaiswal, and Shardul Thakur too are set to arrive at CoE for the mandatory pre-season assessment.

Thakur is set to lead West Zone in the Duleep Trophy semifinals, while Jaiswal and

Sundar, who are on the standby list for the Asia Cup, are also set to feature in the last four matches of the domestic season opener.

Some of the other Asia Cup-bound players such as Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana (North Zone) and Kuldeep Yadav (Central Zone) are already playing in the Duleep Trophy quarterfinals.

Meanwhile, South Zone will have to name a new skipper for

the Duleep Trophy semifinals (September 4-7) as Tilak Varma has been included in the Asia Cup squad.

Kerala's Mohammed Azharuddeen is the vice-captain, and he could be promoted to the leadership role or they have more experienced candidates in R Sai Kishore, Devdutt Padikkal or N Jagadeesan.

East Zone suffered a setback as pacer Mukesh Kumar was not bowling in the second innings,

possibly owing to a niggle that he sustained during the first innings here.

The Bengal pacer sat out for nine overs in the first innings to tend to his thigh/groin before resuming the bowling. Mukesh also came out to bat in East Zone's first innings.

However, he was not available to bowl in the second innings on the third day of the Duleep Trophy quarterfinals. (PTI)

Govt keen to make India sports goods manufacturing hub: Mandaviya

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: India will roll out a dedicated sports goods manufacturing policy by the end of the year, which will not only help nurture sporting talent but also make the country a prominent exporter of sports goods globally, said Union sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya, here on Saturday.

Athletes in several sports disciplines have to rely on costly imported equipment to compete at the highest level to give them the cutting edge, but the minister said that by November-December this year a scheme would be launched which would bolster manufacturing of sports goods and equipment in a big way.

"By November-December, a scheme will be launched so that the country can become the best sports goods manufacturer, one that provides top-class facilities, empowers the entire ecosystem and (helps India) emerge as a prominent exporter of sports goods globally," said Mandaviya during the sports goods and manufacturing conclave here. He said that India had the ability to achieve anything and that the country was looking at making sports medicines, sports infrastructure, sports literature, and sports education design a part of the bigger sports goods manufacturing project.

"The sports ecosystem is growing at a very fast pace. Our

country has the capability to achieve everything. What we need to understand are the challenges ahead. In the coming days, how do we move forward in the sports manufacturing sector?"

"We can also make sports medicines, sports infrastructure, sports literature, and sports education design a part of sports goods manufacturing. There are lots of challenges like GST... we must make a task force and have schemes and policies for sports manufacturing," he said during the

Mandaviya added that the ministry would reach out to stakeholders to draw out a pathway to strengthen the sector to drive greater production and export.

"Sports goods manufacturing sector is the priority for the government. The first pillar of the National Sports Governance Bill was athlete-centric governance. It also addressed the disputes of the federations. This is an important conclave, a part of the reforms in the sports sector which focuses on how we can intervene in sports goods manufacturing," he said.

"Policies will be made through discussions with all stakeholders, including NITI Aayog and the manufacturers. The work of policy framing will be completed by September," he added. (PTI)

Pakistan to visit India for Junior World Cup: Hockey India

RAJGIR (BIHAR), Aug 30: Pakistan will travel to India later this year to compete in the FIH Junior World Cup, Hockey India secretary general Bholanath Singh confirmed on Saturday.

Pakistan opted out of the ongoing Asia Cup in Bihar following the military conflict between the two countries, citing security concerns. It had raised doubts if the team from the neighbouring country will compete in the Junior World Cup to be held in Southern Indian cities of Chennai and Madurai in November-December.

"The Pakistan team is coming to India for the Junior World Cup. They confirmed to us last night. I asked them about their availability after they opted out of the ongoing Asia Cup," Bholanath said.

He said the preparations for the tournament are at the "final stage". "Out of 24 countries, we have received the long list from 23 nations. Only Pakistan is left which are hoping to receive in a day or two."

The Indian government recently formulated a policy that it would not have any bilateral sporting ties with Pakistan but won't stop the Indian teams from competing against Pakistan in multinational events.

The policy was adopted in the wake of Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed 26 civilians and the subsequent Operation Sindoor carried out by India. (PTI)

Malaysia stun Korea 4-1, B'desh crush Chinese Taipei 8-3

RAJGIR, Aug 30: Korea's Asia Cup title defence received a massive jolt after being stunned 4-1 by Malaysia while Bangladesh crushed Chinese Taipei 8-3 in second round of Pool B matches of the hockey tournament here Saturday.

In the second match of the day, Five-time champions Korea surged ahead in the second minute through a reverse stick field goal by Geonhyo Jin.

But Malaysia made a brilliant comeback through Akhimullah Anuar's (29th, 34th, 58th) hat-trick and a field strike from Ashran Ham-san to stun their opponents.

Even though just one rung separates Malaysia (12) and Korea (13) in world rankings, the title holders were considered as favourites in the contest. Earlier in the day, Bangladesh completely dominated after the change of ends and pumped in as many as five goals in the last two quarters. (PTI)

Satwik-Chirag pair stuns nemesis Chia-Soh, assures India of World Championships medal

PARIS, Aug 30: Star Indian shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty assured India of a medal at the World Championships after defeating their nemesis, Malaysia's two-time Olympic medallists Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik, in the men's doubles quarterfinals here.

A year after the heartbreak in Paris, where they lost to the same pair and missed out on an Olympic medal, the world No. 3 duo produced a commanding 21-12, 21-19 win in 43 minutes to avenge that loss and storm into the semifinals late on Friday night.

It will be Satwik and Chirag's second medal at the prestigious event after their 2022 bronze, extending India's streak of podium finishes at every edition since Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa's breakthrough bronze in 2011. The Asian Games champions will next face 11th seeds Chen Bo Yang and Liu Yi of China.

Only hours earlier, PV Sindhu's

exit in the quarterfinals had denied India a medal in women's singles. By the time Satwik and Chirag walked onto the court, the weight of expectations was unmistakable against opponents who had repeatedly broken Indian hearts.

Chia and Soh had beaten the Indians in Singapore and China this year after crushing their Olympic medal dream in Paris last year.

On Friday night, however, the world No. 9 Indians turned the script on its head with a dominating show.

Chirag opened with a drive-serve winner before a 59-shot rally, the longest of the match, and ended with his thundering mid-court smash to put India 4-2 ahead. Satwik's booming serves and the pair's seamless rotation saw them reel off six straight points to lead 9-3. The top seeds went into the mid-game interval 11-5 ahead after Satwik conjured a deft cross-lift. Chia and Soh managed to take another marathon 49-shot rally, but the Indians quickly wrested back



momentum.

From 15-8, the Indians tightened the screws. Chirag's sharp net play and Satwik's clever serve helped India keep things in grip.

Chirag then earned nine game points with a deceptive return and they sealed it with another aggressive return.

After the change of ends, the Indians dished out blistering attack to carry their momentum from the opening game, racing to a 10-5 lead with Satwik's sharp serves and Chi-

rag's booming backcourt smashes setting the tone.

The Indians had a four-point advantage after Soh sprayed into the net. Satwik and Chirag's ability to create those angled returns and vary the attack made life difficult for their rivals. Soh also struggled under pressure, leaking errors as India built a comfortable 17-12 cushion.

But the Malaysians, bronze-medallists in Tokyo, clawed back with a spectacular 41-shot exchange at 12-17. The Indians made it 18-14 with Chirag dazzling at the forecourt.

Then another long rally ensued at 15-19 that showcased their defensive grit as Chirag recovered after slipping to keep it going.

Aaron then controlled the pace and Soh finally found rhythm as a good return followed by Satwik's smash into the net helped the Malaysians narrow the deficit to 18-19, sending jitters through the Indian camp. (PTI)

Hockey Asia Cup: India need to produce 'A' game to counter Japan threat

RAJGIR (BIHAR), Aug 30: India will look to put behind a lacklustre outing in the opener and dish out their 'A' game when they take on a dangerous-looking Japan in the men's Asia Cup hockey tournament here on Saturday.

The Indians, ranked seventh in the world, huffed and puffed to a narrow 4-3 win over world No. 23 China in their opening Pool A match on Friday — a performance that was far from impressive.

India are the highest-ranked team in the tournament and clear favourites to win the Asia Cup, which also serves as a direct qualification event for next year's World Cup to be jointly hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands.

The Indians started brightly against China but lost their momentum as the game progressed and they will have to guard against conceding soft goals, which they did against China.

The backline will have to be on its toes against the fast-paced Japanese, who pumped in seven goals against Kazakhstan in their opener.

Penalty corner defence is another area which looks a cause of concern for India.

India's all four goals against China came from penalty corners with skipper Harmanpreet Singh scoring a hat-trick but he was also



guilty of missing a penalty stroke.

With four dragflickers in their armoury in Jugraj Singh, Harmanpreet, Sanjay and Amit Rohidas, India will also need to better their penalty corner conversion rate.

The Indian midfield, though, played well creating numerous chances but the need of the hour is to convert those opportunities into goal.

India's chief coach Craig Fulton would also be worried about his forwards inability to find the target from field.

Even though the likes of Manddeep Singh, Sanjay, Dilpreet Singh and Sukhjeet Singh looked agile inside the opposition circle, they failed to register their name in the

scoresheet.

"We played well enough to win the game (against China) but we didn't play to our expectations. We missed a few chances and we conceded a few soft goals as well," Fulton admitted.

Even though India are the highest ranked side in the tournament, they can't afford to take any side lightly in such a high-stake event.

"Well I expect fight from any team. We are the highest ranked team and favourites here, so every team is going to lift themselves to play us and we have to manage that challenge," Fulton said.

India captain Harmanpreet too stressed on the need to have a compact defence.

Ankit, Dhull hundreds grind East Zone, take North Zone closer to Duleep Trophy semifinals

BENGALURU, Aug 30: Skipper Ankit Kumar and promising batter Yash Dhull made contrasting hundreds to place North Zone on the cusp of the Duleep Trophy semifinals here Saturday.

North Zone chose to bat again despite holding a 183-run lead. While Ankit (168 batting) and Dhull (133, 157 balls) further bolstered that situation, taking their side to a mammoth 388 for two at the end of third day's play for an overall lead of 563 runs.

But the third day of the quarterfinal match was all about the ruthlessness of North Zone in extending their supremacy through Ankit and Dhull who milked 240 runs for the second wicket off just 290 balls.

They did it in their own way. Dhull was all aggression and Ankit went about his task in a more mellown manner.

After the early dismissal of Shubham Khajuria (21), who was castled by Suraj Jaiswal, East Zone bowlers struggled to make any impact on the North pair. Senior pacer Mohammed Shami found occasional movement and troubled the batters, but that was all the East bowlers could manage on the day.

Dhull's off-side play was exceptional as 57 runs came off in the arc between point and cover region, as he went past 50 in 49 balls.

But the 22-year-old had big slice

of fortune when Sharandeep Singh dropped him on 48 at covers off left-arm spinner Manishi, and the Delhi batter did not require any second invitation to exploit the reprieve.

Ankit, meanwhile, went past fifty in 74 balls, and soon his younger partner completed his eighth first-class century in 112 balls. The only time Dhull looked a bit unsettled was in the 90s when Shami, who restricted himself to just 11 overs on the day, troubled him with a slew of quick snorters, but he withered the storm.

Along with Ankit, Dhull, who had a surgery to remove a hole in his heart last year, never gave any respite to the East spinners, often coming down the track to disrupt their rhythm.

Dhull reached his hundred with a single to mid-off, but Ankit fetched the milestone with much more flourish, with a six off Manishi. North went to tea at 290 for one in 64 overs, and added 125 runs in the middle session without losing a wicket.

Ankit's hundred came in 155 balls and he also received a let off when Utkarsh Singh grassed him at the first slip off Manishi when the batter was on 112.

The situation was so grim for the East as Shami did not turn his arm over in the final session of the day and the injury-enforced absence of pacer Mukesh Kumar too hurt their plans. (PTI)