

6 WORLD

- Multiple journalists killed by Israeli strikes on Gaza hospital
- Five security personnel killed in militant attacks in Pak's KPK

8 NATION

- 'Our soldiers did not kill terrorists based on their religion'
- MC alleges vendetta after ED arrests MLA Jiban Saha in SSC scam

Probe ordered into 'lynching' of road accident victim

Goreswar circle officer directed to conduct investigation, submit report at the earliest



RANGIA, Aug 25: A magisterial inquiry was ordered on Monday by the local administration into the allegation of lynching of a youth in Assam's Tamulpur district, who was injured in a road accident.

An official statement said the probe has been ordered in view of the gravity of the incident, public sentiment and reports published by media outlets.

Deeming a thorough inquiry necessary, District Magistrate Pankaj Chakravarty has asked Goreswar circle officer-cum-executive magistrate Trilina Tiad to conduct the probe.

Taid has been asked to submit

her report at the earliest on an urgent basis, the statement added.

A 23-year-old youth, Abhishek Das, died after his car met with an accident at Bharali Chowk on August 20 when he was returning from a nearby tourist spot, along with three friends.

The deceased's family had filed a complaint at the Tamulpur police station on Sunday, alleging that he was assaulted by a mob, which caused his death.

Abhishek's friends, who were also injured in the accident, alleged that when he got out of the vehicle to seek help, some of the locals started to beat him up.

He was declared brought dead at a hospital in nearby Rangia.

A video of the incident emerged on Sunday, which showed the three survivors inside the car in an injured condition, while a mob surrounded them.

The local people have, however, refuted the allegation and claimed that Abhishek had succumbed to injuries. (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

Stage set for direct contest for VP's post

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: With neither of the two candidates for the vice presidential election withdrawing their nomination, the stage is set for a direct contest between ruling NDA nominee C P Radhakrishnan and joint opposition candidate B Sudershan Reddy on September 9.

Both candidates this time hail from southern India, with Radhakrishnan from Tamil Nadu and Reddy from Telangana. The vice-presidential poll has been described by the opposition as an ideological battle, even as the numbers are stacked in favour of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

After the last date of withdrawals on Monday, Buchireddy Sudershan Reddy and C P Radhakrishnan remain in the fray now.

Rajya Sabha Secretary General P C Mody, who is the returning officer for the vice-presidential election, in a statement said that the polling for the Vice-Presidential Election, 2025, will take place on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, in Room No. F-101, Vasudha, Parliament House, New Delhi.

The polling will commence at 10 AM and close at 5 PM on September 9.

"The electoral college for election to the Office of the Vice-President of India consists of the Members of both Houses of Parliament. The nominated Members of Rajya Sabha are also eligible to be included in the Electoral College and, therefore, are entitled to participate in the election.

"The polling arrangements in Parliament House are being made by Shri P.C. Mody, the Returning Officer for the Vice-Presidential Election, 2025, and Secretary-General, Rajya (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

Assam not for infiltrators: CM on Syeda Hameed's remarks

GUWAHATI/ KOKRAJHAR, Aug 25: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday criticised ex-Planning Commission member Syeda Hameed for her remark that "Bangladeshis can live here", asserting that such statements legitimise infiltrators and seek to "realise Jinnah's dream of making Assam a part of Pakistan."

Sarma claimed that the identity of the Assamese people is on the brink of extinction due to the tacit support of the likes of Hameed, whom he described as a close confidante of the Gandhi family.

He emphasised that it is a 'dangerous time' for the state and all have to unite to secure it.

Sharing a clip of Hameed's remarks after a meeting in Guwahati

on Sunday, Sarma said in a post on X, "People like Syeda Hameed, a close confidante of the Gandhi family, legitimise infiltrators, as they seek to realise Jinnah's dream of making Assam a part of Pakistan."

"Today, Assamese identity is on the brink of extinction because of the tacit support of people like her. But we are the sons and daughters of Lachit Barphukan, WE WILL FIGHT till the last drop of our blood to save our State and our identity," he added, referring to the legendary Ahom general.

Hameed, a former member of the Planning Commission, was here to attend a seminar on 'The State of the Nation with Special

Reference to Assam', organised by a citizens' forum Asom Nagarik Sammilan on Sunday.

In the 33-second clip shared by Sarma, rights activist Hameed expressed concern over the condition of Muslims in Assam, suggesting that they are often branded as 'Bangladeshis'. "What is the crime in being a Bangladeshi? Bangladeshis are also humans. The world is so big. Bangladeshis can also live here; they are not depriving anyone of their rights," she said.

Hameed added that the world was created by Allah for humans and not for monsters, and questioned that "if a person is standing on this land, why uproot him so badly". (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

Pressure might increase, but we will bear it all: PM

US TARRIFF WAR

AHMEDABAD, Aug 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday asserted he can't compromise on interests of farmers, cattle-rearers, small-scale industries, cautioning "pressure on us may increase, but we will bear it", remarks coming two days before the 50 per cent US tariffs on Indian goods kick in.

Addressing a gathering in Ahmedabad after launching multiple projects, he hit out at the Congress, saying the party, which ruled India for 60 to 65 years, made the nation dependent on other countries in order to indulge in "import scams".

India is empowered by walking on the path of Sudarshan Chakradhari Mohan Lord Shrikrishna, who symbolised strength and protection, and Charkhadhari Mohan Mahatma Gandhi, the independence movement hero who pushed for swadeshi with his spinning wheel, the PM maintained.

Referring to Operation Sindoor, India's military response to the Pahalgam massacre, and in an oblique reference to Pakistan, he declared India no longer spares terrorists and their masters. "Operation Sindoor (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

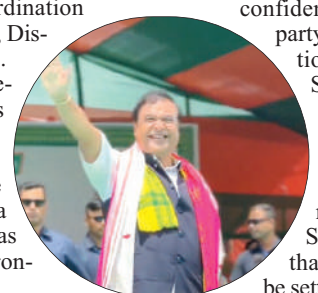
Himanta attends several poll rallies BTR people for natl party for good governance: CM

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 25: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday asserted that voters in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) are leaning towards supporting a national party in the upcoming Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections, emphasising their desire for stronger governance coordination between Kokrajhar, Dispur and New Delhi.

Speaking to reporters after a series of campaign meetings in the region, Sarma said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has emerged as the frontrunner.

"BJP remains the number one choice in BTC, except for areas around Parbatjhora and Srimampur. I have visited all constituencies, and it is clear that the people want a national party this time. They believe this will ensure effective cooperation between Delhi, Dispur and Kokrajhar. Regional parties have had their chance many times. Now, the people of BTC want a change, and



they want the BJP," he said.

The Chief Minister underlined that the BJP's campaign has already covered 36 council areas and the party has identified the seats it will contest.

"BJP will form a policy, and once the election dates are announced, it will release the list of candidates for the seats where it is confident of victory. The party is in a strong position in Bodoland," Sarma added.

On the question of the future of the Village Council Development Committee (VCDC), Sarma maintained that the matter would be settled by the new government.

"Whether VCDC should be scrapped or not will be decided only by the government that comes to power here. BJP is not the enemy of anyone," he said.

Sarma's remarks come at a time when the BJP is seeking to expand its political footprint in the BTR, banking on its governance model and promises of development. The focus on (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

Friends of corruption opposing efforts to bring morality in politics: BJP on bills for removing PM, CMs

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: The BJP on Monday slammed the opposition for objecting to three bills for the removal of prime minister, chief ministers and ministers if they are under arrest for 30 consecutive days on serious charges, saying "friends of corruption" are opposing the government's effort to bring morality in politics.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said the three bills brought by the Narendra Modi government aim to bring in "morality, clean politics, and good governance".

These can serve as a "weapon or a tool" to effectively fight against corruption and criminalisation in politics, he said.

"The entire country is welcoming these bills. A handful of opposition parties are saying they are with shamelessness, not morality. They are saying they are with their family, not with propriety and principles in politics... These 'bhrastachar ke year' (friends of corruption) are opposing the bills," he charged.

Lashing out at the opposition parties over their stand against the bills, Poonawalla called them a "bandwagon of corrupts" and alleged that they have come together to protect "corruption" in the name of saving democracy and the Constitution.

"You are not protecting democracy. You are protecting the corruption committed by your family," he charged.

He criticised the TMC, SP and

AAP for boycotting the proceedings of the Joint Committee of Parliament that will review the bills, saying it reflects their "corruption-supporting mindset".

"During COVID, everyone was working from home. Is the country now expected to see a 'Work From Jail' concept? Will chief ministers work from inside prison? Will cabinet meetings be held within jail premises?" he asked.

Poonawalla said the principle of morality stems from the vision of the Constituent Assembly, when stalwarts like KM Munshi hoped that politics would always stand on the foundation of ethics.

"They believed leaders would follow the example of Lal Bahadur Shastri, who (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

Farmers submit memorandum to Union agriculture minister; seek MSP law

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) on Monday submitted a memorandum to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, demanding a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) for all crops and the exclusion of agriculture and allied sectors from any proposed trade agreement between India and the United States.

The farmers' body said the memorandum was handed over to the Delhi Police during a "Kisan Mahapanchayat" organised at Jantar Mantar here. Thousands of farmers from across the country participated in the event despite heavy rains and traffic disruptions caused by police checks at several

points.

According to the SKM (non-political), the agriculture ministry wrote to it late on Sunday night, saying a meeting with a delegation of farmers would be fixed soon to discuss their pending demands.

The memorandum reiterated three main issues -- the fulfilment of the demands raised during the farmers' agitation at the Shambhu, Khanauri and Ratnapura border points of Delhi, including the enactment of an MSP-guarantee law, keeping agriculture, dairy, poultry and fisheries outside the ambit of any India-US trade pact and withdrawing the cases lodged against farmers during their 2020-21 movement. "Farmers cannot be left at the mercy (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

points.

According to the SKM (non-political), the agriculture ministry wrote to it late on Sunday night, saying a meeting with a delegation of farmers would be fixed soon to discuss their pending demands.

The memorandum reiterated three main issues -- the fulfilment of the demands raised during the farmers' agitation at the Shambhu, Khanauri and Ratnapura border points of Delhi, including the enactment of an MSP-guarantee law, keeping agriculture, dairy, poultry and fisheries outside the ambit of any India-US trade pact and withdrawing the cases lodged against farmers during their 2020-21 movement. "Farmers cannot be left at the mercy (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

MIND AND SPIRIT



Devotees performing gayan bayan on the occasion of the Tirubhav Tithi of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva at Srimanta Sankar Dev Krishi Vikash Samitee's Namghar in Paltan Bazaar in Guwahati on Monday -HT Photos

7,000 women perform devotional recital

GUWAHATI, Aug 25: Seven thousand women came together in Assam's Barpeta district to perform 'Thiyanam', a Vaishnavite devotional recital, seeking to enter the record books as the largest ensemble for such a performance, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The recital was conducted at Howly on Sunday, on the eve of 'tirobhav tithi' (death anniversary) of Srimanta Sankardeva, the Vaishnavite saint-scholar on whose compositions the 'Thiyanam' is mostly performed.

"On the eve of the auspicious Tirobhav Tithi of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev, 7,000 mothers in Howly performed the Thiyanam, a powerful (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

Kamrup district is an important habitat with a distinct role to play in vulture conservation

Experts call for increased involvement of stakeholders to stop vulture deaths

GUWAHATI, Aug 25: Assam's vulture population has seen a sharp decline over the years, primarily due to the consumption of chemical-laced animal carcasses, prompting experts to call for greater grassroots involvement in conservation efforts.

The use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medicines on animals, whose carcasses are the staple diet of vultures, is primarily responsible for the decline in their population in the state, senior conservation biologist Dipankar Lahkar said.

NSAID medicines such as Diclofenac, Aceclofenac, Ketoprofen, and Nimesulide, used to treat bovine pain and fever, have been identified as a primary cause of vulture deaths, he said, adding that the Centre has prohibited the use of these drugs for veterinary pur-



poses.

Vultures, known as nature's cleaning crew, have an important ecological role in keeping the environment disease-free, but "now, they are struggling for their survival", Lahkar said.

There is an urgent need to involve people at the village level to ensure poison-free food for vultures, he said.

"We have started campaigns to educate, sensitise and create awareness among people who use these medicines for the treatment of their domestic animals," he

added.

"Kamrup district is an important habitat with a distinct role to play in vulture conservation, and we have already started a campaign to achieve zero vulture deaths in the district in the coming years", he said.

Lahkar pointed out that more than 600 vultures have died in the district due to chemical poisoning during the last decade.

"Educating people and increasing their participation in vulture conservation is critical for the future of these birds. We are attempting to bring everyone on board through the flagship 'Sagun (Vultures) Mitra and Nest Guardianship initiatives", Lahkar added.

A forest official said the population of resident vultures has almost collapsed over the past two decades. Few (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

India, Fiji resolve to boost defence ties

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: India and Fiji on Monday firmed up a broad action plan to ramp up defence ties and vowed to work jointly for a peaceful Indo-Pacific following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Fijian counterpart Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka.

India and Fiji may be oceans apart, but our aspirations sail in the same boat, Modi said with the Fijian leader by his side.

Rabuka arrived in Delhi on Sunday on a three-day trip. It is his first visit to India in his capacity as the prime minister of the South Pacific nation.

Fiji is an important nation for India in the sphere of maritime security. India has been looking at expanding its defence ties with Fiji against the backdrop of China's relentless efforts to expand its strategic heft in the Pacific region.

Following the talks between

Modi and Rabuka, the two sides inked seven pacts providing for enhancing cooperation in a range of areas, including medicine, skill development, trade and capacity building.

In the talks, Modi and Rabuka condemned in strongest terms the Pahalgam terrorist attack and reiterated their commitment towards "zero tolerance" to terrorism.

The two leaders rejected "double standards" on terrorism and agreed to boost bilateral cooperation in dealing with the menace, according to a joint statement.

"We have decided to strengthen mutual cooperation in the defence and security sector," Modi said.

An action plan has been prepared for this, he said in his media statement. PM Modi said India will provide training and equipment support to strengthen Fiji's maritime security. In his remarks, Modi also (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

36 B'deshi infiltrators deported from Assam

GUWAHATI, Aug 25: As many as 36 Bangladeshi infiltrators have been deported from two districts of Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday.

He asserted that such people infringe upon the rights of the indigenous people and will be sent back to where they belong. "36 illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators have been pushed back to Bangladesh from Sribhumi and South Salmara," Sarma said in a post on X. He, however, did not mention when the infiltrators were deported. "These illegal infiltrators change our demography and infringe upon the rights of the indigenous and will be pushed back to where they belong," Sarma added. Assam Police has launched a statewide crackdown on illegal immigrants, particularly Bangladeshi nationals, residing without valid documents. Over 400 alleged Bangladeshi infiltrators have been deported in recent months. (PTI)

RBI has not lost sight of growth amid tariffs, geopolitical uncertainties: Malhotra

MUMBAI, Aug 25: Reserve Bank governor Sanjay Malhotra on Monday said that corporates and banks need to come together to boost investments amid challenges emanating from tariff uncertainties and geopolitical concerns, stressing that the central bank has not lost sight of growth objectives.

Speaking at the annual Fibac event here, the Governor said he is hopeful that the ongoing negotiations between the US and Indian trade representatives will yield a decision which will "minimize" the impact of tariffs on the domestic economy.

Amid concerns on the US move to slap 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods and the likely impact on textiles, shrimps etc, Malhotra assured sector-specific help if some sections of the economy feel the heat.

Making it clear that monetary policy will take on board both inflation and growth dynamics, Malhotra said "we are at a critical juncture with challenges emanating from geopolitical front and tariffs, and focused more on ways of ensuring economic expansion."

"At the time when the balance sheets of the banks and the corporates are at their best, they should come together and drive the animal spirits to create an investment cycle, which is so important at this juncture," Malhotra said.

Malhotra said the focus on financial stability and price stability



does not "inhibit" growth and there is no "tussle" between financial stability and growth.

Amid credit growth dipping to a three-year low in FY25, Malhotra said, "we are examining measures to expand bank credit across sectors."

The RBI is "examining measures to enhance bank credit", Malhotra said, without elaborating on the precise moves being planned.

C S Setty, the chairman of SBI who also leads industry lobby grouping IBA, pointed out that the credit demand from corporates has waned as entities shift to private credit and capital markets for their funding requirements.

"Banks have to look to step up financing for the next wave of long-term capex which is essential

for India's growth ambitions," he said.

The SBI chairman also made a plea for allowing banks to do acquisition finance at least for the top companies, an area where they have been prohibited from till now.

Ruchin Goyal of BCG, a consultancy firm, said corporate lending has reduced over a period of time, pointing out that it now constitutes 36 per cent of the overall system exposure from being 60 per cent a few years ago.

Meanwhile, Malhotra also said that the RBI is also working on ease of doing business for the regulated entities which will also help reduce the cost of intermediation.

Acknowledging that RBI's focus to give more autonomy to banks has led to an overburdening

of bank boards, Malhotra said the RBI is trying to "rationalize" some of these macro policies that need to be approved by the boards, and leave the procedural aspects of the same to the managements.

Admitting that there is a feeling of the RBI seeking too much of details, Malhotra urged the stakeholders to cooperate with the asks pointing out that richer information will help it come out with better regulations.

The RBI intends to implement the Basel-III norms soon and the guidelines for expected credit loss will also be issued soon for public comments, he said.

Deepening financial inclusion and credit to small businesses, and enhancing customer service were called out as a priority for RBI by the Governor. "While we have opened accounts for almost the entire adult population courtesy the Jan Dhan Yojana, there is a scope for enhancing it," Malhotra said.

Business correspondent networks need to be strengthened by increasing their numbers and also expanding the services that they are able to offer, Malhotra said.

Apart from that, the RBI is also reviewing the internal ombudsman framework to help on the customer service agenda, he said, adding that the significant credit gap on the small businesses front can be bridged by the unified lending interface. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Probe ordered into

sustained in the accident. Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) chief Pramod Bodo visited the victim's family on Sunday evening and offered his condolences. He promised a thorough investigation into the incident and exemplary punishment for the accused. (PTI)

Pressure might increase

embodied the bravery of our soldiers and determination of Sudarshana Chakradhari Mohan's India. Today, we do not spare terrorists and their masters, no matter where they are hiding," the PM told the gathering.

"For Modi, interests of farmers, cattle rearers and small scale industries are paramount. Pressure on us may increase, but we will bear it all," the PM affirmed as the August 27 deadline for 50 per cent US tariffs on Indian imports nears.

He pushed for the widespread use of swadeshi goods.

"All of us should follow the mantra of buying only 'made in India' goods. Businessmen should keep a big board outside their establishments, saying they sell only 'swadeshi' goods," he stated.

"I think I am fortunate to get the love and blessings of lakhs of people," said Modi, who in the evening held a roadshow in Ahmedabad. (PTI)

BTR people for

coordination between the Centre, the state, and the BTC is seen as part of the party's broader strategy to project itself as the most effective vehicle for delivering growth and stability in the region.

Friends of corruption opposing

resigned merely on the basis of an allegation; or leaders like Lal Krishna Advani and Madan Lal Khurana, who stepped down even when faced with minor charges; or like Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah, who resigned even before being sent to jail," he said. The BJP spokesperson demanded that the opposition parties must tell the people of the country clearly which side of morality they stand on.

"Do they stand with the unwavering integrity and honesty of Lal Bahadur Shastri ji and Lal Krishna Advani ji, or with the shamelessness of Senthil Balaji (ex-Tamil Nadu minister) and Arvind Kejriwal, who holds the unique record of running (Delhi) government from Tihar for 150 days and?" he asked.

Last Wednesday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah introduced in the Lok Sabha three Bills for the removal of prime minister, chief ministers, and ministers if they are under arrest for 30 consecutive days on serious charges, drawing fierce protests from opposition MPs who tore up copies of the draft law and marched close to his seat shouting slogans. The bills were sent by the House to a Joint Committee of Parliament comprising 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha for scrutiny. The committee, whose members will soon be named, has been asked to submit its report to the House by the last day of the first week of the next session, expected in the third week of November.

The opposition parties are up in arms against three bills, with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleging on Sunday that after "vote chori", the BJP was now engaged in "satta chori" by bringing the draft bills to "topple opposition governments within 30 days" and "destabilise" democracy by using arrest as a weapon. (PTI)

Assam not for infiltrators

Sarma asserted that "Bangladeshis are not welcome in Assam, it is not their land". "Anyone sympathising with them may accommodate them in their own backyard. Assam is not up for grabs by infiltrators, NOT NOW, NOT EVER," the chief minister added.

Along with Hameed's comments, Sarma also shared her photographs with former PM Manmohan Singh and ex-Assam CM Tarun Gogoi at different forums. He also shared a finding from a recent report by a commission set up by the state government to examine Satra (Vashnavite seats of learning) land issues. The report stated that over 15,288 bighas (5,045.04 acres) of Satra land across Assam have been illegally taken over.

In Barpeta district alone, 7,137 bighas (2,355.21 acres) under encroachment. Other affected districts include Bajali, Nagaon, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Kamrup, Bongaigaon, Majuli and Dhubri.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Kokrajhar, Sarma said Hameed is a friend of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and served on the Planning Commission when Manmohan Singh was heading it and visited the state previously on the invitation of former CM Tarun Gogoi.

On her remarks, he said, "It means that if we allow the Congress and Nagarik Samiti to survive, a time will come when Bangladeshis will be in Assam, and Assamese people will have to go to Bangladesh."

"It is a dangerous time for Assam, and we have to be united to secure our state," Sarma added.

On Jamiat-Ulama-E-Hind (Arshad faction) president Arshad Madani's purported recent outburst against Sarma by alleging that Muslims were being targeted, the chief minister said, "Be it Arshad Madani or Mahmood Madani, I don't care about them."

Earlier, the working committee of the Mahmood faction of Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind expressed alarm over the eviction drives in Assam that have rendered more than 50,000 families homeless, mostly Bengali-speaking Muslims. Adopting a resolution, the organisation called upon India's constitutional authorities to immediately remove the chief minister and initiate criminal proceedings against him for hate speech.

On Saturday, Sarma said that he does not care about the demand for his resignation and that if he gets Madani, he would send the Islamic scholar to Bangladesh. (PTI)

Stage set for direct

Sabha," the statement from Rajya Sabha secretariat said. "The counting of votes will commence at 6 PM on the same day and the result will be declared immediately thereafter," it said.

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

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

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

As an apex court judge, Reddy ordered the formation of a special investigation team to take all steps for bringing back unaccounted monies unlawfully kept in bank accounts abroad.

Retrieving black money deposited in foreign banks was a key electoral plank of the BJP ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha election.

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

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

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

Farmers submit memorandum

of market fluctuations. We want to make it clear that the demand for MSP is not limited to Punjab and Haryana, but is shared by cultivators across the country," SKM leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal said.

The organisation said farmer leaders from multiple states, including Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, attended the mahapanchayat, which was conducted peacefully.

Police officials said around 1,200 personnel were deployed at and around the protest site to ensure law and order. The gathering came nearly four years after the year-long farmers' agitation at Delhi's borders that led to the repeal of three contentious farm laws. (PTI)

7,000 women perform

reflection of the Sankari-Sattriya culture," Sarma said in a post on X.

Participants from various parts, including Guwahati, Darrang, Udalguri, Nalbari, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Rowta and Mazbat, came together for the performance, organised by the Howly Raas Celebration Committee. The performance seeks to enter the record books, including the Assam Book of Records, as the largest such recital of 'Thiyanam', officials said.

The 'Thiyanam' or 'Thiyanam' is usually performed on the compositions of Vaishnavite saints Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhabdeva. (PTI)

India, Fiji resolve

referred to India's priorities for the Global South. India is co-traveller in development of Global South, he said. We are partners in building a world order where the independence, ideas and identity of the Global South are respected, he added.

The prime minister said climate change is a threat for Fiji and New Delhi will help it deal with disaster response. Modi and Rabuka shared their vision for a robust, inclusive, and sustainable Indo-Pacific with an economic architecture, and expressed commitment to working closely to promote mutual prosperity. (PTI)

Experts call for increased

species, such as the Slender-billed Vulture, have populations of less than 900 across their distribution ranges. Assam is home to several vulture species, including the critically endangered Oriental White-backed vulture, Slender-billed and King Vulture. Besides, the Himalaya Griffon and Cinereous vultures are migratory and come to the state during the winter from Europe and the Himalayas.

Circle Officer Chiranjib Das of Chaygaon, where a campaign has been initiated, said village heads could play a pivotal role in spreading the conservation message across villages.

"The village heads are one of the important stakeholders in disseminating the message of conservation to the common people. There should be more campaigns involving them to ensure vulture conservation reaches the people and they take the necessary steps to stop the birds' death", he said.

Director of the Assam Forest School, Dimpi Borah, said they have established a nursery to raise tree saplings preferred by vultures for nesting.

Assam Science Technology and Environment Council's (ASTEC) Programme Officer Manisha Sarmah said collaborating with the local population is a crucial step towards stopping the decline in vulture population.

Local communities can directly impact wildlife and environmental conservation and create a positive change at the grassroots, she said.

Assam has one of the four country's Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centre (VCBC) at Rani in Kamrup district, whose goal is to breed the bird in captivity and release them back in the wild. (PTI)

Sensex rebounds 329 pts on rally in IT shares, global cues amid US Fed rate cut hopes

MUMBAI, Aug 25: Benchmark BSE Sensex rebounded by 329 points on Monday following heavy buying in IT and auto shares and a rally in global equity markets on hopes of a potential US Federal Reserve rate cut.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 329.06 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at 81,635.91 with 20 of its constituents ending higher and 10 with losses. During the day, it jumped 492.21 points or 0.60 per cent to 81,799.06.

The 50-share NSE Nifty rose by 97.65 points or 0.39 per cent to 24,967.75.

Infosys was the biggest gainer among Sensex firms, rising by 3.03 per cent. Tata Consultancy Services rose by 2.85 per cent, HCL Tech by 2.6 per cent and Tech Mahindra by 1.32 per cent.

"A wave of optimism swept through the domestic market, driven by expectations of a Fed rate cut in September and a subsequent decline in the US 10-year yield. The IT index outperformed, buoyed by favourable global sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Gains in Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, Maruti, Titan and Reliance Industries also added to the recovery. Bharat Electronics, Asian Paints, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank were among the laggards.

"Markets started the week on a positive note, gaining nearly half a per cent on the back of favourable global cues. Investor sentiment was buoyed by easing global rate concerns, with comments from the US Federal Reserve hinting at a possible rate cut next month, boosting risk appetite across emerging markets," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

The BSE Midcap gauge went up marginally by 0.10 per cent, while the Smallcap index ended flat, with a mild dip of 0.02 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, BSE Focused IT jumped 2.35 per cent, followed by IT (2.34 per cent), teck (1.67 per cent), auto (0.51 per cent) and consumer durables (0.46 per cent). Capital Goods, telecommunication, industrials and financial services were the laggards. (PTI)

Nxtra by Airtel achieves 15% higher emission cuts in FY 2024-25

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 25: Nxtra Data Limited ("Nxtra by Airtel"), a subsidiary of Bharti Airtel, has released its Sustainability Report for FY 2024-25, showcasing significant progress in emission reductions, renewable energy adoption, workplace inclusion, and value chain sustainability.

The report highlights Nxtra's integrated approach to building intelligent, scalable, and sustainable digital infrastructure while balancing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) priorities.

According to an official statement, Nxtra reduced its carbon emissions by 188,507 tCO2e during FY 2024-25, recording a 15% year-on-year increase in emission reductions.

Nearly half (49%) of the energy consumed across its core data centre facilities was sourced from renewable energy alternatives, reinforcing the company's commitment to green operations.

Nxtra also reported significant progress under its NxtWave talent development programme, which focuses on increasing female representation in engineering roles.

The initiative helped the company achieve a 130% growth in its women workforce, furthering its social inclusion goals and creating a more diverse workplace.

Ashish Arora, CEO of Nxtra by Airtel, said sustainability is deeply embedded in the company's design, build, and operational decisions.

"At Nxtra, sustainability is not an afterthought but a core business imperative. This year, we set new industry benchmarks by becoming the first data centre company in India—and only the 14th organisation in the country—to join the global RE100 initiative. We have committed to sourcing 100% of our energy from renewables. In addition, Nxtra is also the first data centre player in the country to harness AI at scale to drive energy efficiency and optimise operational performance," he said. The report detailed several key milestones achieved in FY 2024-25.

These included contracting 482,800 MWh of renewable energy—three times higher than the baseline year of 2021—reducing average Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) by 10% compared to 2021, achieving an employee engagement score of 85/100, and ensuring 6.15 million safe person-hours in construction. Nxtra also strengthened its local economic impact by ensuring 99% of its suppliers were India-based and carrying out ESG assessments for 98% of strategic suppliers, thereby ensuring responsible and sustainable practices across its supply chain.

PhonePe launches affordable home insurance starting at ₹181

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 25: Digital payments platform PhonePe has announced the launch of its new home insurance product line, designed to provide simple, flexible and affordable protection for homeowners across India.

With premiums starting as low as ₹181 per year (including GST), the product offers coverage ranging from ₹10 lakh to ₹12.5 crore, enabling users to insure both the structure and contents of their homes through a completely digital process on the PhonePe app.

According to an official statement, the insurance plan safeguards homes and valuables against more than 20 risks, including fire, floods, earthquakes, riots and theft.

Unlike most conventional home insurance products—often bundled with home loans at higher costs and with extensive paperwork—PhonePe's offering is open to all homeowners, regardless of whether they have an existing loan, and comes with instant digital issuance and zero paperwork.

The company said its new product has been designed to be both comprehensive and flexible. While the annual premium starts at just ₹181, customers have the option to select coverage that extends up to ₹12.5 crore, depending on the size of their homes and their requirements.

It is also accepted by all banks and lending institutions for home loan purposes, giving it an added advantage for homeowners.

With instant issuance, the process requires no inspections or lengthy documentation, making it convenient and accessible.

Vishal Gupta, CEO of PhonePe Insurance Broking Services, said the launch reflects the company's commitment to making insurance more accessible and affordable.

"We believe India's homeownership aspirations are larger than ever, and PhonePe is eager to be a part of that journey. Our new home insurance solution empowers homeowners to protect their most cherished asset with complete ease."

New I-T rules to be notified by Dec-end, simplified forms for assesseees in works: Official

NAME CHANGE
I have Changed my name from MOHAMMED RAIHAN UDDIN TO RAIHAN UDDIN by swearing a notarial affidavit at Srimanta Sankardevnagar Hojai(Assam)

Affidavit

Through a notary affidavit dated on August 20, 2025, I declared that my name has been changed as Pranita Kalita instead of Pranita Bhuyan following the title of my husband Kamala Kalita due to matrimonial status. Hence, Pranita Kalita and Pranita Bhuyan are the name of same and one person and I am known as Pranita Kalita instead of Pranita Bhuyan. Pranita Kalita W/O : Kamala Kalita Karchung Satra near Namghar. Aibheti, PS: Jajari, Nagaon (Assam)

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: The Income Tax department is working on simplified I-T forms and aims to notify new rules by December-end to give effect to the new I-T Act, which will come into force from April 1 next year, a senior tax official said on Monday.

Talking to PTI, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) member (Legislation) RN Parbat also said the department will come out with a fresh set of FAQs on the new Income Tax Act and come out with SOPs and guidance notes.

President Droupadi Murmu, on August 21, gave her assent to the Income-tax Act, 2025, which will replace the archaic Income Tax Act, 1961. The law was passed by Parliament on August 12. Explaining the next set of processes before the income tax department, Parbat said CBDT is already working on formulating new rules and educating taxpayers, as well as capacity building of its officers, so that they are in a position to understand and enforce the new Act. "The princi-



ples being followed for reframing the rules are the same, which we have followed for the I-T Act. So, simplification of language will be there. The redundant rules and forms will be removed from the statute, and a fresh set of rules and forms will be applicable for the new Act," Parbat added.

CBDT started work on framing the rules on February 13, 2025 -- the day the Income Tax Bill was introduced in Parliament. The Board had constituted the "Rules and Forms" committee under a Chief Commissioner rank officer.

The committee has identified redundancies, done public consultation and presented the draft rules to the Tax Policy & Legislation

(TPL) division of the CBDT. Once examined by the CBDT, the draft rules will be sent to the Union Finance Minister for approval.

After vetting by the law department, the rules will be notified and laid before Parliament. "The new I-T Act is coming into effect from April 1, 2026. So, our rules and forms have to be ready so that we can give effect to the new Act. So, we will be preparing them right away. The rules will be ready by year-end, which is December 2025," the top official added.

With regard to the changes in the tax forms, the CBDT member said all the different forms applicable under the Income Tax Act, like TDS quarterly return form, ITR forms, are being reworked, and the Directorate of Systems is working with the TPL division to roll them out. "Our Act has changed... So it will be a brand new form. In the form, we are following the same principle, that they should be simple enough so that the ease of doing business is more and more," Parbat added. (PTI)

Minister Dass distributes 4,242 cheques under Mahila Udyog Abhiyan in Dhubri

HT Correspondent

DHUBRI, Aug 25: In a significant move to empower women entrepreneurs, cheques worth Rs 10,000 were formally distributed on Monday to members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyog Abhiyan Scheme in Dhubri.

The event, held at Raja Prabhata Chandra Barua Playground, saw a large gathering of beneficiaries and dignitaries. The Guardian Minister of Dhubri District, Ranjit Kumar Dass, presided over the open meeting organised by the Dhubri District Administration. He personally handed over the cheques to members of the Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission and the Assam State Urban Livelihood Mission.

In his address, the Minister highlighted the scheme's core objective of encouraging the self-re-



liant journey of Assamese women. He said the campaign aims to put two lakh women from SHGs across the state on the path of entrepreneurship and self-reliance. "Under this scheme, a fund of

Rs 10,000 will be given to each eligible woman," he announced, explaining that the initiative is designed to promote diverse business opportunities, including tailoring, poultry farming, piggyery,

and handicrafts.

Under Dhubri Assembly Constituency No. 8, a total of 4,242 SHGs within Dhubri Municipality areas are beneficiaries, covering 9,433 women. The Minister also mentioned that the scheme will facilitate bank linkages and will be implemented in three phases. He expressed confidence that the scheme would empower SHG members to become successful entrepreneurs, thereby strengthening rural and urban economies in Dhubri and across Assam.

The ceremony was attended by several dignitaries, including Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam B. Kalyan Chakraborty, Dhubri Deputy Commissioner Dibakar Nath, senior BJP leader Shiladitya Deb, and Dhubri Municipality Chairman Dr. Debamoy Sanyal.

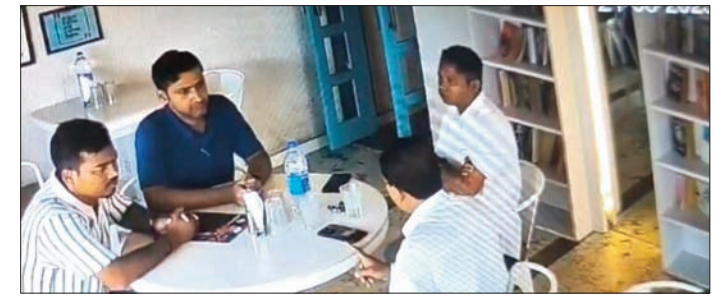
Veer Lachit Sena Jorhat leaders removed after viral video

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 25: The president and secretary of Veer Lachit Sena, Assam (Jorhat district), Aditya Paniphukan and Sujit Dutta, have been temporarily removed from their posts after a video clip went viral on social media, purportedly showing them demanding money from a shopping mall chain.

According to sources, the central office of Veer Lachit Sena, Assam has ordered an inquiry into the matter. Until the completion of the probe, both leaders will remain suspended from their positions.

In the viral video, Paniphukan and Dutta are seen sitting with employees of a shopping mall chain in Jorhat and allegedly demanding ₹5 lakh. The demand reportedly followed an incident last week at the mall, where a female employee accused a manager, Vicky Sutradhar, of molestation attempts. Veer



Lachit Sena members subsequently caught Sutradhar and handed him over to police, leading to his arrest.

However, after the arrest, the two office bearers allegedly approached mall officials seeking money in the name of "settlement." An audio clip also surfaced in which the duo allegedly instructed mall staff to down their shutters.

Following these developments,

the shopping mall authorities lodged an FIR at Jorhat Police Station against Paniphukan and Dutta, alleging that during a meeting in a hotel, the duo demanded ₹11 lakh—₹5 lakh as settlement and the remaining amount as a "party donation."

A case (No. 438/2025) has been registered at Jorhat Police Station under sections 308 (4), 35 (2), and other relevant provisions of the BNS.

KARAA and WKSAA take up case of alleged job scam victims in Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

DIPHU, Aug 25: Alleged victims of a cash-for-job scam have approached Karbi Anglong Rong Asar Amei (KARAA)—an organisation of traditional village headmen—and the Women Karbi Students Association (WKSAA) to help recover their money from the accused, Moon Engtipi.

In a press conference held at its office, KARAA vice president Ram Teron said that Moon Engtipi collected huge sums of money from several people, promising them government jobs.

"One lady, Moon Engtipi, under the pretext of securing government jobs, has collected a huge amount of money from several persons. It is not only within Karbi Anglong district, but also from Kokrajhar, Tinsukia, and even states like Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. She could not provide the jobs, nor is she returning the money," Teron said.

He added that KARAA had written to Engtipi five times asking her to resolve the matter, but she failed to respond. As KARAA could do nothing further, the issue has now been forwarded to the seat of the Karbi traditional king at Ronghang Rongbong, where Lindokpos and the Karbi traditional king will discuss it.

Teron also revealed that an irate mob went to Engtipi's residence on August 23 demanding their money back, but she refused to meet them. He hinted that Engtipi may have political patronage.

KARAA has demanded Engtipi's removal from any government post she might be holding. It also warned that if any political party is backing her, that party will be prevented from entering villages during elections.

The press meet was attended by KARAA president Augustine Kramsa, secretary Harsing Ronghang, vice president Surjyo Teron, and Riso Timung.

In another press meet convened by the Women Karbi Students Association (WKSAA) in support of the victims, president Dimi Hansepi said that Engtipi had taken money from unsuspecting people in the name of providing government jobs. On August 23, WKSAA members, along with victims, went to her residence but she refused to meet them.

Hansepi added that the amounts taken from each person varied, ranging from ₹3 lakh to ₹1 crore. Some victims even sold their land and livestock to raise the money. KARAA president Augustine Kramsa himself is reportedly owed ₹2 crore by Engtipi.

MP Pradyut Bordoloi accuses CM of spreading communal venom

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 25: Since the BJP came to power in 2014, the country's politics has changed gradually. Earlier, there was no Hindu-Muslim politics. Now, the Chief Minister of Assam is trying to spread communal venom among people, MP Pradyut Bordoloi said today in Nagaon.

Speaking at an awareness programme and training camp organised at the Nagaon District Library auditorium by the Nagaon District Congress Committee, Bordoloi further alleged that the BJP is trying to emotionally manipulate people by creating a false image of a huge problem. He added that the Central and State governments led by the BJP have dealt a severe blow to India's Constitution.

Bordoloi also accused the CM of starting communal politics in Assam by targeting Muslims under the guise of eviction. He claimed that the BJP is trying to politically benefit from the issue of citizenship.

Dhubri MP and senior Congress leader Rakibul Hussain criticized the BJP, saying that the party is now trying to nullify the NRC despite having accepted it earlier. He alleged that the BJP is making contradictory statements to create confusion around the citizenship issue.

Hussain also criticized the CM, saying that he is inconsistent in his words and actions. He accused the CM of being anti-indigenous and anti-tribal and called on people to prepare to defeat him politically. The programme was attended by several Congress leaders, including Rupahat MLA Nurul Huda, former MLA Ashok Sharma, and others.

Agnigarh Sanskritik Prashikshan Kendra celebrates first foundation day at historic Nagsankar Temple

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Aug 25: The first foundation day of Agnigarh Sanskritik Prashikshan Kendra, the only music education institute of the greater Nagsankar area, was celebrated at the conference hall of the historic Nagsankar Temple. The event was chaired by Sarat Kumar Mahanta, President of the Kendra.

The programme began with a soulful Borgeet by Jitashree Ojha, followed by the annual report presented by Manash Hazarika, Secretary of the Kendra. The occasion was graced by Angshumi Basumatary, District Cultural Development Officer of Sonitpur (distinguished guest), and Anjan Baskota, Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar recipient (guest of honour). Niju Moni Gohain, Principal of the music school, delivered the inaugural lecture.

The meeting featured addresses by several cultural personalities including Anjan Devi, Mamoni Saikia, and Palash Gayan. It was attended by cultural figures such as Lochan Bora (President, Agnigarh Nat-



ghar), Banerwar Bora, Pintu Gupta, and Rajib Barua. Proceedings were conducted by Sarat Kumar Borah, Secretary of the Kendra, while Pallab Hazarika, Secretary of Agnigarh Nat-ghar, offered the vote of thanks.

In between speeches, students of the Kendra presented a series of cultural performances. At the conclusion, pass certificates were distributed among students.

It is noteworthy that the music school was established last year under the um-

UPPL govt committed to change through honesty and sincerity: Pramod Boro

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 25: With the BTC council elections approaching in September, political parties, including the ruling UPPL, are intensifying their campaigns across the 40 MCLA seats in the BTR region.

As part of the campaign, BTR Chief Pramod Boro, along with several party leaders, addressed programmes in Gohpur, Biswanath, and Batachipur in Sonitpur district on Saturday.

Speaking at a public meeting organised by the Sonitpur District UPPL at Batachipur Milan High School playground, Boro said that the 2020 Bodo Peace Accord, signed after decades of struggle, had fulfilled the people's long-cherished aspirations for peace and development.

He said the UPPL government is striving to bring change to society through "the politics of honesty, sincerity, and solidarity," and added that systematic governance has replaced the alleged misuse of the past.

Highlighting key initiatives, he

mentioned distribution of land pattas, inclusion of villages into the BTR, and development in education, health, sanitation, electrification, and connectivity. He said 60 villages had already been inducted into the BTR, with residents voting in the council elections for the first time.

Boro said the UPPL government had executed significant development in just five years, but added, "We still have many things to do, and we are committed to doing them. If we regain power in BTR, our mission to make it the best region for all will be given top priority."

He emphasised youth development and highlighted schemes such as Alari Swrang (infrastructure for religious institutions), Gyan Swrang (education for students), student insurance, Gami Swrang (solar lighting), Ai Manaw Swrang (₹ 75,000 support for women SHGs), the Super 50 coaching programme (for JEE, NEET, APSC, UPSC), and Mission Bwisunthi (Basundhara).

He noted that a peaceful environment had enabled world-class events like the Durand Cup and CEM Cup, and announced plans for a digital knowledge centre, modern teacher training institutes, and transparent recruitment across schools and colleges.

The event was also attended by Rajya Sabha MP Rungwra Narzary, MCLA Sanjay Swargari, MLA Bhupen Boro, and Sonitpur UPPL leaders including Phanidhar Boro. They urged people to vote for the UPPL for continued peace and development.

The meeting was conducted by Jeet Swargiyari and chaired by Sonitpur UPPL President Khwngkra Swargiyari. Earlier in the day, Boro had addressed public meetings at Gohpur and Biswanath, and later attended an intellectuals' meeting at Dhekiajuli Sahitya Sabha Bhawan. Addressing Bodo intellectuals, he said development and a full-fledged Bodoland is a continuous process that requires tireless united efforts to one day fulfil the dream of the Bodo nation.

West Karbi Anglong District Cong conducts BLA training programme

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Aug 25: The West Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (WKA-DCC) successfully conducted a District-Level Booth Level Agent (BLA) Training Awareness Programme yesterday at its district headquarters in Donkamokam.

Led by Augustine Enghee, President of WKA-DCC and former MLA candidate for Baithalango LAC, the event provided a robust platform for knowledge exchange, skill development, and networking among Congress party members.

The programme was attended by notable dignitaries, including Smt. Sibamoni Bora, MLA (Batadroba Constituency), Jadab Swargiyari, MLA (Dudhnoi Constituency), and Rajesh Pandia, BLA Master Trainer. Other key figures included Ashok Teron (APCC Secretary and WKA-DCC In-charge), Prasanta Kumar Mahanta (former Executive Member, KAAC), Sing Teron (former President, WKA-DCC), and Smt. Alice Engtipi (former Executive Member, KAAC and Vice-President, WKA-DCC).

Office bearers of the DCC, Youth Congress, Mahila Congress, Sevadal, NSUI, and BLAs from various blocks and constituencies also participated. The training focused on equipping members with critical skills to strengthen the party's grassroots outreach.

Amid ongoing protests by opposition parties against the SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar, the Assam Congress is developing strategies to prevent voter list manipulation as the state prepares for a similar exercise ahead of next year's polls.

In its second phase, from August 24 to 30, the party will train representatives and agents from all 28,800 polling booths in Assam to combat voter theft, fraud, and misrepresentation.

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF S.E./Addl. C.E. WORKS,

KAAC::SECRETARIAT

DIPHU-782460

No. KAAC/S.E.-W- 105 (Pt) /2025-26/

Dtd. / /2025.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non-refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to 4 P.M. 28/08/2025, and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be a holiday/non-working days, the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any assigning reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted rate...

Sl. No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount (Rs)	A/A Amount (Rs)	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion
1	Construction of paver block at Hemphu Lakhimon English Higher Secondary School, Lakhimon Ashram Dolamara under Duarbagori Constituency.	Rs. 78,69,000.00	Rs. 78,69,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General = 2%	90 days
2	Construction of Boundary Wall and Iron Gate at Hemphu Lakhimon English Higher Secondary School, Lakhimon Ashram Dolamara under Duarbagori Constituency.	Rs. 82,41,000.00	Rs. 82,41,000.00	ST/SC/OBC1% General 2%	120 days
3	Construction of Boundary Wall and Iron Gate at Katu Rongpharpi Memorial Girls Hostel, Lakhimon Ashram Dolamara under Duarbagori Constituency.	Rs. 50,55,000.00	Rs. 50,55,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General = 2%	90 days

Terms & Condition

N.B.

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/ works for all division under CPWD-2020-21.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
- The Contractor shall repair/re-Construction if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works, The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuse to repair/re- construction the works.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W), KAAC Diphu Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
 - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate/GST.
 - Council Registration.
 - Call Deposit.
 - Council receipt
 - Caste Certificate.
 - Pan Card/Adhaar Card
 - Account number
 - Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund
 - The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-

S. E./Addl. C. E. (Works)
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council
D I P H U.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I don't think of all the misery but of the beauty that still remains. -Anne Frank

Nikki Haley and Indo-US ties

Everybody is looking to benefit from the India-United States standoff. The Trump-Modi rift has also caught the fancy of Indian-American and Trump's "Republican colleague" Nikki Haley, who was Trump's United Nation's ambassador till they parted ways and Haley took off for a presidential run on her own against, of all the people, Trump himself! Of course, she didn't stand a chance against the MAGA wave and Trump left her straggling if not struggling. Nikki Haley is one of the reasons why Trump stopped trusting Indians except those of them who wouldn't let go of Trump's apron-strings, which Nikki Haley stopped doing once she decided she was the 'better man' for presidential honour than Donald Trump would ever be, not in this lifetime! And now, Haley sees opportunity in the India-United States tariff-induced rift triggered by Trump's urge to be the best American POTUS and American dictator in 200 years. How could Haley allow it and Trump does not trust Haley. For Trump every 'Indian' is a mean Hindu and this has been told to him by Field Marshal Asim Munir, this sorry picture of the average Indian. Trump looks at an Indian-American and he sees Nikki Haley, who took his crumbs and then mounted a campaign against him. Did Nikki Haley become the ogre at the top of the beanstalk? Haley is seriously fishing in Trump's troubled waters, muddying them further. Haley's friends in the military-industrial complex didn't like Trump in the first place.

The former UN ambassador is suddenly a "born again Indian" with full of love and romance for India against the marauding tariffs of President Donald Trump. Nikki Haley's words carry weight in both Democratic and Republican circles. Haley was hailed as a better presidential pick than Trump towards the end of Trump's presidential campaign in 2024. The sort of person that Trump is, he must have concluded that there's no Indian or Indian-American worth the attention that Nikki Haley got. Haley wouldn't ever think of becoming a mediator between President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. She will never again get access to the Oval Office as long as Donald Trump remains United States President. As far as Trump is concerned, Nikki Haley is persona non grata. Now, by talking for India and laying all the blame for the India-US break-up on Trump, Haley has further alienated the Trump administration and made President Trump by far more anti-India than he was ever was.

Nikki Haley isn't the great ambassador India should have in its corner. Nikki Haley would only add to the rancour Trump has for India. Nobody ever thought Nikki Haley was a friend of India, to start with. In fact, stories abound of Nikki Haley's dislike for India and 'Indianness'. Haley apparently gave up being a Sikh and became a Christian and Nikki's Sikh moniker was a casualty.

Employment-Oriented Education

Education is an indispensable pillar of human civilization, through which an individual's knowledge, skills, ethical values, and sense of social responsibility are developed. This multifaceted role of education has always played a central part in societal progress and the shaping of individual lives. However, in the context of the changing circumstances of the modern world, the concept of education is no longer confined to theoretical knowledge but has begun to connect with the practical needs of life. In this evolving scenario, the concept of employment-oriented education has gained special significance. Employment-oriented education is a system that not only enriches students with academic knowledge but also equips them with practical skills, professional capabilities, and the mindset required for the workplace. The primary objective of this education is to provide students with competencies that enable them to enter the job market seamlessly, achieve success, and contribute meaningfully to the economic and social development of society. In a state like Assam, where unemployment remains a complex challenge, the relevance of employment-oriented education is particularly evident.

An analysis of the origin and development of the concept of employment-oriented education reveals that this educational approach is a product of the economic and social changes in modern society. Traditionally, the aim of education was to foster the intellectual, moral, and cultural development of individuals. In ancient India, the Gurukul system imparted knowledge to students in various aspects of life, including philosophy, literature, mathematics, and ethical values. However, the Industrial Revolution transformed the structure of society. The rise in industrial production, urbanization, and globalization in-

emerged, with a growing demand for skilled workers.

A review of the current state of Assam's education system reveals that the state has seen an expansion in education. Over the past few decades, the number of schools, colleges, and universities has increased, and the quality of education has improved to some extent. However, unemployment remains a significant challenge for the state, particularly among the youth, where the unemployment rate is high. A major reason for this issue is the vast gap between the education system and the requirements of the job market. Many students in Assam, even after obtaining graduate or post-graduate degrees, lack skills that align with workplace demands. Students graduating in general subjects such as arts, science, or commerce often lack practical skills, which reduces their employability. In contrast, employment-oriented education aims to bridge this gap. It provides students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, thereby enhancing their prospects of securing employment. In the context of Assam's economy, the necessity of this type of education is critical. The state's economy, which depends on agriculture, tourism, handicrafts, and information technology, has a growing demand for skilled workers. Assam's tea industry, a vital component of the state's economy, requires expertise in modern management, technology, and marketing. Employment-oriented education can equip young individuals with these skills, connecting them with such opportunities.

One of the primary advantages of employment-oriented education is its practical orientation. Through this education, students become familiar with real workplace scenarios. For instance, in the field of information technology, employment-oriented education provides training in programming, data analysis, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and more. These skills are highly sought after in modern workplaces. Similarly, in agriculture, training in modern farming techniques, organic agriculture, safe pesticide use, and water management prepares students for agriculture-based careers. In a state like Assam, where agriculture remains the backbone of the economy, such education can open new possibilities for the youth. By adopting modern agricultural methods in the production of organic tea, rice, fruits, and vegetables, productivity can be enhanced, creating employment opportunities. Additionally, employment-oriented education fosters an entrepreneurial mindset among students. In Assam, where government job opportunities

are limited, entrepreneurship enables young individuals to start their own businesses, creating employment for themselves and others. In sectors like Assam's handicrafts—such as Muga, Eri, and Pat weaving, bamboo and cane crafts, and traditional jewelry-making—entrepreneurial initiatives can lead to the establishment of new businesses.

However, employment-oriented education also faces several challenges, particularly in the context of Assam. The state's education system remains heavily reliant on traditional methods. Many educational institutions lack the necessary infrastructure for employment-oriented education, such as modern training centers, technological equipment, and skilled trainers. In the field of information technology, training requires advanced computer labs, high-speed internet, and modern software, but many educational institutions, especially in rural Assam, lack these facilities. There is also a lack of awareness among students and parents about the importance of employment-oriented education. Many still prioritize general degrees over acquiring practical skills. Implementing curricula tailored to local needs is another challenge. In the context of Assam's agriculture-based economy, there is a need to emphasize skill development in agriculture and related fields, but many institutions lack such programs. Furthermore, the lack of collaboration with industries to connect students with job opportunities is a significant issue. The absence of internships or placement programs in educational institutions hinders students' ability to gain practical experience.

Several successful initiatives have been undertaken in Assam to promote employment-oriented education, which deserve mention. Through programs like the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and various skill development initiatives by the Assam government, young individuals are being trained in fields such as information technology, tourism, handicrafts, and healthcare. Under the Prime Minister's Skill Development Scheme, training centers have been established in Assam to provide youth with technical and practical skills. Additionally, institutions like polytechnics, Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), and other vocational programs are offering training to students. However, the scope of these initiatives remains limited, and there is a need to expand them. For instance, increasing the number of training centers in rural areas and designing curricula aligned with local needs is essential.

Looking to the future, the potential of employment-oriented education is immense. Assam's economy is becoming increasingly diverse, with new job opportunities emerging.

The tourism sector holds significant potential for the state. Areas like Kaziranga, Manas, Dighalipukhuri, and Majuli can create employment opportunities through tourism. Training in tourism-related skills, such as guiding, management, hospitality, and food services, can prepare young individuals for these opportunities. Similarly, the information technology sector is witnessing new possibilities in Assam.

The emergence of IT hubs in cities like Guwahati has increased the demand for IT-related skills. In this context, employment-oriented education can connect young individuals with these opportunities. Additionally, sectors like handicrafts and small-scale industries offer employment potential. For example, Muga and Eri weaving can tap into local and international markets. Training and entrepreneurship in these areas can enable youth to establish their own businesses.

For the success of employment-oriented education, several critical steps are necessary. Educational institutions need to improve their infrastructure, ensuring the availability of modern technology, training centers, and skilled trainers. Awareness campaigns are needed to educate students and parents about the importance of employment-oriented education. Collaboration with local industries should be established to connect students with job opportunities. Internship programs between educational institutions and industries can provide students with practical experience. Curricula should be designed to align with local needs. By developing programs tailored to sectors like agriculture, handicrafts, tourism, and information technology in Assam, students' employability can be enhanced.

In conclusion, employment-oriented education can serve as a powerful tool to prepare Assam's youth for the job market. By equipping students with practical skills rather than just theoretical knowledge, it enhances their employability. In a state like Assam, where unemployment is a pressing issue, such education can empower young individuals to become economically self-reliant and contribute meaningfully to the state's economic and social development. However, the success of this education system requires coordination among the government, educational institutions, and industries. By raising awareness among students and society, improving infrastructure, and designing curricula aligned with local needs, employment-oriented education can lead Assam's youth toward new horizons. Through this education, the youth of Assam can not only improve their quality of life but also play a vital role in the state's overall economic and social progress.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Assam's classical gem: Sattriya dance

By: Satyabrata Borah

Sattriya dance, one of India's classical dance forms, is a vibrant and expressive art that embodies the cultural and spiritual heritage of Assam. Rooted in the Bhakti movement, this dance form originated in the 15th century under the guidance of the revered Assamese saint, scholar, and cultural icon Srimanta Sankardeva. It was developed as a medium to propagate the teachings of Vaishnavism, a sect of Hinduism that emphasizes devotion to Lord Krishna. Sattriya, named after the monastic institutions called *sattras* where it was nurtured, is a unique blend of dance, drama, music, and spirituality. Over centuries, it has evolved into a sophisticated art form, earning recognition as one of India's eight classical dances in 2000 by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Its journey from the sacred precincts of Assamese monasteries to national and international stages is a testament to its enduring appeal and artistic depth.

The origins of Sattriya dance are deeply intertwined with the socio-religious reforms initiated by Srimanta Sankardeva. In the 15th century, Assam was a land of diverse tribal cultures, fragmented by religious practices and social divisions. Sankardeva sought to unify people through the Bhakti movement, emphasizing devotion, equality, and spiritual enlightenment. To make religious teachings accessible to the masses, he devised various artistic forms, including Ankiya Naat (a form of devotional drama), Borgeet (devotional songs), and Sattriya dance. These art forms were performed in the *sattras*, which were Vaishnavite monasteries established to foster spiritual and cultural activities. Sattriya dance was initially performed by male monks, known as *bhokots*, as a form of worship and storytelling within the *sattras*. The dance was a medium to narrate tales from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas, particularly those centered around Lord Krishna and his divine exploits.

The essence of Sattriya dance lies in its ability to convey spiritual themes through graceful movements, intricate footwork, and expressive gestures. Unlike some other classical dance forms that emphasize elaborate costumes or acrobatic movements, Sattriya is marked by its simplicity and subtlety, yet it is profoundly evocative. The dance is characterized by its lyrical quality, with movements that flow seamlessly, reflecting the rhythm of nature and the divine. The dancer's body becomes a vehicle for storytelling, using precise hand gestures (*mudras*), facial expressions (*abhinaya*), and body postures to convey emotions and narratives. The footwork, known as *nritta*, is rhythmic and synchronized with the accompanying music, while the expressive aspect, called *nritya*, brings to life the emotions and stories of mythological characters.

Sattriya dance is accompanied by traditional Assamese music, which includes instruments like the *khol* (a two-sided drum), *taals* (cymbals), and the *flute*. The vocal music consists of *Borgeets*, the devotional songs composed by Sankardeva and his disciple Madhavdeva. These songs, sung in *Brajavali* (a medieval language blending Maithili and Assamese), are rich in poetic and philosophical content, often describing the divine love of Radha and Krishna or the spiritual journey of the soul. The rhythmic structure of Sattriya is based on traditional Assamese *tala* systems, which provide a complex yet harmonious foundation for the dance. The interplay of music and movement creates a meditative atmosphere, drawing both the



performer and the audience into a shared spiritual experience.

The repertoire of Sattriya dance is diverse, encompassing various forms that reflect its dual role as a devotional and performative art. One of the key components is the *Ankiya Naat*, a theatrical performance that integrates dance, music, and dialogue to enact mythological stories. Within this, Sattriya dance sequences are used to depict specific episodes or emotions. Other forms include solo performances like *Krishna Nritya* (depicting Krishna's life), *Nadubhangi* (a dance of joy), and *Jhumura* (a folk-inspired dance performed by male dancers). Each form has its own stylistic nuances, yet all adhere to the core principles of grace, precision, and devotion. The costumes in Sattriya are simple yet elegant, typically consisting of handwoven Assamese silk garments like the *pat silk saree* for women and *dhoti-kurta* for men. Female dancers wear a *chador* (a draped shawl) and traditional jewelry, while male dancers may don headgear or carry props like flutes to represent Krishna.

Sattriya dance was confined to the *sattras* and performed exclusively by male monks due to its religious context. Women were not permitted to participate, as the *sattras* were male-dominated institutions. However, with the passage of time and the gradual opening of Sattriya to wider audiences, women began to learn and perform the dance, particularly after the 20th century. This shift marked a significant turning point, as it broadened the scope of Sattriya and allowed it to reach new platforms. The transition from the sacred to the secular was not without challenges, as traditionalists in the *sattras* were initially resistant to performances outside the monastic setting. However, the efforts of pioneering gurus and performers, coupled with growing interest in Indian classical arts, helped Sattriya gain recognition beyond Assam.

In 2000, the Sangeet Natak Akademi officially recognized Sattriya dance as one of India's classical dance forms, alongside Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri, Odissi, Kuchipudi, and Mohiniyattam. This recognition was a milestone, as it placed Sattriya on a national platform and encouraged its preservation and propagation. Today, Sattriya is taught in dance schools across India and abroad, with institutions like the Sattriya Kendra in Guwahati playing a pivotal role in training new generations of dancers. The dance has also adapted to contemporary stages, with performers experimenting with new themes and choreographies while staying true to its traditional

roots. Festivals, cultural events, and international tours have further elevated Sattriya's visibility, showcasing its elegance and spiritual depth to global audiences.

Sattriya dance faces challenges in maintaining its authenticity and relevance in a rapidly modernizing world. The commercialization of classical arts sometimes leads to diluted presentations, where the spiritual essence is overshadowed by theatricality. Additionally, the younger generation in Assam and beyond may gravitate toward more contemporary forms of dance, posing a risk to the transmission of Sattriya's traditional techniques. To address these challenges, efforts are being made to document the dance form, standardize its teaching methods, and integrate it into educational curricula. The *sattras* continue to play a vital role as custodians of Sattriya, preserving its original forms while encouraging innovation within the framework of tradition.

The spiritual dimension of Sattriya dance remains its most distinctive feature. Unlike some classical dances that emphasize technical virtuosity, Sattriya prioritizes *bhakti*, or devotion, as its core philosophy. The dancer is not merely a performer but a devotee, channeling divine energy through every movement. This spiritual connection resonates with audiences, creating a sense of transcendence that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers. The stories depicted in Sattriya, whether of Krishna's playful antics, Radha's longing, or the triumph of good over evil, are universal in their appeal, making the dance relatable to diverse audiences.

Sattriya dance has also contributed to Assam's cultural identity, serving as a symbol of pride and heritage. It has become a medium to showcase the state's rich artistic traditions on national and international platforms. Collaborations with other classical and contemporary dance forms have further enriched Sattriya, allowing it to evolve while retaining its distinct character. For instance, choreographers have explored fusion performances that combine Sattriya with other Indian classical dances or even Western styles, creating innovative presentations that appeal to modern sensibilities.

The future of Sattriya dance lies in striking a balance between preservation and adaptation. While its roots in the *sattras* and its devotional ethos must be safeguarded, the dance form must also embrace change to remain relevant. Young dancers, trained in both traditional and contemporary techniques, are key to this evolution. By blending the purity of Sattriya's classical forms with creative expressions, they can ensure that the dance continues to inspire and captivate audiences. Moreover, digital platforms and social media have opened new avenues for promoting Sattriya, allowing dancers to share performances, tutorials, and historical insights with a global audience.

Sattriya dance is a living evidence to Assam's cultural and spiritual legacy. From its origins in the *sattras* to its recognition as a classical art form, it has traversed a remarkable journey, embodying the ideals of devotion, artistry, and unity. Its graceful movements, soulful music, and profound storytelling continue to enchant audiences, bridging the past and the present. As Sattriya evolves, it carries forward the vision of Srimanta Sankardeva, reminding us of the power of art to uplift, unite, and inspire. Through dedicated efforts to preserve and promote this dance, Sattriya will undoubtedly continue to shine as a jewel of India's cultural heritage, captivating hearts for generations to come.

How free are we? Reflecting on 79 years of Independence

By: Satyabrata Borah

Today, India celebrates its 79th Independence Day, a milestone that fills every Indian heart with pride and gratitude. On August 15, 1947, India broke free from the chains of colonial rule, stepping into a new era of self-governance and hope. As we hoist the tricolour and sing the national anthem, the air resonates with patriotism. Yet, amidst the celebrations, a question lingers in the minds of many: how truly free are we? Independence is not a singular concept confined to political freedom; it is a multifaceted ideal encompassing social, economic, cultural, and personal liberties. As we mark this significant day, it is imperative to reflect on the extent of our freedom and the challenges that still bind us.

Political independence was the first and most visible victory of our freedom struggle. The sacrifices of countless freedom fighters, from Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent resistance to Bhagat Singh's revolutionary zeal, culminated in the historic moment when Jawaharlal Nehru declared India's trust with destiny. Today, India stands as the world's largest democracy, with a constitution that guarantees fundamental rights to every citizen. The right to vote, the freedom of speech, and the ability to choose our leaders are pillars of our democratic framework. Yet, the question remains: Does this political freedom translate into true independence for every Indian?

For many, freedom is an incomplete promise when basic needs remain unfulfilled. Economic disparity continues to cast a long shadow over our progress. Despite India's remarkable economic growth and its emergence as a global powerhouse, millions still live below the poverty line. For a daily wage labourer struggling to afford two meals a day, the notion of independence feels hollow. Access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities remains uneven, particularly in rural areas. Economic freedom is still a distant dream for a significant portion of our population. The wealth gap is stark, with urban centres flourishing while rural India grapples with underdevelopment. If independence means the right to a life of opportunity and fairness, we are yet to fully realise it.

Social inequalities further complicate the narrative of freedom. India's diversity is its strength, but it also presents challenges. Caste, religion, and gender-based discrimination persist, undermining the spirit of equality enshrined in our constitution. The marginalised whether Dalits, tribals, or religious minorities often face systemic exclusion. Women, despite making strides in education and leadership, continue to battle patriarchal norms and safety concerns. The recent rise in crimes against women underscores the urgent need for a safer, more equitable society. True independence cannot exist in a nation where half its population feels unsafe or undervalued. Similarly, communal tensions and regional disparities remind us that social cohesion is a work in progress. Freedom, in its truest sense, demands that every individual, irrespective of their background, enjoys equal respect and opportunities.

Education is another lens through which we can measure our independence. Knowledge is the cornerstone of a free mind, yet access to quality education remains uneven. Urban schools boast modern facilities, while many rural schools lack basic infrastructure. The digital divide, exacerbated by the pandemic, has further highlighted this gap. For a child in a remote village with no access to the internet or quality teachers, the promise of independence feels

like an abstraction. Education empowers individuals to question, innovate, and contribute to nation-building, but when it is inaccessible to many, it limits the scope of our collective freedom.

Cultural and intellectual freedom also warrant scrutiny. India's rich cultural heritage is a source of pride, but rigid traditions sometimes stifle individual expression. The fear of societal backlash often discourages people from challenging outdated norms or voicing dissenting opinions. While the constitution protects freedom of speech, instances of censorship, trolling, and intolerance on social media platforms reveal the fragility of this right. A truly free society encourages open dialogue and diverse perspectives without fear of retribution. Our ability to think freely, question authority, and embrace change is a measure of our intellectual independence, and we must strive to nurture it. On the global stage, India has made remarkable strides. From space exploration to technological innovation, we have carved a niche as a nation of immense potential. Our youth, vibrant and ambitious, are driving change in fields like artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and entrepreneurship. India's soft power like its films, cuisine, and yoga has captured the world's imagination. Yet, this progress must not blind us to the internal challenges that hinder our journey toward complete freedom. Corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and environmental degradation are hurdles that demand collective action. A nation cannot claim to be fully independent when its rivers are polluted, its forests are shrinking, and its institutions are mired in red tape.

The essence of independence lies in the empowerment of every citizen. It is about ensuring that a farmer in a remote village has access to fair markets, that a young girl can pursue her dreams without fear, and that a tribal community is not displaced in the name of development. It is about creating a society where every voice is heard, every life is valued, and every dream has the chance to take flight. Our freedom fighters envisioned an India where justice, liberty, and equality were not mere words but lived realities. As we celebrate 79 years of independence, we must ask ourselves whether we are honouring that vision.

The path to true independence is not a destination but a continuous journey. It requires us to confront uncomfortable truths and work tirelessly to address them. Every step toward reducing poverty, eliminating discrimination, and improving education brings us closer to the ideal of freedom. It demands active participation from every citizen, not just in celebrating Independence Day but in building a nation that reflects its highest aspirations. The government, civil society, and individuals must collaborate to bridge the gaps that divide us. Only then can we claim to be truly free.

As we stand under the tricolour today, let us renew our commitment to this journey. Let us pledge to create an India where every citizen feels the weight of freedom's promise fulfilled, not just in law but in spirit. The 79th Independence Day is not just a celebration of the past but a call to action for the future. It is a reminder that freedom is not a gift to be taken for granted but a responsibility to be upheld. Let us strive for an India where every heart beats with the pride of being truly free, where every mind is unshackled, and where every soul finds its place in the tapestry of this great nation. Only then will our independence be complete, and our trust with destiny, fulfilled.

GANESH CHATURTHI: A festival of hope and prosperity

By: Dipak Kurmi

The Ganesh Chaturthi festival in India is a beloved celebration filled with divinity, joy, and grandeur. It's a festival that brings people together regardless of their religion, caste, or creed. When we think of Ganesh Chaturthi, we envision the beautiful idol of Lord Ganesh, the excitement, the crowds, and the sweet aroma of His favorite modaks filling the air. Lord Ganesh is a God for everyone, known for new beginnings, removing obstacles, and supporting learning. This festival lasts for 10 days and not only marks Lord Ganesh's birthday but also serves as a social and community event that promotes harmony. Many believe that Lord Ganesh comes to earth during these 10 days to bless His devotees. So, for those who have a Ganesh statue at home, it's a time to care for Him as a cherished guest. Indian festivals are incomplete without delicious food, and Ganesh Chaturthi is no exception. Throughout these 10 days of celebration, people make a special effort to please Lord Ganesh by preparing and offering His favorite dishes as offerings.

How Ganesh Chaturthi Became a Popular Festival: Ganesh Chaturthi is a traditional festival celebrated in many parts of India, but its grandeur and enthusiasm in the state of Maharashtra are unmatched. Interestingly, it wasn't always a big part of Maharashtra's culture until it arrived during the Maratha rule. Initially, Ganesh Chaturthi was more of a family affair. However, a significant transformation happened thanks to Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920), a prominent leader in the Indian Independence Movement. He played a crucial role in turning Lord Ganesh into a powerful symbol of cultural and religious unity among the people of Maharashtra as a way to resist British rule. The British government was strict about political opposition and rebellion, but they didn't interfere with religious customs. So, the Ganesh festival became a platform to display national unity. In 1893, Tilak transformed Ganesh Chaturthi from a yearly family celebration into a full-blown public event.

Rituals and Traditions: The preparations for Ganesh Chaturthi start months ahead of the festival. Skilled artisans create clay statues of Lord Ganesh in various sizes. These statues are then placed in beautifully decorated pandals (temporary structures used for religious events) or in people's homes. The celebration lasts for 10 days,



following the Hindu lunar calendar, with the grandest festivities happening on the final day known as Anant Chaturdashi. On the first day of the festival, amidst chants of "Ganpati Bappa Morya," thousands of devotees bring Lord Ganesh's idol to their homes. After placing the idol, a special ceremony called Prana Pratishtha is performed to invite the divine presence into the statue.

During this ritual, many mantras (sacred chants) are recited, a worship ceremony is conducted, and offerings like sweets, flowers, rice, coconuts, jaggery, and coins are presented. Additionally, the statue is adorned with red sandalwood powder. Over the next 10 days, the idol is worshipped daily, and an evening prayer called "arti" is sung. It's believed that Lord Ganesh was born at noon, making this time of day especially auspicious for performing these rituals.

Ganesh Chaturthi is a festival celebrated with great pride and excitement in public places. Besides the prayers and special events held in temples dedicated to Lord Ganesh, there are also

elaborately crafted statues of the Lord set up in specially built and beautifully decorated structures called pandals. Among local communities, there's even a competition to see who can create the most impressive Ganesh statue, which lasts for 10 days. People who follow the festival make sure to visit these public displays during this time. In the state of Maharashtra, the Lalbagha Raja Sarvajani Ganeshotsav Mandal, founded in 1934, is one of the most famous and highly visited Ganesh pandals.

The highlight of this festival happens on the 11th day, which is quite a spectacle. On the final day, called Anant Chaturdashi, the statues of Lord Ganesh are paraded through the streets with singing and dancing. Afterward, they are submerged in the ocean or other water bodies. This act of immersing the statues and allowing them to dissolve symbolizes the idea that the world is always changing and eventually transforms into something formless. It represents the cycle of life. As the devotees bid farewell, they chant "Ganpati Bappa Morya" and pray for Lord Ganesh to return

soon in the following year. Business owners seek prosperity through these prayers, while farmers ask for bountiful harvests. In the city of Mumbai alone, it's believed that more than 150,000 statues are immersed in water each year during this festival!

Food – A Big Part of the Celebrations: India celebrates numerous festivals, and they all come with delicious sweets and elaborate meals. Each festival in our country brings a rich variety of flavors, and different regions have their unique culinary twists. Sweets like laddoos, barfis, and mithais are a common sight and treat during most festivals. But every festival also has its special set of delicacies. The 10-day-long Ganesh Chaturthi festival creates an atmosphere much like a carnival. It's a festival known for its abundance of sweet treats because Lord Ganesh is believed to have a sweet tooth. So, during this time, you'll find homes and sweet shops making some of the most exquisite sweet delicacies, including modaks, laddoos, and barfis.

Bhog – Food for Worship and Devotees: The term "bhog" has two meanings during Ganesh Chaturthi. First, it's the food given to all those who come to honor Lord Ganesh. Second, it's the food presented to Him during worship. Besides sweets and other tasty treats, fruits are also part of this offering. Among the fruits, bananas hold a special place because they are Lord Ganesh's favorite fruit and are given more importance than others.

Modak – Lord Ganesh's Favorite Sweet: This sweet treat, known as modak, is believed to be Lord Ganesh's absolute favorite. In fact, He is often called "Modakpriya" in scriptures because of His deep affection for these sweet dumplings. So, on the first day of Ganesh Chaturthi, devotees offer Him a special dish of modak as part of the bhog (offering). Traditionally, modak was made from rice flour and jaggery. However, today, you can find various types of modak, including steamed modak, dry fruit modak, chocolate modak, fried modak, and more, each with its unique flavor.

Laddoos – Another Favorite of Lord Ganesh: In addition to modak, Lord Ganesh is also known to have a liking for laddoos. Among the laddoos offered to Him in the bhog, the delicious motichoor laddoo is one of the most common choices. You'll often see Lord Ganesh depicted holding motichoor laddoos in His hands in pictures or idols,

showing His deep fondness for them. During the festival, other mouthwatering laddoos that are quite popular include coconut laddoos and til ke laddoos. These sweet treats are a part of the festive celebrations.

Satori – A Beloved Festival Sweet from Maharashtra: Satori is a sweet flatbread that's cherished during festivals in the state of Maharashtra. It's a delightful treat made from ingredients like khoya or mawa, ghee (clarified butter), gram flour (besan), and milk.

Coconut Rice – a Popular Offering in Western India: Coconut Rice is a common dish offered to the deity in Western India, especially during festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi. It's made by either soaking white rice in coconut milk or cooking it with coconut flakes. This tasty and aromatic dish is a favorite offering to Lord Ganesh.

Shrikhand – a Sweet Dish Loved in India: Shrikhand is a sweet treat enjoyed in various regions of India. It's created by straining yogurt and then topping it with pieces of nuts and raisins.

Banana Sheera – A Favorite Offering to Lord Ganesh: Banana Sheera is a simple and beloved sweet dish often given to Lord Ganesh as an offering. It's prepared using mashed bananas, semolina, and sugar, and its texture and flavor are quite similar to the delightful semolina-based sweet called sooji ka halwa.

Puran Poli – a Traditional Stuffed Bread: Puran Poli is a classic Indian stuffed flatbread. It's made from wheat and has a sweet filling that's flavored with spices like cardamom and nutmeg. "Puran" means the stuffing, and "poli" refers to the flatbread.

"The value of a culture can be seen through its festivals." This well-known saying perfectly describes Ganesh Chaturthi. This special festival promotes living together peacefully and in harmony, bringing people closer. Besides the delicious food and excitement it brings, people eagerly await the arrival of the Lord of Peace and the Bringer of Happiness and Prosperity. Today, there is also a growing awareness about making eco-friendly choices when it comes to the Ganapati idol. People are encouraged to use materials that don't harm the environment or marine life, showing their care for the planet.

The Ganesh Chaturthi festival is filled with excitement, optimism, and a wish for a better future. Ganpati Bappa Morya! (the writer can be reached at dipakurmigpltd@gmail.com)

Cosmic secrets unlocked: The power of supercomputers

By: Satyabrata Borah

The question of what preceded the Big Bang has captivated scientists, philosophers, and curious minds for centuries. This profound mystery about the origin of the universe touches on the very essence of existence, prompting humanity to explore the boundaries of science, philosophy, and technology. The Big Bang theory, widely accepted as the leading explanation for the universe's birth, suggests that approximately 13.8 billion years ago, the universe emerged from an extremely dense and hot point, expanding rapidly to form the cosmos we observe today. This model accounts for phenomena such as the universe's expansion, the formation of galaxies, and the cosmic microwave background radiation. However, it leaves a critical question unanswered: what existed before the Big Bang? Recent advancements in computational technology, particularly the development of supercomputers, have opened new avenues for exploring this enigma. By leveraging the immense computational power of supercomputers, scientists are attempting to simulate and analyze the conditions that may have existed before the universe as we know it came into being. This article delves into the scientific perspectives on the pre-Big Bang era, the pivotal role of supercomputers, and the potential implications of these efforts.

The Big Bang theory provides a robust framework for understanding the universe's evolution from a singular point of infinite density and temperature. This event marked the beginning of time, space, and matter as we understand them. Yet, the theory is silent on what, if anything, existed before this moment. The concept of "before" itself is problematic, as time is believed to have originated with the Big Bang.

This creates a paradox, as our intuitive understanding of causality relies on a linear progression of time. To address this, scientists have proposed various theoretical models, each attempting to describe the state of reality before the Big Bang. These models, however, involve complex mathematical equations and physical principles that require immense computational resources to test and validate. This is where supercomputers, with their unparalleled ability to process vast amounts of data, become indispensable.

Supercomputers are advanced

computing systems capable of performing trillions of calculations per second, far surpassing the capabilities of standard computers. They enable scientists to tackle problems that were previously intractable due to their computational complexity. In the context of cosmology, supercomputers are used to create simulations of the universe's early conditions, allowing researchers to explore hypothetical scenarios about its origins. These simulations draw on principles from quantum mechanics, general relativity, and other fields of physics to model the behavior of matter, energy, and spacetime in extreme conditions. By simulating the moments immediately following the Big Bang, scientists can work backward to infer what might have preceded it. The computational power of supercomputers makes it possible to handle the intricate calculations required to test these models, offering insights into the pre-Big Bang state.

One prominent theory about the pre-Big Bang era is the concept of quantum fluctuations. According to this idea, the universe may have emerged from a vacuum state characterized by random quantum fluctuations in energy. These fluctuations, governed by the principles of quantum mechanics, could have triggered the formation of a tiny, dense point that rapidly expanded in the Big Bang. Simulating such quantum processes requires solving complex equations that describe the behavior of particles and fields at subatomic scales.

Supercomputers excel in this regard, as they can process the vast datasets needed to model these phenomena. By running simulations based on quantum fluctuation models, scientists can test whether such conditions could lead to the formation of a universe like ours, providing clues about the state of reality before the Big Bang.

Another intriguing hypothesis is the multiverse theory, which posits that our universe is just one of many in an infinite ensemble of universes. In this framework, the Big Bang may have been a local event within a larger multiverse, with other universes potentially existing before or alongside our own. Each universe in the multiverse could have its own physical laws and constants, and our Big Bang might have been the result of a collision or interaction between universes. Testing the multiverse hypothesis is a daunting task, as it involves modeling interactions across

multiple dimensions and scales. Supercomputers play a crucial role here, enabling researchers to simulate the dynamics of multiple universes and explore how they might give rise to events like the Big Bang. While the multiverse remains speculative, supercomputer simulations provide a way to test its plausibility by comparing theoretical predictions with observational data.

Supercomputers also contribute to our understanding of the universe's earliest moments, which can shed light on the conditions that preceded the Big Bang. For instance, the first few seconds after the Big Bang were marked by rapid expansion, the formation of fundamental particles, and the emergence of cosmic structures. By simulating these processes, scientists can study how matter and energy behaved under extreme conditions. Supercomputers allow researchers to model the formation of galaxies, the distribution of dark matter, and the influence of dark energy, all of which provide indirect clues about the universe's origins. These simulations require processing enormous datasets, as they involve tracking the interactions of billions of particles across vast timescales. Only supercomputers have the capacity to handle such computations, making them essential tools for cosmological research.

One of the most challenging aspects of studying the pre-Big Bang era is reconciling quantum mechanics with general relativity. These two pillars of modern physics describe the universe at vastly different scales: quantum mechanics governs the subatomic realm, while general relativity describes gravity and spacetime on cosmic scales. At the moment of the Big Bang, however, the universe was so dense and energetic that both theories must apply simultaneously. This creates a theoretical conflict, as quantum mechanics and general relativity are not easily unified. Supercomputers help bridge this gap by enabling scientists to test models of quantum gravity, such as loop quantum gravity, which proposes that spacetime is quantized at the smallest scales. According to this theory, the universe may have undergone a "bounce" rather than a singular beginning, transitioning from a contracting phase to an expanding one. Simulating such scenarios requires immense computational power, as it involves modeling the behavior of spacetime itself under extreme conditions.

Despite the power of supercomputers, uncovering definitive answers about the pre-Big Bang era remains a formidable challenge. The lack of direct observational evidence from before the Big Bang means that scientists must rely on indirect methods, such as analyzing the cosmic microwave background radiation.

This radiation, a remnant of the Big Bang, contains subtle patterns that may hold clues about the universe's earliest moments. Supercomputers are used to analyze these patterns, identifying fluctuations that could reflect conditions before the Big Bang. For example, certain anomalies in the cosmic microwave background could support theories like the multiverse or quantum fluctuations. By comparing simulation results with observational data, scientists can refine their models and narrow down the possibilities.

The implications of using supercomputers to study the pre-Big Bang era extend beyond cosmology. These efforts push the boundaries of computational science, driving innovations in algorithms, data processing, and machine learning. The techniques developed for cosmological simulations can be applied to other fields, such as climate modeling, medical research, and materials science. Moreover, the quest to understand the universe's origins fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together physicists, computer scientists, and mathematicians. This convergence of expertise accelerates progress and opens new avenues for discovery.

The question of what came before the Big Bang remains one of the most profound mysteries in science. Supercomputers have emerged as powerful tools in this quest, enabling scientists to simulate complex cosmological scenarios and test theoretical models. While definitive answers are still elusive, the computational power of supercomputers is bringing us closer to understanding the conditions that may have preceded the universe's birth. Theories like quantum fluctuations and the multiverse offer tantalizing possibilities, and ongoing research continues to refine our understanding. As supercomputing technology advances, it holds the promise of unlocking new insights into the origins of the cosmos, deepening our appreciation of our place in the universe. This journey not only expands the frontiers of science but also reflects humanity's enduring curiosity about the fundamental nature of existence.

Lord Ganesha: The sattvic deity and architect of a noble nation

By: Lalit Garg

Lord Ganesha is an inseparable part of Indian culture. Revered as Vighnaharta (remover of obstacles) and Mangalkarta (bestower of auspiciousness), he is a sattvic deity who also embodies the qualities of a great nation-builder. Ganesha is not only deeply woven into the fabric of Indian culture and lifestyle but also occupies a revered place in homes, vehicles, offices, and institutions across the world. Everywhere, one finds the presence of Ganesha. In daily life, people invoke him for success, happiness, prosperity, wisdom, and intellect. He is remembered before the commencement of every auspicious activity. Being the foremost among deities, his personality is multidimensional—he is both a divine figure and a people's leader. As the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, his universal, timeless, and all-encompassing popularity makes his birth festival—celebrated on the fourth day of the bright fortnight (Shukla Paksha) in the month of Bhadrapada—a joyous occasion worldwide. Known as Ganesh Chaturthi, this festival is especially renowned in Maharashtra.

Various stories about Lord Ganesha's birth exist in Hindu scriptures. According to the Varaha Purana, Shiva himself created Ganesha by combining the five elements. So radiant and attractive did he appear that the gods became disturbed. Sensing this, Shiva enlarged his belly and gave him an elephant's head to reduce his overwhelming charm. As per the Shiva Purana, once Goddess Parvati created a boy from the paste of sandalwood and turmeric she used for her bath and breathed life into him. She stationed him as a guard at her door while she bathed, forbidding anyone to enter. When Shiva arrived, the boy—unaware of who he was—stopped him from entering.

Enraged, Shiva beheaded the boy. Seeing this, Parvati was overcome with grief. To console her, Shiva fixed the head of a young elephant onto the boy's body and revived him. From that day, he became known as Gajanan. To further appease Parvati, the gods showered him with boons: Indra gave him the Ankusha (goad), Varuna the Pasha (noose), Brahma immortality, Lakshmi wealth and prosperity (Riddhi), and Saraswati knowledge and wisdom (Siddhi). Thus, he was granted the highest place among the gods and became the Pratham Deva—the one worshipped first. Ganesha is also revered as the first divine scribe. At the request of the gods,



he penned down the Mahabharata as dictated by sage Ved Vyasa. Not only in Hinduism but also in Jainism and Buddhism, Lord Ganesha holds an honored place. He is adored as the eternal remover of sorrow, fear, and obstacles.

In modern times, Ganesh worship carries a special significance for the protection of freedom, fostering of national consciousness, and preservation of unity and integrity. His favorite offerings—modaks, laddus made of jaggery and wheat flour, and pure ghee—are symbolic of bliss, purity, and sattvic nourishment, which brings clarity of mind and stability of intellect. His consorts Riddhi (prosperity) and Siddhi (spiritual power) bless devotees with wealth, peace, happiness, and noble offspring when worship is performed with devotion. Their sons, Shubha (auspiciousness) and Labha (profit), symbolize success and good fortune that is lasting and secure. In this way, Lord Ganesha becomes the custodian of human welfare and righteous governance—values deeply needed by today's rulers and leaders.

Indian culture, while rooted in the vision of one Supreme Being, flourished through devotion to multiple deities. Among them, Lord Ganesha is always invoked first. He is the lord of prosperity, well-being, and joy. Every new venture begins with his name—traders write Shree Ganeshaya Namah on their account books, weddings begin with his invocation; housewarming ceremonies, temple consecrations, and all sixteen life-sacraments start with his worship.

The Skanda Purana affirms that those who worship Ganesha with devotion are never troubled by obstacles. The very names Ganapati, Vinayaka, and Vighneshwara mean "lord of the multitudes," "supreme leader," and "remover of obstacles." His unusual form embodies profound

spiritual symbolism.

Every feature of Lord Ganesha reflects profound wisdom: His elephant head represents knowledge, intellect, and memory. His large ears teach us to listen more, while his small mouth reminds us to speak less and with reason. His big belly symbolizes the ability to absorb criticism, secrets, and negativity while remaining steadfast in duty. His tiny eyes reflect deep concentration and insight. His massive form inspires fearlessness, readiness, and strength to face challenges. The word Gaja (elephant) itself carries deep meaning—Ja denotes birth or origin, while Ga denotes movement and destination, thus signifying the cycle of life from origin to end. Gajanan, therefore, embodies the ultimate truth of creation and dissolution—Brahman and the cosmos.

Lord Ganesha's form was designed by Shiva with the vision of an ideal ruler—just, wise, compassionate, and courageous. His mysterious persona cannot easily be read, a quality essential for great leadership: to understand others' minds while keeping one's own inscrutable. In his various forms—Heramba (protector), Vinayaka (commander of spirits), and Vighneshwara (remover of obstacles)—he symbolizes valor, benevolence, and leadership. The word Gan means group or community. Thus, Ganapati is not only the lord of the divine hosts but also the leader of people—a true Lok-nayak.

Lord Ganesha is the embodiment of wisdom, prosperity, and leadership. His worship ensures not only the removal of obstacles in personal life but also the establishment of righteous, prosperous, and harmonious governance in society. Today, more than ever, rulers and leaders must walk in the footsteps of Ganesha to ensure unity, peace, and sustainable prosperity.

Multiple journalists killed by Israeli strikes on Gaza hospital

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Aug 25: Four journalists were among at least eight people killed on Monday in a strike on a hospital in southern Gaza, including a freelancer who worked for the Associated Press.

Mariam Dagga, 33 freelancer for the AP since the Gaza war began, as well as other news outlets.

Dagga reported on Nasser Hospital doctors struggling to save children with no prior health issues who were wasting away from starvation.

Al Jazeera confirmed that its journalist Mohammed Salam was among those who were killed in the Nasser hospital strike. Reuters reported that its contractor cameraman Hussam al-Masri was also killed in the strike. Photographer Hatem Khaled, who was also a



Reuters contractor, was wounded, the news agency reported.

The Israel-Hamas has been one of the bloodiest conflicts for media workers, with a total of 192 journalists killed in Gaza in the 22-month conflict, according to the

Committee to Protect Journalists. Comparatively, 18 journalists have been killed so far in the Russia-Ukraine war, according to the CPJ. The Israeli Prime Minister's Office and Israeli military refused to comment on the incident. (AP)

Five security personnel killed in militant attacks in Pak's KPK

PESHAWAR, Aug 25: At least five security personnel were killed and 17 others injured in two separate terrorist attacks in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, officials said on Monday.

Three personnel of the Frontier Constabulary (FC) died and 17 were injured when militants stormed an FC fort in the Tora Warai area of Hangu district late Sunday night, officials said.

Earlier in the day, two more security personnel were killed when terrorists opened fire in the Tirah valley of Khyber district, officials said.

In another incident, five militants were killed during a joint operation launched by police and the Counter Terrorism Department in Upper Dir district.

One civilian was also killed, and seven policemen were injured during the operation, officials said.

Police recovered one militant's body on Sunday night and four more on Monday, bringing the toll to five.

Search operations are being conducted in Upper Dir's Dabando, Birkot, Salam Kot and Atandra areas to clear militants, police said.

The development comes amid a surge in terrorist attacks across the country, particularly in Khyber



Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan — both of which share a porous border with neighbouring Afghanistan.

According to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), an Islamabad-based think tank, the country witnessed 78 terrorist attacks in June. Altogether, the violence and operations resulted in 175 deaths.

Earlier this month, security forces neutralised 47 terrorists attempting to infiltrate from Afghanistan during separate operations in Balochistan's Zhob district, officials said. (PTI)

'Israel could withdraw from Lebanon if Hezbollah is disarmed'

JERUSALEM, Aug 25: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he welcomed the Lebanese cabinet's "momentous decision" earlier this month to work towards the disarmament of Hezbollah by the end of 2025 and it could lead to Israel's troops withdrawing from the country.

He said that if Lebanon takes the necessary steps to disarm Hezbollah, then Israel will respond with reciprocal measures, including a phased reduction of the Israeli military presence in southern Lebanon.

Since the Israel-Hezbollah war ended in November with a US-brokered ceasefire, Hezbollah officials have said the group will not discuss its disarmament until Israel withdraws from five hills it controls inside Lebanon and stops almost daily airstrikes that have killed or wounded hundreds of people, most of them Hezbollah members. Beirut is under US pressure to disarm the group that recently fought a 14-month war with Israel and was left gravely weakened, with many of its political and military leaders dead. (AP)

Vietnam evacuates hundreds of thousands as typhoon Kajiki nears landfall

HANOI (VIETNAM), Aug 25: Vietnam has evacuated hundreds of thousands of people and closed schools and airports as it braces for Typhoon Kajiki, its strongest storm of the year so far.

Forecasters said the typhoon had winds of up to 166 kilometres per hour at 10 am Monday but is expected to weaken slightly before making landfall between central Vietnam's Thanh Hoa and Ha Tinh provinces later in the afternoon.

The typhoon started as a weak tropical depression on Aug. 22 but grew into a powerful storm in less than two days, matching last year's Typhoon Yagi as one of the region's fastest-growing, according to state media. Its rapid strengthening forced Vietnamese authorities to rush emergency measures as strong winds and heavy rain hit the region.

Last year, Typhoon Yagi killed about 300 people and caused USD 3.3 billion in damage.

Kajiki has already caused devastation in China, with strong winds and heavy rain whipping Hainan Island and nearby parts of Guangdong province on Sunday. About 20,000 people were evacuated from high-risk areas, China's official Xinhua News Agency reported.

One man in Nghe An province died Friday after being electrocuted while trying to secure his roof ahead of the storm, state media reported.

The storm is expected to move

Indonesia hosts annual US-led combat drills with Indo-Pacific allies

JAKARTA, Aug 25: Indonesia and the United States began annual joint military exercises on Monday together with forces from a dozen other countries, as the US pushes its allies to take threats from China more seriously.

Hosted by the Indonesian National Armed Forces, this year's Super Garuda Shield focused on strengthening regional ties in an increasingly unstable global landscape, said Gen Tandyo Budi Revita, the military's Deputy Commander.

"It serves as a joint exercise where we stand together to respond to every challenge quickly and precisely," he said in his speech at the kick-off ceremony, along with Admiral Samuel Paparo, the Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command.

The exercise has been held annually in Jakarta by US and Indonesian soldiers since 2009. The list of participants expanded since 2022 to include Australia, Japan, Singapore, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Brazil and South Korea, bringing the total number of troops taking part in the drill to 6,500.

Paparo said the expanded participants symbolise a commitment to partnership and to the sovereignty of each country through mutual respect.

"It represents deterring anyone that would hope to change the facts on the ground using violence with the collective determination of all participants to uphold the principles of sovereignty," Paparo said.

Jakarta has expressed concern about what it sees as Chinese encroachment on its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, while maintaining generally

inland into Laos and northern Thailand.

Vietnamese state media reported plans to evacuate nearly 600,000 people in the provinces of Thanh Hoa, Quang Tri, Hue and Danang, where more than 152,000 homes are in high-risk areas.

The government said over 16,500 soldiers and 107,000 paramilitary personnel have been deployed to assist with evacuations and remain on standby for search and rescue.

Vietnam halted flights at two airports in Thanh Hoa and Quang Binh provinces on Monday, the Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam said while dozens of flights have been cancelled.

Scientists published a study last year warning that seas warmed by climate change will result in Southeast Asia's cyclones forming closer to land, strengthening faster and lasting longer, raising risks for cities.

"It's frightening to see our projections from just last year already materialising," said Benjamin P. Horton, Dean of the School of the Environment and Chair Professor of Earth Science at City University of Hong Kong.

He said that the speed at which these changes were unfolding was a "clear signal" that the climate crisis is moving faster than expected. "We are no longer predicting the future — we are living it," he said. (AP)

positive ties with Beijing.

Several Asian countries also sent observers to the 11-day combat exercise in Jakarta and on Sumatra Island. They will end on Sept. 4 with a combined live-fire drill. The expanded drills have sparked concern from China, which accused the US of trying to build an "Asian NATO" to limit China's growing military and diplomatic influence in the region.

During a recent speech in Singapore, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth cautioned that seeking US military support while relying on Chinese economic support carries risk.

Hegseth said Washington has been strengthening an arc of military alliances in the Indo-Pacific to reassure allies alarmed by Beijing's increasing military and economic pressure and provocative actions in the disputed South China Sea.

Despite increased activities by Chinese coast guard vessels and fishing boats in the area, which have unnerved Jakarta, Indonesia has sought to avoid confrontation and continued economic initiatives with China.

Jakarta's decision to sidestep the issue is consistent with its longstanding policy of keeping friction with Beijing behind closed doors, especially given the scale of Chinese trade and investment in the Indonesian economy, said Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat and Yeta Purnama, researchers at the Centre of Economic and Law Studies or CELIOS.

"This dual-track diplomacy might seem inconsistent. But for Jakarta, it is strategic. Indonesia is embracing defence diversification, not alignment," said Rakhmat of CELIOS. (AP)

No. E-694475/3

ADVERTISEMENT

With a view to support, strengthen and improve the quality education in Secondary Schools in the State of Assam in compliance with the Right to Education Act, 2009 and the Hon'ble Apex Court of India Judgement dated 28.10.2021 & 21.07.2022 passed in Writ Petition (C) No. 132/2016 (Rajneesh Kumar Pandey & Ors - Union of India & Ors), applications are invited from the eligible Indian citizen as defined in Article 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India and permanent residents of Assam for filling up of 59 vacant posts of Special Educator of the different Provincialised Secondary Schools under the Directorate of Secondary Education, Assam in the scale of pay of ₹14,000/- to ₹70,000/- and Grade Pay of ₹8,700/- PM (PB-2) plus other allowances as admissible under the rules.

The District-wise and Category-wise break-up of vacancies showing the reservation for OBC/ MOBC/ Tea Tribes & Adivasi/ SC/ ST(P)/ ST(H)/ PwD/ Women/ Ex-Servicemen etc. will be notified in due course of time subject to the approval of Post-Based Roster from the WPT & BC Department, Personnel Department, Department of Tribal Affairs (Plain) and subject to approval of the vacant posts from Finance (SIU) Department. The date and time of receipt of online applications for TET cum Recruitment Test and other details will be notified in the official website www.madhyamik.assam.gov.in due course of time.

The vacancies may vary due to administrative reasons. The Director of Secondary Education, Assam reserves the right to make changes in sequence of the recruitment process after publication of this advertisement.

The Director of Secondary Education, Assam reserves the right to cancel or postpone the recruitment at any stage, without assigning any reason thereof. The aspiring candidates must be ready to serve in their respective place of posting.

(A) CONDITIONS OF RECRUITMENT :-

➤ Minimum educational and professional qualifications for direct recruitment in the post of **SPECIAL EDUCATOR: Graduate/ Post Graduate from recognized University with at least 50% marks in either Graduation or Post Graduation (or its equivalent) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) (Special Education) recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), but degrees obtained from off-campus and distance education institution shall not be considered as valid.**

➤ **As per the Assam Secondary Education (Provincialised Schools) (Amendment) Service Rules, 2021, those institutions having territorial jurisdiction outside the State of Assam but having a study centre in the State and such study centres if not recognized by DEC under UGC, the degrees/ certificates issued by such off campus institutions shall not be considered as valid for the purpose of employment under Education Department. However, degrees/ diplomas conferred by KKHSOU, IGNOU, IDOL under Gauhati University and Distance Education under Dibrugarh University shall be considered as valid for the purpose of employment.**

➤ A candidate must not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 40 years for unreserved category, 42 years for Ex-Servicemen, 43 years for OBC/ MOBC and 45 years for SC/ ST(P)/ ST(H) and 50 years for Persons with Disability (PwD), as on 1st January, 2025 as per Govt. Office Memorandum vide No. ABP.6/2016/51 Dated 02/09/2020 and subsequent Corrigendum No. ABP.6/2016/52, dtd. 20.02.2021.

➤ No person having more than two living children on or after 01/01/2021 from a single or multiple partners shall be eligible for appointment as per the Govt. policy on Small Family Norms, the Guidelines contained in the Notification No. ABP.69/2019/17 dated 06/11/2019 and No. ABP.69/2019/18 dated 16/11/2019. The candidate shall have to submit a self-declaration at the time of filling up of online application as per the provisions contained in the Notification No. ABP.69/2019/17 dated 06/11/2019 and No. ABP.69/2019/18 dated 16/11/2019.

➤ There shall be reservation for the Persons with Disability in conformity with the "Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016". The final selection of PwD candidates shall be subject to further medical examination.

➤ There shall be reservation for OBC/ MOBC/ Tea Tribes and Adivasi/ SC/ ST(P)/ ST(H)/ PwD/ Women/ Ex-Servicemen etc., as per existing Government Rules.

(B) CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATOR :-

(a) Teachers Eligibility Test cum Recruitment Test : "140 marks in the following paper:- The paper shall be of 140 marks (Pedagogy – 50 marks; About Assam and its People – 35 marks; General Mathematics (10th Standard) – 15 Marks; General English – 30 marks; General Studies and Current Affairs – 10 marks)".

(b) NCC / Sports / Fine Arts and Cultural Activities : (i) 5 marks for NCC Certificates (5 marks for "C" Certificate and 3 marks for "B" Certificate)

Or 5 marks for participation in recognized sports at National Level representing Assam

Or 5 marks for achievements in Fine Arts and Cultural Activities representing the State officially at National Level.

(ii) Candidates who have passed the earlier High School TET and not been appointed till date shall get weightage @ 5% of the marks secured in the TET or maximum 5 marks for selection as a Graduate Teacher.

(c) There shall be one common question paper.

(d) The number of qualified candidates in the TET cum Recruitment Test shall be in the ratio of 1:1 of the vacancies advertised.

(C) OTHER CRITERIA:-

i. There shall be a single Merit List.

ii. In case two or more candidates obtained equal marks in aggregate, then the seniority of age shall be preferred.

iii. There will be no preference of Districts for appointment. It will be decided by way of randomization.

iv. The Online Applications and documents submitted by the candidates will be verified along with their original testimonials before appointment. The detailed schedule and venue for Screening/ Verification of documents will be notified in the official website at www.madhyamik.assam.gov.in. No TA/ DA shall be admissible for the verification purpose.

v. The Online Applications and documents submitted by the candidate will be verified using modern technology with the help of DigLocker, Govt. of India and by scanning Barcode or QR Code for ensuring genuineness of the uploaded documents as well as by back office verification with the competent Board/ Council/ Authority concerned. But the authority, if, desires may conduct physical document verification at any point of time with proper notice.

vi. The candidate must ensure genuineness of all the information/ documents uploaded against the online application and he/ she will be solely responsible for the information/ documents uploaded against his/ her online application. Once uploaded there will be no scope for correction in respect of the credential submitted by the candidate. Any discrepancy will lead to cancellation of the candidature.

vii. The candidature will be cancelled forthwith, if any kind of fraudulent/ discrepancy regarding any information/ documents uploaded by the candidate is established by appropriate authority at any point of time. The candidate will be debarred from any future recruitment under Government of Assam and subsequent legal action will also be initiated against such candidate.

viii. When the candidate appears for the document verification, they must produce original certificates, testimonials and documents that were uploaded during the online application process.

ix. Physical fitness:-

A candidate for direct recruitment shall be:

a. of sound health both mentally and physically and free organic defect or bodily infirmity which is like to interfere with the efficient performance of his duties; and

b. required to undergo medical examination before appointment to the service.

x. The candidates having **NOT CLEAR (NC)** status against any qualification will not be eligible to apply.

xi. A candidate must possess all the requisite educational as well as professional qualification as on the last date of filing online application.

(D) POINTS TO NOTE :-

a. Candidates should be cautious while submitting the online application as once the application is submitted; they will not be allowed to re-submit any online documents or application for the second time. After successful submission of the online application form, candidates shall take a print out of the Acknowledgement form for future references. Candidates must also produce original documents that have been uploaded with the online application at the time of physical verification of documents.

b. Candidate may note that failing to appear in the Screening / Verification of documents will result in cancellation of their candidature.

c. The office will not be responsible for any lapse in submission of online application due to any technical problem/ issues.

d. In case of PwD candidates, screening of selected candidates will be done before appointment by the competent authority.

e. No information related to this Advertisement shall be issued personally/ individually.

f. Canvassing directly or indirectly will lead to cancellation of candidature.

g. The office of the Director of Secondary Education, Assam will not be responsible for any kind of fraudulence of information/ document.

h. All the applicants should have Employment Exchange Registration Number. Candidate already in Govt. service shall submit a **NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATE (NOC)** against the applied post, issued by the competent authority. The following documents are to be uploaded while applying online as mentioned below. It should be coloured scanned and clear in PDF format:

i. Passport Size Photograph.

ii. Scanned Signature.

iii. HSLC Admit Card in support of age.

iv. HSLC, HSSLC, Graduate Degree and Post Graduate Degree Mark-sheet and Pass Certificate.

v. Any other Mark-sheet and Pass Certificate of Higher Education.

vi. Mark-sheet and Certificate of B.Ed. in Special Education.

vii. Caste Certificate issued by the competent authority.

viii. Candidates with disabilities will have to enclose certificates of disabilities issued by Govt. authority/ UDID Card issued by the competent authority.

ix. Certificate of NCC (B & C Category only).

x. Certificate of recognized Sports at National Level representing the State of Assam.

xi. Certificate of Achievements in fine arts and cultural activities representing the state officially at National Level.

xii. Certificate of Ex-servicemen issued by the Director, Sainik Welfare Board.

xiii. Work Experience Certificate (if any).

N.B.

➤ The applicants are requested to visit www.madhyamik.assam.gov.in regularly for any update.

➤ Corrigendum and addendum will be published as and when required in the official website at www.madhyamik.assam.gov.in.

➤ All further communication/ information/ update related to this recruitment shall be notified through the official website at www.madhyamik.assam.gov.in.

➤ Authorities reserve the right to cancel the candidature of any candidate as and when any ineligibility condition is detected/ found. If any information declared by the candidate is found to be false at any stage, the candidate will be penalized as per prevailing laws/rules.

Sd/-

Director of Secondary Education, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-781019

DIPR /D/HLT/133/26-Aug-25

State BJP president Kaling Moyong inaugurates new district office at Basar

State BJP chief stresses booth-level mobilisation, healthcare progress and grassroots outreach

HT Correspondent

BASAR, Aug 25: State BJP president Kaling Moyong on Monday received a grand reception at Basar in Lepa Rada district, where he inaugurated the new BJP district office, marking what party leaders described as an important step in consolidating the organisation at the grassroots level.

According to an official statement, Moyong was welcomed by a large gathering of party workers, women's groups and members of the public.

The programme was attended by several senior leaders including Jony Basar, district president of BJP Lepa Rada; Mutchu Mithi, MLA and chief spokesperson of BJP Arunachal Pradesh; Tojir Kadu, MLA of Nari-Koyu constituency; Nyibi Dirchi, MLA of Basar; Higan Loyi Angom, state vice president of BJP; Taring Tiri, state secretary of BJP; Gumsen Lollen, state president of Kishan Morcha; and Dolang Tako, convener of the BJP media cell.

In his keynote address, Moyong expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and urged karyakartas to work with renewed dedication to



strengthen the organisation at the booth and district levels.

He referred to the recently held state-level workshop for Mandal and district presidents, MLAs, state office bearers, chairmen and vice presidents, where the need for closer coordination between elected representatives and grassroots workers was underlined.

Reiterating that the BJP is "a party with a difference," Moyong called on party cadres to align their work with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, chief minister Pema Khandu, union min-

ister Kiren Rijiju and local MLA Nyibi Dirchi. He highlighted the progress made in the state's health sector, recalling how earlier people had to depend on neighbouring Assam for treatment, while today facilities like TRIHMS and upgraded district hospitals have transformed healthcare delivery in Arunachal Pradesh.

The state BJP chief also urged workers to engage with retired officials, NGOs and the business community to further strengthen booth-level activities.

Stressing the importance of

grassroots outreach, he called for door-to-door contact campaigns to secure a strong mandate in the upcoming Panchayat elections.

He also informed the gathering about the formation of new Morcha teams to energise the party organisation across the state.

Chief spokesperson Mutchu Mithi, addressing the function, commended the Lepa Rada district unit for the warm reception.

He pointed to the infrastructural transformation brought about under the BJP government, noting that regions like Roing and Basar, once difficult to access, now benefit from extensive road connectivity built during the tenure of the Pema Khandu-led government.

Mithi expressed confidence that Moyong's leadership would ensure the party's reach across every corner of Arunachal Pradesh and among all communities.

The district-level function, marked by addresses from MLAs Nyibi Dirchi and Tojir Kadu, ended with renewed calls from the leadership to expand the party's base and consolidate support at the grassroots ahead of upcoming elections.

Veteran Arunachal leader Chow Ambika Enling joins congress



HT Bureau

NAMSAL, Aug 25: In what is being seen as one of the most notable political realignments in Arunachal Pradesh this year, Chow Ambika Enling, a senior and widely respected political leader from Namsai district, has officially joined the Indian National Congress (INC).

Enling's decision to part ways with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), after a long and distinguished career spanning more than 25 years, is being closely watched across the state's political landscape for its immediate and long-term implications. Chow Ambika Enling is regarded as one of the most experienced and grassroots-connected figures in Namsai. He entered politics in 1998 as a member of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), the youth wing of the BJP.

Known for his discipline, organisational skills, and popularity among the younger generation, he quickly rose through the ranks and, within just two years, became the State General Secretary in 2000.

His appointment to this key position reflected the trust placed in him by the party leadership and marked the beginning of a long journey in party affairs, electioneering, and grassroots mobilisation.

Over the years, Enling became synonymous with the BJP's rise in eastern Arunachal. He was at the forefront of numerous organisational drives and election campaigns. In 2008, he was entrusted with the important task of overseeing the Assembly Constituency election campaign in neighbouring Mizoram, where he played a pivotal role in mobilising support.

His work during that period earned him recognition not just in Arunachal but within the wider regional unit of the BJP. In 2009, Enling took a major step in his career by contesting the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly election from the 47th Namsai (ST) constituency on a BJP ticket.

Though he narrowly lost, his candidacy reinforced his stature as one of the key faces of the party in the

district.

Following the election, he remained deeply engaged with grassroots politics, building networks of support, addressing local grievances, and representing the aspirations of the people of Namsai at the party level. Despite his long years of service, Enling grew increasingly disillusioned in recent years.

The turning point came during the run-up to the 2023 Assembly elections, when the BJP denied him a ticket for the 48th Lekang constituency. Many of his supporters and well-wishers considered this a setback not only for him personally but also for the larger section of grassroots workers who had looked up to him as their leader.

For Enling, the denial of a ticket after decades of commitment was a signal that his services were no longer being valued.

Announcing his decision to join the Congress, Enling said, "I have dedicated my life to serving the people of Arunachal Pradesh and to strengthening the BJP for more than 25 years. But in recent years, I was not given the opportunity or importance that I had earned through my work. Politics, for me, has never been about positions or privileges.

It has always been about service to the people. The Indian National Congress has assured me that I will have the right platform to continue this mission with renewed vigour, and that is why I have taken this decision." The Congress leadership has warmly welcomed Enling into its fold, hailing his entry as a morale booster for the party in Arunachal Pradesh. Senior leaders pointed out that Enling brings with him not only a wealth of political experience but also a strong connect with grassroots voters in Namsai and adjoining districts. They believe his move will bolster the party's presence in eastern Arunachal and provide much-needed momentum as the INC seeks to regain lost ground in the state. Political observers say that Enling's defection highlights deeper undercurrents within the BJP in Arunachal Pradesh, where several senior leaders have in recent times

expressed dissatisfaction over lack of recognition and opportunities.

The BJP, which has enjoyed a dominant position in the state in recent years, has often been accused by its detractors of sidelining experienced leaders in favour of newer entrants or leaders perceived to be closer to the central high command.

Enling's decision to quit the party, they say, may not be an isolated case but part of a larger trend that could influence the political balance in the region.

For the Congress, which has been struggling to re-establish itself in Arunachal after successive electoral setbacks, Enling's entry could not have come at a better time.

His presence is expected to strengthen the party in Namsai, where local leadership plays a decisive role, and may also inspire other veteran leaders to consider aligning with the Congress.

With his knowledge of electoral dynamics and his grassroots network, Enling is likely to play a key role in strategy building and mobilisation in the months to come.

Political analysts also note that his decision reflects the personal and community-driven nature of Arunachal Pradesh politics, where individual leaders often carry significant weight in shaping public opinion and influencing electoral outcomes.

While party labels are important, voters in many constituencies are guided by their faith in leaders who have consistently worked for their welfare. Enling's decades of association with the people of Namsai, his active role in addressing local grievances, and his accessibility as a leader have all contributed to his popularity — factors that the Congress will now seek to leverage.

As Arunachal Pradesh heads towards another crucial electoral cycle, the shifting loyalties of experienced leaders like Chow Ambika Enling will continue to shape the political discourse.

Whether his move to the Congress results in a decisive strengthening of the party's position or merely adds a symbolic boost remains to be seen. What is certain, however, is that Enling's defection underscores both the evolving nature of politics in the state and the continuing importance of grassroots leadership in shaping its future.

With this development, the political equations in Namsai stand altered. For the BJP, losing a leader of Enling's stature is a setback, while for the Congress, it represents both an opportunity and a statement that it remains open and welcoming to seasoned leaders who feel left out elsewhere.

For the people of Arunachal Pradesh, Enling's move is being seen as yet another reminder of the fluid and competitive nature of state politics, where leadership, loyalty, and opportunity often intersect in unpredictable ways.

TNPSC delegation visits Arunachal PSC



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 25: A high-level delegation from the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC), comprising of members such as Fr Arockia Raj, Arulmathi and R Premkumar, is on a two-day visit to Arunachal Pradesh and the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) with the objective of studying the best practices adopted by the state commission in the conduct of recruitment examinations.

According to an official statement, the visiting team was accorded a warm reception by members and senior officials of the APPSC on arrival.

The interaction between the two commissions was aimed at institutional collaboration, knowledge exchange, and learning from each other's experiences in examination reforms and transparent recruitment practices.

During the deliberations, Col Koj Tari (Retd), member of APPSC, highlighted several measures undertaken to revamp the functioning of the commission in recent years.

He pointed out that the APPSC has focused extensively on creating fair, transparent and technology-driven systems that ensure equal opportunities for all aspirants.

He also underlined that reforms were designed not just to restore public confidence in the commission but also to set high standards for efficiency and accountability.

P Priyatrshini, IAS, OSD, APPSC, explained in detail the procedures followed by the Commission in the conduct of examinations.

She outlined the broader reforms adopted by the APPSC, which include examination automation, digitisation initiatives, innovative recruitment processes, and various measures aimed at ensuring efficiency and transparency.

She emphasised that these steps were not merely procedural, but were introduced to uphold the credibility of the institution in the eyes of the public.

The TNPSC delegates, on their part, also made a detailed presentation on the reforms and practices adopted by their commission.

They explained the systems and procedures followed in Tamil Nadu to ensure smooth and fair recruitment examinations, particularly through the adoption of technology-driven methods.

It was highlighted that the TNPSC has streamlined its processes by making extensive use of digital platforms to reduce manual errors, increase transparency, and make recruitment both efficient and inclusive.

The TNPSC team expressed their appreciation of the reforms implemented by the APPSC, especially in areas such as the introduction of an answer key challenge mechanism, coding of candidates during viva-voce examinations to conceal identity, the appointment of senior government officials as observers and coordinators, and the establishment of examination halls that are friendly and accessible to Persons with Disabilities (PwD).

These initiatives, they said, represented forward-looking steps that ensured fairness, accountability, and inclusivity in recruitment.

Both commissions also engaged in extensive discussions on the role of public service commissions in strengthening democratic governance.

The dialogue focused on how transparent and credible recruitment processes contribute directly to efficient public service delivery.

By ensuring that deserving candidates are selected on merit, commissions like APPSC and TNPSC play a vital role in shaping the quality of governance and administration in their respective states.

According to the official statement, the visit of the TNPSC delegation marks an important step in strengthening inter-state institutional ties.

It is expected to open new avenues of cooperation and coordination between the two commissions, especially in areas such as adopting modern examination techniques, sharing expertise in handling large-scale recruitment drives, and designing more inclusive systems that cater to candidates from diverse backgrounds.

The statement further added that the exchange also highlights the growth of the APPSC in recent years.

Despite being one of the youngest public service commissions in the country, the APPSC has quickly carved out a reputation for itself by adopting reforms, modernising examination procedures, and demonstrating a commitment to transparency.

The measures implemented by the commission have not only improved efficiency but also helped rebuild trust among candidates and the public.

Waii urges youths to shun drugs, embrace culture and sports

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 25: Bameg MLA and former Home Minister Kumar Waii recently appealed to the youths of Arunachal Pradesh to stay away from bad habits and drugs, and instead engage in music, culture, games and sports for a healthy body, sound mind and long life.

According to an official statement, Waii was addressing the grand premiere show of Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Papum Pare Season-1 held at a city hotel, which witnessed a large gathering.

He warned that indulgence in bad habits could darken the future of the state's youth and urged them to utilise their time in positive activities.

Expressing concern over the spread of drugs, Waii said it was disheartening to learn that even policemen in uniform were involved in drug peddling.

He urged the Home Department to take stern action against those engaged in such activities.

"Drug use is ruining families one by one. It is high time all of us, irrespective of tribe or party, join hands in the fight against drugs and save the precious lives of our youths," he said. The former minister lauded the organisers of Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Papum Pare for promoting the theme "Say No to Drugs" and called upon like-minded individuals and social organisations to work collectively for the welfare and development of the state.

Guest of honour and APCC General Secretary Kipa Kaha also motivated the youths with a speech against drug abuse, encouraging them to lead peaceful and healthy lives.

Nyishi Students of RGU president Taw Tukung and social activist Neelam Sonju also addressed the gathering as special guests.

Army mentors 32 Arunachal students for sainik school journey

ITANAGAR, Aug 25: In a significant step towards youth empowerment and nation-building, the Indian Army's Blazing Sword Division under Gajraj Corps has successfully mentored 32 students from Dirang and Jang in West Kameng and Tawang districts of Arunachal Pradesh, enabling them to begin their educational journey at Woods Park Sainik School in Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh.

These children have been groomed under the Army's guidance with values of discipline, courage, and determination, preparing them not only for academic excellence but also for a future rooted in leadership and service to the nation. Guwahati-based defence spokesman Lt Col Mahendra Rawat informed in a statement here on Monday.

The achievement has brought pride to their families and stands as an inspiring example of how opportunities can transform young lives in far-flung regions, it added.

Army officials emphasised that the initiative is about building character, instilling confidence, and nurturing qualities that will shape the students into responsible citizens and potential leaders. (PTI)

Inter-School Basketball Tournament concludes with record participation in Arunachal

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 24: The 5th State-Level Inter-School Basketball Tournament, organised by the Arunachal Pradesh Basketball Association, concluded with great enthusiasm and record participation at the Donyi Basketball Court, Lower Borum, on August 23.

The week-long event, which began on August 17, showcased the growing popularity of basketball in the state and the emergence of new talent from schools across districts.

According to an official statement, the tournament was inaugurated by Gumnya Karbak, Director of Sports Authority, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, who attended as chief guest.

The inaugural function was also graced by Lobsang Tsering, Education Secretary of the All Papum Pare Students' Union (APPSU), as guest of honour.

The closing ceremony was marked by the presence of Assistant Director of Sports and Incharge, Education Department, Takam Pate, as chief guest, along with BJP Vice President Taying Shakuntala as guest of honour.

Both functions reflected the support extended by state authorities and community leaders to strengthen grassroots sports culture.

This year's edition of the tournament was described as one of the largest and



most competitive school-level basketball events ever held in Arunachal Pradesh.

A total of 27 schools participated, fielding 46 teams with over 600 student-athletes.

For the first time, the reach of the tournament extended beyond the capital region, as schools from Bana, Thrizino, Palizi and Aalo took part, giving the event a truly state-level character and

adding further prestige to the competition.

The matches, played over the course of seven days, were closely contested and drew sizeable crowds of students, parents and basketball enthusiasts.

Many of the games went down to the final moments, underlining the high level of competitiveness and discipline among the participating teams.

The tournament not only gave young players the opportunity to showcase their skills but also highlighted the potential of basketball as a sport that is steadily growing in the state.

In the championship results, Garden Dew School, Itanagar, emerged as Senior Boys Champions, successfully defending their title with back-to-back victories.

Alphabet Girls Residential School, Nirjuli, created history by clinching a double victory in both the Senior Girls and Junior Girls categories, a feat that brought immense pride to the school. Don Bosco School, Doimukh, also retained their crown by winning the Junior Boys championship for the second consecutive year.

These victories, achieved by defending champions and new contenders alike, added to the excitement of the event and set a high benchmark for future editions.

The Arunachal Pradesh Basketball As-

sociation expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the participating schools, coaches, referees, volunteers and sponsors whose collective efforts ensured the success of the tournament.

The Association, in its closing remarks, reiterated its commitment to nurturing young talent, providing structured opportunities for school-level athletes, and promoting basketball as an accessible and aspirational sport in the state.

Officials noted that the rising participation levels and the enthusiasm witnessed this year were encouraging signs of the sport's future in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Association also emphasised that such events play an important role in instilling discipline, teamwork and sporting spirit among schoolchildren, while creating pathways for them to progress to state and national-level competitions.

With the 5th edition concluding on a high note, the Arunachal Pradesh Basketball Association announced plans to further expand the tournament in the years ahead, both in terms of geographical reach and competitive standards.

The Association hopes that the talent and energy displayed by the students this year will inspire more schools to take up basketball and strengthen the state's representation in the sport at larger platforms.

Our soldiers did not kill terrorists based on their religion, but because of their deeds: Rajnath

'India does not discriminate based on caste or religion'

JODHPUR, Aug 25: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday asserted that Indian forces gave a "befitting reply" to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor and "our soldiers did not kill terrorists based on their religion, but because of their deeds".

Addressing an event here, Singh also lauded the people of border areas for supporting the administration and the armed forces during the military operation to avenge the Pahalgam terror attack.

The Defence Minister said that after the incident, he called the service chiefs and asked if they were ready for the operation.

"The chiefs of all three armed forces unanimously replied, 'We are ready for any operation.' This is India. The prime minister gave the necessary directives," he said. "The target that was decided was hit precisely, just as planned. During Operation Sindoor, our forces received full support from all border regions. India is a country that not only considers people within its borders as members but also regards people across the world as part of its family, spreading the message of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam."

"India does not discriminate based on caste or religion. How-

ever, terrorists killed people after identifying their religion. Our soldiers did not kill the terrorists based on religion but because of their deeds," he said.

Under Operation Sindoor in May, precision strikes were carried out on multiple targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir linked to terror groups. The operation aimed at destroying terror infrastructure and neutralising key operatives following the April 22 Pahalgam attack.

Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts in the education sector, Singh said a significant transformation had taken place over the years that will help the country achieve new heights. "There is a considerable difference between the education of our time and today's education. 'I had also studied in a village primary school. When I used to look at the globe on the principal's table, it felt like a magical ball,' he said.

He attributed the changes to decades of hard work, saying, "In recent years, there have been significant changes in education. Today, our children can access information on the internet. Such a huge transformation has taken place."



Singh expressed gratitude towards Prime Minister Modi, saying, "I want to thank Modi for showing a strong resolve to improve the education sector. Bringing reforms in education was not an easy task. Several commissions were formed and recommendations were given but the kind of reform that was needed did not come."

He said that today's children can acquire information from an app about the entire world.

"In our time, science meant only the blackboard," he said. Singh said that the visible differ-

ence in the education sector is India's real strength. "This is the real change and this is the future of India. This will take our country to even greater heights," he said.

Elaborating on India's history, he said that when people in other parts of the world were living in caves, Indian sages were writing the Natya Shastra.

"When the world did not understand the causes of diseases, India had doctors like Sushruta. Knowledge of medicinal plants like turmeric, neem and ashwagandha existed, which scientists now ac-

knowledge," he said. Singh also touched upon the concept of spiritual growth, saying that the importance of balancing physical and spiritual development in children's education was important.

He said that children's development should not only be physical but also spiritual. "Spiritual development can only happen through educational institutions. Give children education that will expand their minds," he said.

He quoted former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, saying, "No one becomes great with a small mind. No one stands tall with a broken heart."

"Indian sages' minds were so vast that they considered everyone in the world as part of their family and spread the message of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," he said. "Imagine the mind as a circle. As you expand its circumference, your experience of happiness increases in proportion. In the end, you will attain supreme bliss," he said.

During the event, he inaugurated a sports academy in Jodhpur.

Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and other leaders were also present on the occasion. (PTI)

MC alleges vendetta after ED arrests MLA Jiban Saha in SSC scam

KOLKATA, Aug 25: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday arrested TMC legislator Jiban Krishna Saha after dramatic raids at his residence in West Bengal's Murshidabad district in connection with the multi-crore school jobs scam, triggering a fresh political slugfest ahead of the 2026 assembly elections.

According to officials, the Burwan MLA allegedly tried to escape by scaling a boundary wall and was caught in a nearby agricultural field. The drenched leader, mud sticking to his clothes, was seen in videos being escorted away by ED and CRPF personnel from a garbage-strewn patch of land, visuals that instantly went viral. Investigators claimed that in a desperate bid to destroy evidence, Saha flung two of his mobile phones into a pond behind his house. "As the legislator came to know about the raids, he tried to flee his house by scaling the boundary wall of the premises."

He was chased and caught by our officers and central forces in an agricultural field. He was caught with mud on his body," an ED officer said. The agency is also conducting searches at the residence of his personal assistant in Birbhum, he said. "Our officers have recovered both the mobile phones from the pond. Both devices will be sent for forensic examination. The MLA is being interrogated," he said, adding that raids were simultaneously carried out at the residences of his relatives in Raghunathanjan and his personal assistant in Birbhum.

The MLA was arrested under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) for alleged non-cooperation. In April 2023, the CBI had arrested him in the same case and later released him on bail.

The ED's case stems from a CBI FIR registered on the orders of the Calcutta High Court into alleged irregularities in the recruitment of Group C and D staff, assistant teachers of classes 9 to 12 and primary teachers. The central agency has so far filed four charge sheets and arrested several key figures, including former state education minister Partha Chatterjee, his alleged aide Arpita Mukherjee and ex-TMC MLA Manik Bhattacharya.

"@BJP4India runs on an E² policy! The first 'E', the @ECISVEEP is used as a weapon to strip citizens of their voting rights. If that fails, the second 'E', the @dir_ed, is unleashed as a political weapon. As exposed by our Parliamentary Party Leader Shri @abhishekaic, the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill is not aimed at fighting corruption. Its sole purpose is to crush the Opposition. This is dictatorship in disguise," the party posted on X. (PTI)

9 dead, 43 injured as truck hits tractor-trolley carrying pilgrims in UP

BULANDSHAHR (UP), Aug 25: Nine people were killed and 42 injured when a truck rammed into a tractor-trolley carrying pilgrims in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district in the early hours of Monday, police said.

Two of the deceased were minors, while 12 of those injured and hospitalised are below the age of 18.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath condoled the demise of the pilgrims and directed officials to ensure the best treatment for those injured. He also announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the kin of those dead and Rs 50,000 each for the injured.

The accident took place around 2.10 am on the Bulandshahr-Aligarh border near the Arnia bypass, when the tractor-trolley hit the tractor-trolley from behind, causing it to overturn. Senior Superintendent of Police (Rural) Dinesh Kumar Singh said.

"The tractor-trolley was carrying 61 people, who were travelling from the Rafatpur village in the Kasganj district to Jaharpeer in Rajasthan for a pilgrimage," he said.

The police officer said the victims were rushed to hospitals. "Eight people died, while 43 of them are undergoing treatment. Three of the injured are on ventilator support," Singh added.

Later, another man, identified as Lekhraj (40), succumbed to injuries during treatment at a hospital, taking the toll in the incident to nine, police said.

They said 10 passengers escaped with minor injuries.

The victims were taken to multiple hospitals for treatment -- 10 to Aligarh Medical College, as many to Bulandshahr district hospital and 23 to Kailash Hospital in Khurja. The bodies of the deceased have been sent for post-mortem, police said.

The deceased have been identified as tractor driver E U Babu (40), Rambeti (65), Chandni (12), Ghaniram (40), Mokshi (40), Shivansh (6), Yogesh (50) and Vinod (45), all residents of Kasganj district, and Lekhraj (40), according to the police.

District Magistrate Shruti, along with SSP Singh and other senior officials, visited the spot amid drizzle and later interacted with the injured patients in a hospital.

According to a post on X by the chief minister's office, Adityanath has expressed condolences to the bereaved families of the deceased.

"The chief minister has directed the district administration officials to immediately transport the injured to the hospital and ensure their proper treatment. He has wished for the speedy recovery of the injured," it added.

Police said the erring truck, which is registered in Haryana, has been impounded, and further legal proceedings have been initiated.

By afternoon, 18 of the injured persons were discharged after primary treatment at hospitals, the police said.

According to police officials, the trolley of the tractor had been modified into two decks to accommodate the large number of passengers. The use of a tractor-trolley to ferry passengers is officially banned in Uttar Pradesh. (PTI)

Ruckus in Jharkhand assembly leads to multiple adjournments



RANCHI, Aug 25: Chaos reigned supreme in the Jharkhand Assembly on Monday as both ruling and opposition MLAs demonstrated, forcing Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahato to adjourn the House three times during proceedings.

The MLAs of the opposition BJP and its allies demanded a CBI probe into the death of tribal leader Surya Hansda in a police encounter and return of land, proposed for a hospital project here, to farmers.

Members of the ruling JMM and the Congress, on the other hand, protested the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar and the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill.

As soon as the House assembled for the day, MLAs of both sides trooped into the Well and started raising slogans. The speaker urged the members to go back to their seats, but they continued their demonstrations. Amid the ruckus, the House was adjourned first till 12.30 pm. "Members have important questions today. I feel sad to adjourn the House," he said.

As the House reassembled at 12.34 pm, BJP MLAs Raj Sinha and Alok Chourasia moved separate adjournment motions over Hansda's encounter and the land acquisition for the RIMS-2 hospital project, respectively. The motions were rejected by the speaker, who said discussions on the issues could be taken up on a later date.

Demanding a reply from the government on the issues, BJP MLAs trooped into the Well.

Members of the ruling parties followed them to the Well, protesting the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill, which seeks to bar a Prime Minister, chief ministers, and ministers from holding office if they remain in jail for 30 days or more.

Amid the ruckus, Finance Minister Radhakrishna Kishore tabled CAG reports on 'Integrated Financial System in Jharkhand' and 'State Finances for the year 2023-24'.

The speaker adjourned the House after 10 minutes of functioning till 2 pm.

The House resumed after lunch break around 2pm with debate on the supplementary budget, which was

tabled in the House on August 22.

Starting his speech, BJP MLA Satyendra Nath Tiwary compared Surya Hansda with former chief minister Shibu Soren, which was protested by the treasury bench and demanded that his remarks on it be expunged. "Surya Hansa was following the footsteps of Gururji, and he was fighting for the rights of tribals," Tiwary said.

Reacting to this, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Radha Krishna Kishore said comparing the 'Disom Guru' (leader of the land) with a person with criminal tendencies was unfortunate.

"I urge the Speaker to expunge Tiwary's remarks from house proceedings," he said.

Leader of Opposition Babul Marandi said a person having political background should not be declared a criminal only on the basis of cases.

"Hansda contested four assembly polls. We know he was facing 24 cases, but acquitted in 15 cases. He was on bail for the rest of the cases. The court did not declare him a criminal. Shibu Soren, whom we call Disom Guru, was also facing many cases. We just want a probe into the Surya Hansda case by the CBI," Marandi, Jharkhand BJP president, said in the House. JMM legislator Hemlal Murmu said Hansda was accused in multiple murder cases including the murder of a JMM block president Sunil Tudu.

"The BJP is playing the tribal card. A criminal is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim nor a tribal but a criminal only," he said.

Hansda, who contested multiple assembly polls, was arrested from Nawadhi village in Deoghar on August 10, and the alleged encounter took place when he was being taken to Rahadbadia Hills to recover hidden weapons. He had allegedly snatched a weapon from the police and fired at them while attempting to flee custody. The police retaliated, resulting in his death.

BJP MLA Tiwari also raised the issue of land acquisition at Ranchi's Nagri for the multi-crore hospital (RIMS-2) project.

The Speaker asked if these were relevant for the supplementary budget discussion. On this, Marandi said they want to stop the government from misusing the budget amount.

JMM MLA Hemlal Murmu said the BJP doesn't have any issue and they are misleading people in the Surya Hansda case. BJP members trooped into the Well of the House demanding government's reply on Hansda 'encounter'. MLAs of ruling parties also demonstrated at the Well.

Then, the Speaker adjourned the House for the third time at around 2.36pm till 3.30pm.

As the House resumed around 3.30pm, BJP's Hatia MLA urged the Speaker for the government's reply on the Hansda and Nagri issue. (PTI)

Rahul Mamkootathil suspended from Congress; will continue as MLA

KANNUR (KERALA), Aug 25: Congress leader and Palakkad MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, facing multiple sexual misconduct allegations, was suspended from the primary membership of the party on Monday, KPCC President Sunny Joseph said.

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) chief, however, rejected the political opponents' demand for Mamkootathil's resignation as MLA.

Joseph also said the legislator has set a "model" by stepping down as youth congress state president without waiting for a formal complaint or a case being lodged.

During the brief press conference convened at his house in Irity here, the veteran leader didn't specify the duration of the suspension period.

Joseph said the Congress viewed the allegations against Rahul Mamkootathil as serious.

The Congress leadership in Kerala made a series of consultations with various leaders, including Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan, former KPCC chiefs and AICC working committee members from the state in this regard, and took an "unanimous" decision in the matter, he said.

"The party has not received any complaint in this regard so far. There has also been no legal complaint. No case has been registered anywhere," Joseph added.

So, there is no justification or logic in the demand raised by political opponents for the resignation of Mamkootathil as MLA, he said.

"They have no moral right to raise such a demand. There is no such precedence in Kerala politics," the KPCC chief further said and maintained that the Congress values the dignity and safety of women to the core.

After announcing the decision, Sunny Joseph hurriedly concluded the press conference.

He refused to answer any questions raised by the reporters, including whether there is any party probe against the allegations, cyberbullying against party MLA Uma Thomas, allegedly carried out by Congress activists supporting Mamkootathil.

Rahul Mamkootathil recently quit as Youth Congress state president after Malayalam actress Rini Ann George accused "a young leader" of a well-known political party of misbehaviour and subsequent protests by BJP and DYFI, the youth wing of the CPI(M). Subsequently, several women and a transgender person accused him of similar charges.

He was elected as MLA in November last year in a by-election held for the Palakkad seat, following the election of party leader and then sitting MLA Shafi Parambil as Lok Sabha MP from Vatakara in the general election.

Senior Congress leaders including Leader of Oppo-



sition V D Satheesan, Ramesh Chennithala and former KPCC Chief K Sudhakaran welcomed the leadership's decision.

However, ruling CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan, ministers like V Sivankutti, P Rajeev, M B Rajesh, LDF convenor T P Ramakrishnan and so on continued to criticise the Congress over the issue.

While talking to reporters in Thiruvalla, Satheesan said it is for the first time that any political party is taking a strong action on such an issue with strong determination.

"Congress has taken the biggest decision any political movement can take after examining such an issue. The party has courageously taken a decision that no other political party in Kerala politics has ever taken," he said.

Even though the party is yet to receive a formal complaint, he resigned as the youth congress president within 24 hours and has been suspended now from the party membership after consulting with senior leaders, the LoP added.

However, M V Govindan alleged that the Congress leadership is not firmly asking Mamkootathil to resign as MLA as it fears that the MLA may open up about the degraded practices within the party if they take any strong action against him.

"That's why they are trying to end the issue through the suspension," he said, adding that the allegations came out against Mamkootathil were something "very rare in the history of the world".

Cutting across party politics, people of the state strongly reacted to the sexual harassment complaints against the MLA, he added.

When T P Ramakrishnan urged the Congress MLA to resign on moral grounds, M B Rajesh suspected that his suspension was part of a compromise within the grand old party. (PTI)

Technical, operational issues being resolved: SSC chief

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: Amid a row over alleged irregularities in the conduct of computer-based recruitment examination for government jobs, SSC chairman S Gopalakrishnan on Monday said that all "technical and operational issues" are being resolved.

He said the new system implemented by the Commission is aimed at ensuring more transparency and fairness in the recruitment process, and from the upcoming Combined Graduate Level (CGL) examination, such disruptions are expected to be resolved.

The assertion comes amidst ongoing protests in the national capital and some other parts of the country by government job aspirants and coaching institutes who claimed of encountering various issues, including technical and operational glitches and exam centres being located far from candidates' homes (500 km in some cases), during the conduct of Selection Posts/Phase XIII Exams, 2025, held from July 24 to August 2.

"The technical & operational issues are being resolved, and from the ensuing CGL exams onwards,

such disruptions are not anticipated. "The entities concerned, be it the ECA (exam conducting agency) or the content providers, are subject to strict service level agreements and face deterrent penalties for any shortcomings in performance," Gopalakrishnan said during a presser at the headquarters of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) here.

The Commission is one of the largest recruitment agencies of the central government, with its primary mandate to conduct selections for non-gazetted posts in various central ministries and departments, among others.

Referring to the protests, Gopalakrishnan said about 5.5 lakh candidates took the recent first Selection Posts exams.

He said, on July 24, the test was cancelled at two venues out of 194 and then rescheduled.

"A detailed log analysis has been done, and about 59,000 candidates have been identified for whom, to set the record straight, three special exam shifts for Selection Posts exams have been scheduled on 29th August," Gopalakrishnan said.



He, however, said the computer-based tests for the stenographer posts from August 6-8 were conducted without any hitch, and reiterated that disruptions are expected to be addressed from the CGL exam, which has been postponed to mid-September.

On some aspirants being allocated distant exam centres, the chairman said that the previous exam conducting agency, TCS, had many centres where they could accommodate more seats per shift.

"The new ECA has started to ramp up centres in many places. As a result of this, for the first test,

the Commission including "E-dossiers" a system for secure, tamper-proof and transparent handling of candidate dossiers of recruitment examinations.

Further, deviation from the old pattern of questions has rendered their (coaching centres) material of not much use, he said. The SSC chief said the style of conducting recruitment examinations has been modified since July 2025.

"Consequent to a Supreme Court Order, the responsibility for questions has been unbundled and given to other selected agencies. Till June 2025, for all SSC exams, TCS (Tata Consultancy Services) used to set the questions. From July 2025, the questions come from content agencies and not from the ECA," he said.

On glitches in the computer-based tests, Gopalakrishnan said a significant change is that questions are being delivered from a vault digitally, and in this process, there have been some bugs which resulted in duplication of questions, multiple repeats of the same options, etc., which have been addressed. "Though these are to be avoided, there will be no impact on

candidates since the effect is uniform, marks addressed by question challenge mechanism and adoption of equi-percentile method of normalisation in order to balance differences in exam difficulty across various shifts," the SSC chief said.

He said, Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) has been roped in for IT security since CBTs are prone to technological hacking attempts and in most cases, "in connivance with private test centres which are engaged by the ECA to conduct the exams". "This called for technical integration between the CDAC and Eduquity (exam conducting agency), which came about after initial hiccups for a few days," Gopalakrishnan said.

He said there are two other entities engaged -- one for exam monitoring and another for developing content tools & providing IT application support.

"Unlike the earlier pattern where all activities were undertaken by a single entity, tests are now conducted with active engagement of multiple agencies," the SSC chief said. (PTI)

Major landslide blocks Kohima-Wokha NH-2



KOHIMA, Aug 25: A massive landslide on NH-2 between Nagaland capital Kohima and Wokha town completely blocked vehicular movement on the busy route on Monday.

The landslide, triggered by continuous rainfall, brought down huge boulders onto the highway, officials said.

The Kohima-Wokha highway connects several districts, including Tseminyu, Wokha, Pughoboto subdivision under Zunheboto, and Mokokchung, with the state capital.

It also serves as a key route for the transport of goods and essential commodities.

Several passenger and commercial vehicles were stranded for hours on both sides of the affected stretch.

Fortunately, no casualties have been reported so far, police said.

District administration, police, and Public Works Department personnel rushed to the spot, but operations to clear the road are yet to start as mudslides continue.

Police said arrangements are currently being made for the movement of light vehicles through alternative routes. (PTI)

After the passing of Nagaland Guv, Ajay Kumar Bhalla vows to work for peace and progress

Manipur Guv Bhalla takes additional charge of Nagaland

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Aug 25: Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla took additional charge of Nagaland on Monday. He was sworn in as the 22nd governor of the state in a swearing-in ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Kohima by Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court Ashutosh Kumar.

Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and his cabinet colleagues and other dignitaries were present on the occasion. Bhalla was accorded the Rastriya Salute by the Nagaland Police Mahilla (IR) contingents at Raj Bhavan before the swearing-in ceremony.

Addressing the people of Nagaland, Bhalla expressed his deepest gratitude for the warm and gracious welcome extended to him by them. Asserting that he assumed the office of the Nagaland governor with a profound sense of duty and immense humility, Bhalla said: "I am deeply mindful of the trust reposed in me by our country's leadership."

He said this appointment is not merely an opportunity to serve, but a sacred responsibility bestowed upon me to work for the welfare of the people of Nagaland and for the progress of our great nation.

Bhalla remembered his predecessor La Ganesan, who passed away in Chennai on August 15, on the occasion.



He said Ganesan's sudden and tragic passing had left a void that is deeply felt across the state and the country.

Bhalla also said Nagaland has always held a special fascination for him, saying the rich cultural diversity, the resilience of the people and the scenic beauty of this land have a unique allure.

"In my previous capacities in government service, I have had the privilege of being associated with the developmental journey of the Northeast, including Nagaland," he recalled.

Bhalla sought blessings, cooperation and active participation from all to walk together on the path of peace, progress, and prosperity.

Meanwhile, five apex tribal bodies Angami Public Organisation, Ao Senden, Lotha Hoho, Rengma Hoho and Sumi Hoho declined the state government's invitation to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new governor.

The 5 Tribes Committee on Review of Reservation Policy said the decision was in line with its resolution adopted on August 9, 2023 and 89 in 2024, the data said.

The committee said the state government continued to ignore its legitimate demand despite repeated reminders, compelling the tribes to abstain from the official ceremony.

439 Myanmarese among 460 foreigners held for crimes in Mizoram since 2020: Police

AIZAWL, Aug 25: Altogether 460 foreigners, including 439 Myanmar nationals, have been arrested in Mizoram for committing various crimes in the five years till May 2025, police said. Narcotic substances, including heroin, methamphetamine, crystal 'meth' and ganja (cannabis), worth ₹ 770.95 crore were also seized by the state police alone during the period.

According to police data accessed by PTI, a total of 15,673 people, including 14,432 locals and 781 from other states, were arrested in different criminal cases during the same period.

"As many as 460 foreign nationals have also been arrested for different crimes, including drugs and arms trafficking, child sexual abuse, forgery, burglary, theft and violation of visa norms," it said. Of the 460 foreign nationals, 439 were from Myanmar, 18 from Bangladesh and three from other countries, the data said.

The highest arrest of foreign nationals was made in 2022, a year after a military coup in Myanmar, during which 124 people were apprehended, followed by 106 in 2023 and 89 in 2024, the data said.

In the current year alone, 57 foreigners, including 53 Myanmar, have been arrested so far, it said.

Of the 15,673 people held on charges of crimes, 1,666 were arrested for allegedly smuggling narcotic substances, while 254 were booked under the Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act.



Theft remained the biggest offence with 5,495 cases registered and 3,704 people arrested, followed by burglary, which recorded 4,686 cases and 2,917 arrests during the period, it said.

The data suggested that 1,694 people have been arrested under the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, which bans the manufacture, sale and consumption of liquor in the state, it said.

Among the arrested Myanmar nationals, 185 were booked for drug smuggling cases, followed by 66 for visa norm violation, 43 for arms and explosive smuggling, 40 for theft and burglary and nine each were arrested for murder and child sexual abuse, the data said.

Barring four Bangladesh nationals, who were arrested under the Arms Act and Explosive Sub-

stances Act, all other foreigners were held under the Foreigners Act, it said.

Mizoram has been grappling with the menace of drug trafficking from Southeast Asian countries, particularly Myanmar, and the police data showed a continuous increase in the seizure of narcotic substances, particularly from 2023.

The total value of different types of drugs seized by the state police in 2022 stood at Rs 43.43 crore, ₹ 189.66 crore in 2023 and ₹ 211.63 crore in 2024, the data said.

The state police also seized drugs worth over ₹ 106.56 crore in just five months between January and May this year, it said.

The value of recovered drugs was estimated at ₹ 167.82 crore and ₹ 51.83 crore in 2020 and 2021, respectively. (PTI)

Rally in Dimapur against delayed justice for woman murder victim

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Aug 25: A protest rally against delayed justice to 31-year-old Kesuthlung Newme, who was found brutally killed near the NSCN (IM) Martyrs Park at Pimla village on April 7, was held at Supermarket here on Monday.

The rally, organised by the Zeliangrong Youth Organisation Nagaland, Zeliangrong Students Union Nagaland and Zeliangrong Mipui Organisation Nagaland, demanded declaration of the names of the accused involved in the murder and early submission of the forensic science laboratory (FSL) report in the case.

Hundreds of people, mostly women, attended the rally. After the rally, an ultimatum was served to the Dimapur commissioner of police by the protesters.

The organisations demanded that the names of the culprits/accused persons involved in the case be declared and the FSL report submitted within 15 days, failing which they threatened to take recourse to higher authorities for redressal of the grievances and ensure that justice is not denied.

They also demanded setting up of an FSL in Nagaland.

The three organisations said despite their earlier representations dated April 11, no concrete action has been taken till date regarding declaration of the names of the culprits/accused persons involved in the case and early submission of the

FSL report. The pendency of the FSL report and withholding of the names is a serious lapse in the investigation and contrary to the principles of justice, the ultimatum read.

Meanwhile, Dimapur police commissionerate, in a release on Monday, said during the course of investigation, the investigating agency gathered sufficient evidence establishing the culpability of the accused.

Accordingly, police said, the accused was arrested on April 10 for the murder, which was committed in a fit of rage while under the influence of alcohol, and he was found prima facie liable under Section 103(1) of the BNS for the offence.

The release said an interim chargesheet had accordingly been filed before the court and a prayer submitted to frame appropriate charges against him on the basis of the material placed on record.

It was further submitted before the court that the report of the FSL from an out-of-state facility is awaited, as the state presently does not have an in-house DNA division/expert.

The police said a supplementary chargesheet will be submitted before the court upon receipt of the FSL report.

Further, the release said under the Victim Compensation Scheme, the Peren District Legal Services Authority processed the case for necessary relief to the minor child of the deceased.

Railway board chairman inspects Bairabi-Sairang rail project

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 25: Satish Kumar, Chairman of the Railway Board and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), inspected the newly constructed 51.38 km-long Bairabi-Sairang New Line Railway Project on August 24, 2025. The project will connect Mizoram's capital Aizawl with the national railway network for the first time.

According to an official statement, Kumar was accompanied by Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of NF Railway, Arun Kumar Chaudhary, General Manager (Construction), along with other senior railway and construction officials during the inspection.

During his visit, the Railway Board Chairman reviewed key infrastructure, including bridges, tunnels and stations along the route. He noted that the project marks a significant milestone in strengthening rail connectivity in the Northeast.

Despite the difficult terrain, the Northeast Frontier Railway has successfully overcome major geographical and engineering challenges to bring the project closer to completion. The Bairabi-Sairang link is expected to provide Mizoram with a direct railway connection to the rest of the country, boosting development and accessibility in the region.

Tripura aims for 700 MW electricity demand by 2031-32: Power Minister

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Aug 25: Without power, development is not possible, and for that, the Power Department is working to modernize the power sector to provide uninterrupted power supply across the state.

Tripura Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath informed this after laying the foundation stone for the re-conducting of HTLS Conductors of nine 132 kV transmission lines at a function in Bodhjung Nagar, adjacent to Agartala city. A total of ₹ 126 crore 33 lakh will be spent on this project.

Tripura Power Transmission Limited (TPTL) has taken the initiative to modernize the power transmission system in Tripura with the financial assistance of the Special Infrastructure Development Project of the DoNER Ministry.

Speaking at the function, the Power Minister said that as a result, the power

supply system will be more efficient and improved.

The Power Minister said that this initiative has been taken keeping in mind the goal that the state's electricity demand will increase to 700 MW in the 2031-32 financial year. He said that before 2018, there were 12 132 KV substations, and now there are 20 in the last seven years, with work for two more underway. The 33 KV substations were 44 and are now 75.

"We are working to provide 24 hours of power, but now we are giving 23 hours, and due to many reasons including power theft, overloading, and storms, we fail to give uninterrupted supply," said the minister.

He said that if we shut down schools for three days, there will be no major problem, but if we do the same with electricity, then there will be a huge problem.

"Earlier trains used to run on coal, but

now on diesel; however, this hampers the environment. But now trains will be electric, which will be inaugurated at Agartala Railway Station on August 27. The entire line will be electric, and vehicles will also be electric. There will be no gas or diesel-based vehicles. We are not depending on solar. We are now changing lines, and within one year, the entire work will be completed. These nine lines will be changed, and for that, demand will be saved. We are giving PM Surya Ghar as we are dependent on gas, which is about to finish," said the Power Minister.

He also informed that the government will do everything, but you have to be self-reliant.

"Now the entire world is following Swami Vivekananda. We have to adopt modern facilities. Smart meters are one among them, which will be beneficial for everyone," said the Minister.

No.A/BKD/Tender/Maha/753-755 Date 25/08/2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court fee Stamp of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty five) only with validity period of 180 days, will be received up-to 2 PM on 15/09/2025 in the office of the undersigned for granting of different Mining Contract as per the provision of the Assam Minor Mineral Concession Rule, 2013 in certain specified areas of Mahals within this Division as per the schedule below. The Notice containing the details of the Mining Contract along with the terms and condition of the grant may be procured from the office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Baksa Forest Division, Mushalpur during working hours. The Tender Papers are available on payment of Rs.1000/- (Per Copy) by Demand Draft of SBI in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar payable at Kokrajhar SBI and serially numbered Tender Paper with Specific code will be available by entering in Register.

SCHEDULE

Sl. No.	Name of Mahals in Which the Mining Contract will be granted	Name of the Minor Minerals	Mining Contract period
1	Barnadi Sand Mahal No-12	Sand	2025-2032

Sd/- Divisional Forest Officer,
Baksa Forest Division, Mushalpur

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2891

ENGAGEMENT UNDER SAMAGRA SHIKSHA AXOM

No.554642/SSA-15015/42/2024

The Samagra Shiksha, Axom invites online applications from Indian Citizens (as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India) for the under mentioned positions under Samagra Shiksha, Axom on contractual basis. The online applications will be received from **26.08.2025 to 10.09.2025**. The posts are temporary in nature and the selected candidates will be initially engaged for a period of 11 (eleven) months only. The contractual engagement will neither be regularized under Samagra Shiksha, Axom nor will be absorbed under any job/programme of Government of Assam in future and no person (s) so engaged shall have any right (s) to claim for permanent absorption in any post (s) in the government or in the Samagra Shiksha, Assam.

Age for categories of post : The candidate should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 62 years of age as on 01-01-2025.

The age limit of the candidates will be calculated on the basis of the Matriculation/HSLC Admit Card or Pass Certificate issued by a recognized Board/ Council and no other document shall be accepted in lieu of the mentioned documents.

Sl No	Name of the Post	Essential Qualification and Experience	Pay in Pay Band in Rs.	Grade Pay in Rs.	No. of Post	Place of posting
1	Finance & Accounts Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate in Commerce with minimum 05 years of relevant experience under Government/ Semi Government/ Government Bodies/ PSUs/ Large Private Institute/ organization. Must be computer literate. 	22000-87000/-	11500/-	02	District Mission Offices at Hailakandi 1 (One) post and Biswanath 1 (One) post.

N.B.-

- The link of the recruitment portal will be available in the Samagra Shiksha website <https://ssa.assam.gov.in>
- Read the User Guidelines carefully which is available on the recruitment portal on how to submit the online application form.
- Claims for any correction will not be entertained after submitting the online registration and online application.
- Before filling the on-line application, applicant has to go through the User Guidelines for online registration and online application.
- Candidate must upload the supporting document of educational qualification, experience and others through portal.
- Only eligible candidates will have to appear in test/interview, the exact date of which will be communicated separately.
- A candidate must be in good mental and bodily health and free from any physical defect likely to interfere with the efficient discharge of his/ her duties as an Officer of the service.
- The exact date & time of the Test/ Interview will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates separately.
- Marking pattern will be on General Awareness, Personality & Aptitude, Subject matter in relevant field, Relevant Experience, etc. for the post. The applicant has to obtain minimum 50% of the total marks on the above in the interview and only then the candidates will be short-listed.
- The office will not be responsible for any non submission of online application due to any error or other problem.
- The decision of the Selection Committee in all aspects and all respects pertaining to the application and its acceptance or rejection as the case may be, conduct of test and at all consequent stages concluding in the selection or otherwise of any candidate shall be final in all respects and binding on all concerned. The Mission also reserves its right to alter and modify time and conditions laid down in the notification for conducting the various stages up to selection or withdraw the Notification at any time, duly intimating details thereof to all concerned, as warranted by any unforeseen circumstances arising during the course of this process, or as deemed necessary by the Mission at any stage.

Sd/- Mission Director,
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

DIPR /DF/HLT/929/26-Aug-25

No.KDB/BTC/6th ASFC/NIT/2025-26/ Date: 20/08/2025

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty-Five Paise) only with a validity period of 180 (One Hundred Eighty) days, which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the APWD's printed F-2 forms are invited from the registered contractors of class-II and class-I (A, B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC, according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the following works under 6th Finance Commission Fund for the year 2024-25 during 2025-26. The Tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2.00 P.M. on 10.09.2025 and will be opened on the same date & place at 2.30 P.M. against the scheme shown below-

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Estimated Amount	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender paper	Time of Completion
335	Imp. of S/G road from Hablang Bazar to Biraj house at Bhaoraguzi village.	800000/-	8000/- (1% for ST, SC & OBC) & Rs. 16000/- (Gen)	240/-	3 Months

Details NIT may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent from 26.08.2025 to 10.09.2025 in the office of the undersigned on payment of cost of Tender paper in the form of demand draft/Banker Cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledged in favour of Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar, payable a Kokrajhar.

Sd/- Block Development Officer,
Kokrajhar Dev. Block, Titaguri

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2928

No.A/BKD/Tender/Maha/753-755 Date 25/08/2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court fee Stamp of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty five) only with validity period of 180 days, will be received up-to 2 PM on 18/09/2025 in the office of the undersigned for granting of different Mining Contract as per the provision of the Assam Minor Mineral Concession Rule, 2013 in certain specified areas of Mahals within this Division as per the schedule below. The Notice containing the details of the Mining Contract along with the terms and condition of the grant may be procured from the office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Baksa Forest Division, Mushalpur during working hours. The Tender Papers are available on payment of Rs.1000/- (Per Copy) by Demand Draft of SBI in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar payable at Kokrajhar SBI and serially numbered Tender Paper with Specific code will be available by entering in Register.

SCHEDULE

Sl. No.	Name of Mahals in Which the Mining Contract will be granted	Name of the Minor Minerals	Mining Contract period
1	Barnadi Sand Mahal No-13	Sand	2025-2032

Sd/- Divisional Forest Officer,
Baksa Forest Division, Mushalpur

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2894

NEERAJ GHAYWAN'S 'HOMEBOUND' WINS BEST FILM AWARD AT INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE



NEW DELHI, Aug 25: "Homebound" won the best picture and best director award for Neeraj Ghaywan at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2025.

Ghaywan's film, which first premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in the Un Certain Regard category, also closed IFFM on Sunday night.

The film, produced by Dharma Productions, stars Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa, and Janhvi Kapoor, is based on a New York Times article by Basharat Peer which describes a tragic friendship during the Covid-19 lockdown in India.

"To bring 'Homebound' to Melbourne, and to win these two awards is extremely special. To be in a room full of such diverse people feels truly incredible. One feels so special to see the Australian government and ministers doing so much for this festival, I have never seen such kind of support anywhere else in

the world," Ghaywan, who made his feature debut with the much-acclaimed "Masaan" in 2015, said in a statement.

"We could not have imagined a more powerful and fitting way to close IFFM 2025 than with Neeraj Ghaywan's 'Homebound'. The film embodies everything we celebrate at this festival—fearless storytelling, stellar performances, and narratives that are both deeply personal and universally relatable," festival director Mitu Bhowmik Lange said.

"Watching the audience rise to their feet in applause was a moment of pride not just for the team of Homebound, but for Indian cinema as a whole," Bhowmik added.

Abhishek Bachchan was named Best Actor for his role in Shoojit Sircar's "I Want to Talk", Geeta Kailasam won the Best Actress Award for Tamil movie "Angamml". The film also won Best Indie Film. Aamir Khan

won Excellence in Cinema and served as the chief guest of the festival. Bengali film "Baksho Bondi", which opened the festival, was recognised with Equality in Cinema award.

Aditi Rao Hydari was awarded with 'Diversity in Cinema', Aravind Swami with 'Leadership in Cinema' and comedian Vir Das with the 'Disrupter' award at IFFM.

"Drifters" was named the best short film from Australia, and "Kalar Pencils" best short film for India. Child actor Gugun Kippen received a special mention for his acting in Manipuri film "Boong".

In the OTT segment, Vikramaditya Motwane's "Black Warrant" won the Best Series, Jaideep Ahlawat was named Best Actor for "Pataal Lok" season two and Nimisha Sajayan Best Actress for "Dabba Cartel". (PTI)

MIG-21'S LAST FEW FLIGHTS AT NAL AFS BLEND WITH BOLLYWOOD'S 'LOVE AND WAR' SHOOT



BIKANER, Aug 25: Vanity vans lined up on the tarmac and film crew with cameras waited for that perfect frame to capture MiG-21 jets roaring across the skies of Bikaner Nal Air Force Station for the shooting of upcoming Bollywood movie "Love And War". The moment marked the jet's last operational flight ahead of its retirement next month.

The airbase doubled up as a set for the Sanjay Leela Bhansali-directed film where the MiG-21 will play a decisive role. "Love And War" stars Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal. The plot details of the movie are still under wraps but there are reports that it's a love triangle set against the backdrop of war.

Once described as a "rocket with wings", the Indian Air Force's MiG-21 fighter jets made their last operational flights at the Nal Air Force Station in Bikaner on August 18 and 19, a month ahead of the formal retirement ceremony to be held in Chandigarh on September 26. Air Chief Marshal A P Singh himself flew solo sorties of the ageing supersonic jet last weekend with the event marking the beginning of the end of a six-decade association with the MiG-21.

"It's an amazing aircraft to fly, very agile and maneuverable, and it has been the workhorse of the IAF since the 1960s. But now it is time to move on to newer platforms like the Tejas and Rafale," said Air Chief Marshal Singh.

Wing Commander Jaideep Singh, IAF spokesperson, underscored the MiG-21's legendary role in past wars.

"The most notable was the attack on the Governor's residence in Dhaka on December 14, 1971, which became a turning point in that war," he said.

The formal phasing out of the Russian-origin aircraft will take place in Chandigarh on September 26, where the IAF will hold a ceremonial farewell to the jet that defined generations of fighter pilots.

For those who witnessed Nal's airstrip this weekend, however, the moment was surreal: a slice of aviation history playing out in real time with Bollywood simultaneously attempting to immortalise it on screen.

The MiG-21 may soon retire from service, but its dual presence in the IAF's proud history and in the celluloid retelling of India's 1971 victory ensures that its roar will echo far beyond the skies. (PTI)

Kashmiri actor Farhana Bhat enters 'Bigg Boss 19'

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: Kashmiri actor-activist Farhana Bhat, known for her roles in Bollywood films such as "Laila Majnu" and "Notebook", is one of the 16 contestants in the popular reality show "Bigg Boss 19".

Bhat, who is known to be a fearless voice against terrorism in the Valley, made her acting debut in 2016 with the comedy-drama film "Sunshine Music Tours and Travels". Her latest work includes the 2023 film "Country of Blind" from Rahhat Shah Kazmi.

Speaking about her journey, well-wishers from the Valley have expressed how Bhat represents a new face of Kashmiri youth — educated, bold, peace-loving, and unafraid to challenge wrongs, according to a release here.

"Bigg Boss" is an Indian adaptation of the international show "Big Brother".

The show features contestants who have to live in the same house, isolated from the outside world. During their stay, they are assigned various tasks and get nominated for elimination.

The 28-year-old actor will feature alongside 15 other contestants in the show, including Amaal Malik, Zeeshan Quadri, Pranit More, Gaurav Khanna, Awez Darbar, Nagma Mirajkar, Abhishek Bajaj, Mridul Tiwari, Neelam Giri, Kunickaa Sadanand, Ashnoor Kaur, Nehal Chudasama, Tanya Mittal, and Baseer Ali. Hosted by Salman Khan, the latest season premiered on JioHotstar on August 24. (PTI)

'Inspector Zende', featuring Manoj Bajpayee and Jim Sarbh, to release on Netflix on September 5

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: Manoj Bajpayee and Jim Sarbh-starrer "Inspector Zende" will premiere on Netflix on September 5, the streaming platform announced on Monday.

The upcoming film is written and directed by Chinmay Mandlekar and produced by Jay Shewakramani and Om Raut. The streamer released the film's trailer, which shows Bajpayee's sharp-witted inspector Zende locked in a tense game of cat and mouse with Sarbh's charming yet elusive Carl Bhojraj, according to a press release.

The film is loosely inspired by the real life arrest of notorious serial killer Charles Sobhraj by Mumbai police officer Madhukar Zende.

"What fascinated me about Inspector Zende was that he wasn't chasing glory — he was just doing his job, yet caught one of the most notorious criminals twice. His brav-

ery, humour, and that unmistakable Mumbai flavour make his journey truly inspiring. Playing him let me dive into a world that's as gritty as it is entertaining... I'm glad his story is finally getting the spotlight it deserves, and that too globally on Netflix," Bajpayee said in the statement.

Mandlekar said the project had every ingredient to become a "gripping film".

"Inspector Zende's real-life chase had all the ingredients of a gripping film: a larger-than-life cop, a slippery antagonist, and an unforgettable era of Mumbai. But what really stayed with me was the camaraderie, the small moments, and the quirks of the people involved. The trailer hints at the chase, but the film lets you live every beat of it. I can't wait for audiences to experience it on Netflix," he added. (PTI)

West Bengal: Joy Banerjee, matinee idol of '80s, dies at 63

KOLKATA, Aug 25: Bengali actor Joy Banerjee died at a hospital in Kolkata on Monday at the age of 63, his family said.

Banerjee was admitted to the private hospital on August 15 with acute breathing problems. He was suffering

from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

His condition worsened gradually, and he was on ventilator support over the last few days.

Banerjee, who fought elections on a BJP ticket, passed away at 11.35 am. He has been survived by his wife and mother.

A matinee idol of the '80s and

'90s, he had given Tollywood a string of hits, such as Hirak Jayanti (1990), Milan Tithi (1985), and Nagmati (1983), besides the critically acclaimed Chopper (1986).

He fought the 2014 and 2019 elections from the Birbhum and Uluberia seats, respectively, on a BJP ticket. However, he quit politics in November 2021.

TMC MP Satabdi Roy, his co-actor in many films, said, "I am shattered. I knew Joy was ailing for quite some time, and we all were praying for his recovery." Union minister Sukanta Majumdar condoled Banerjee's untimely demise. (PTI)



Films should be seen as piece of art, says actor Sourav who plays Gopal Patha in 'The Bengal Files'

KOLKATA, Aug 25: Bengali actor Sourav Das, who plays Gopal 'Patha' in Vivek Agnihotri's upcoming film 'The Bengal Files', said cinema must be viewed as a work of art and not through the prism of political or ideological bias.

The film, the concluding chapter in Agnihotri's 'The Files' trilogy after 'The Tashkent Files' (2019) and 'The Kashmir Files' (2022), revisits the communal riots of August 1946 in Kolkata, known as 'Direct Action Day'.

With a runtime of 204 minutes, it is among the longest Indian films. It is set to hit theatres on September 5.

Das essays the role of Gopal Mukhopadhyay, a goat meat seller, who is remembered for mobilising people to resist rioters during the violence.

"One must accept a film as a piece of art. Audiences are mature enough to criticise if they disagree, or appreciate if they connect with the story. But they must be given that freedom," Das told PTI in an interview.

Asked if the portrayal of the events risks reopening old wounds, he disagreed.

"Don't we know about Independence and Partition? Shouldn't we also know what led to it? That does not mean

such events will be repeated. I don't think we will look at these episodes as vultures. Facts must be accepted as they are," he said.

On the criticism about choosing to act in the film, Das said actors should not be judged by the roles they portray on screen.

"In one of my earlier films, I played a character who killed a little girl. Does that mean people should stop watching me? Cinema mirrors society, and negative characters have always existed," he said.

Portraying Gopal 'Patha', Das said, was a "huge responsibility".

"I had a sense of what he represented, but after inputs from my director and the research team, I realised what an iconic figure he was. Playing him has been a deeply satisfying experience," he said.

On the controversy surrounding the film's teaser release in Kolkata last week, Das said he would refrain from commenting as he was not in the city at the time.

The Bengal Files also features Mithun Chakraborty, Anupam Kher, Darshan Kumar, Pallavi Joshi, Saswata Chatterjee, Simrat Kaur, Namashi Chakraborty, and Dibyendu Bhattacharya in key roles. (PTI)



THE 38-YEAR-OLD WON HIS FIRST MATCH SINCE WIMBLEDON DJOKOVIC IMPROVES TO 19-0 IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE US OPEN

NEW YORK, Aug 25: Novak Djokovic looked tired. He looked hurt. And at times, he just looked old.

Djokovic overcame all that and improved to 19-0 in the first round of the U.S. Open Sunday night, battling through some leg troubles to beat Learner Tien 6-1, 7-6 (3), 6-2.

But the 38-year-old acknowledged concern after laboring through the middle of his first match since Wimbledon.

"I don't know. I don't have any injury or anything. I just struggled a lot to stay in long exchanges and recover after points," Djokovic said.

Djokovic had his hands on his knees multiple times in the second set and received treatment for a blister on his right big toe after it. But after having his serve broken in the first game of the third set, he won the next five games to regain control.

It was the 24-time Grand Slam champion's first match since falling to Jannik Sinner in the Wimbledon semifinals, when he struggled with an upper left leg injury, and one that made it tough to tell if he remains a real contender to win a fifth title in Flushing Meadows.

He rolled through the first set in just 24 minutes, then looked weary in a second set that took nearly an hour longer.

"I started great. Just over 20 minutes, first set, I felt really good," Djokovic said.

"Then some long games to start the second set, and then I started to feel really — I don't know why. I really was surprised how bad I was



feeling in the second physically."

The No. 7-seeded Djokovic has made a career of wearing down his opponents, but he looked like the one who was feeling it physically in the second set against an opponent from California who was half his age.

"To be quite honest with you, I wish I had Learner Tien's age but that's not possible," Djokovic said in his post-match interview.

His face reddened and he was huffing and puffing so much by the time the tiebreaker arrived that he received his second time violation

of the match during it, costing him a first serve.

Tien won the point on Djokovic's second serve to tie it at 3-all, before Djokovic won the next four points.

He was then visited by the trainer at his seat. Djokovic had appeared to be bothered by his lower left leg late in the set, but it was his right foot that received treatment during the medical timeout.

Djokovic felt better in the third set, pulling away for his 75th consecutive first-round win at a Grand Slam tournament.

He hasn't won one of them since his win at the U.S. Open in 2023.

Djokovic opted to skip all the hard-court tournaments leading into this year's last major of the season, which perhaps contributed to him looking winded Sunday.

But Tien isn't ruling out a run for the Serbian.

"Obviously Sinner and (Carlos) Alcaraz, those guys are playing extremely well, but I don't think I'd ever count him out," Tien said. "I think he has the ability to play his best tennis and kind of peak when he needs it most, so I'm going to

say that he's got a shot."

Perhaps Djokovic will be helped by an extra day of rest before his second-round match, thanks to playing on the first day of a tournament that now starts on Sunday, a day earlier.

"There are positives but also things that hopefully won't happen in terms of, like, how I feel on the court physically the way I felt in the second set," Djokovic said.

"Hopefully that doesn't happen, because then it makes my life on the court definitely much more challenging." (AP)

Jamil plays down non-availability of players for camp, says team is up for challenge

BENGALURU, Aug 25: India's new head coach Khalid Jamil on Monday played down the chatter around non-availability of some top players in the national camp for the upcoming CAFA Nations Cup and asserted that the team is ready for the challenge.

Indian Super League (ISL) champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant refused to release their seven players for the camp, saying it was not mandatory for them to do so as the tournament did not fall in the FIFA international window. Jamil, who succeeded Manolo Márquez at the helm of affairs, was left to pick his final 23-member squad from the 29 players who attended the camp.

"Talking about the difficulty, some clubs are not releasing players because of some reasons. We are coming from off-season also. So whoever is available, we have to deal with them," Jamil said during his first press conference as India head coach here.

"It is a big challenge for me. And the players who are with me, I have never felt any difficulty. Whatever I want, I have got. So, for me, it's time to deliver and give our best. I am talking about the players. Everybody's attitude is very good."

Asked if the players in the national camp were being affected by the uncertainty over the ISL's future after the top-tier league was put on hold by the organisers FSDL, Jamil said they were professionals and know how to handle situations.

"I never felt that they were having a disturbed mind. They know that when they go inside (the pitch), they have a job to do. So, there is no excuse. Everybody is working hard, that is the good point. I am getting full support from everybody, players and AIFF top brass."

"Moreover, we still have players like Sandesh Jhinghan, Gurpreet Sandhu, Anwar Ali, they are all very good. The new players, their attitude is also very good."

"And the camp I have conducted, I never felt like that the team is weak. So, I have not missed anything. I think the players who are with me, they are very good." Placed in Group B of the CAFA Nations Cup, India face co-host Tajikistan on August 29 in Hisor, Iran on September 1 and Afghanistan on September 4. The third-place match and the final will be played on September 8 in Hisor and Tashkent (Uzbekistan) respectively.

The national camp began here on August 16 with just 22 players as the remaining were playing in the Durand Cup which ended on August 23. Seven other players joined later. "Some players were not available and we are choosing whoever is fit. We don't want to make any possible mistakes in this match. There was some problem."

"As of now, I am thinking about this tournament only. The players have to be mentally strong. They must believe in themselves and play as a team. That is the first motto for me." (PTI)

WFI drops Neha from World Championship squad, hands 2-year suspension for weight management issue

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: Wrestler Neha Sangwan, who was disqualified from the recent U20 World Championships for being overweight, was on Monday dropped from the senior World Championships squad and suspended for two years by the national federation for her "consistent weight management issues".

Neha, who hails from Charkhi Dadri in Haryana, was to compete in women's 59kg class in Samokov, Bulgaria last week but weighed about 600 grams more than the permissible limit.

The organisers disqualified her and India went unrepresented in that weight category due to the transgression.

India's women team won seven medals to finish runner-up behind Japan. Neha, without doubt, was a strong medal contender and could have helped

India win the team championship by winning a gold.

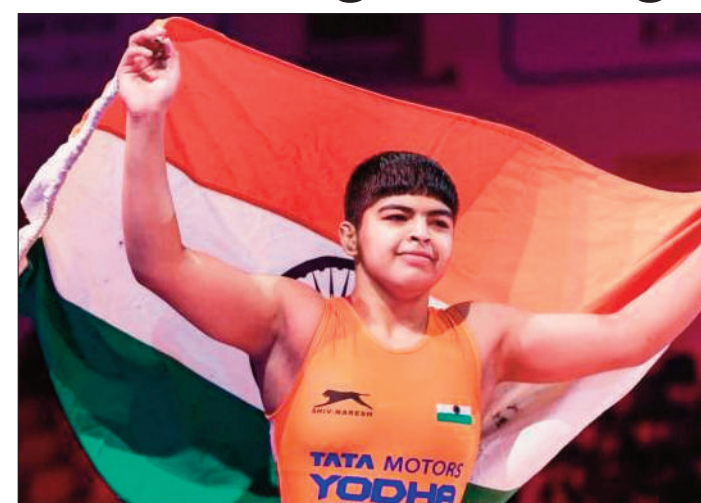
India finished with 140 points behind Japan's 165.

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has replaced Neha with Sarika Malik, who had finished second in the World Championship trials in 59kg competition.

The Worlds are scheduled to be held in Zagreb Croatia from September 13-21.

"This is not acceptable. Weight management is something that a wrestler has to take care of. We missed out on a medal in that weight category in Bulgaria. We also have accountability because the government funds the tournament expenses and around Rs 2-3 lakh is spent on one wrestler. If you can't manage the weight, we will give the chance to the next best wrestler," said a WFI official.

Neha has been growing into a good wrestler and her transition from junior to senior has also been very encouraging. She had won a bronze medal at the 2024 U20 World Championship and this year has already won three medals at the senior level in 57kg weight class.



She won the UWW Ranking Series Mongolia Open in 57kg in May and also finished on top in Yasar Dagu in June. Last month, she won a silver at the Ranking Series event in Bu-

dapest. "In Ranking series events, all wrestlers get a 2 kg weight tolerance as per the UWW rules, so she was not troubled in these events but she is consistently struggling with weight management."

"Even during the U20 World Championship in Spain last year, she was really struggling to maintain right weight on the scale. A wrestler at this level knows what he or she is expected to do, so weight management is a wrestler's responsibility. If you can't do that, you can't play," said the official.

Asked if the punishment was not harsh for a promising wrestler like Neha, the WFI said, "We are not doing it for joy. She certainly is a good wrestler but if you are not going to compete, what's point of all the hard work." (PTI)

Women's DPL: South Delhi Superstarz win title

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: South Delhi Superstarz brushed aside the disappointment of losing last year's summit clash as they edged out Central Delhi Queens by a solitary run to win the Women's Delhi Premier League title. Chasing 122 for victory, the Queens were under pressure right from the start and managed 120 for 8 at the end of the 20 overs Sunday night. They lost early wickets and were soon pegged back further when rain interrupted play. Once the game resumed, their chase never gathered full momentum. Reduced to 74/5, the contest seemed slipping away before Monika (33 off 28 balls) and Riya Shokeen, who eventually scored 28 not out off 28 balls, revived hopes with a fighting 33-run partnership for the sixth wicket.

The pair looked threatening, but Monika's dismissal came at the wrong time, leaving Shokeen stranded with the lower order.

The Queens battled hard but

eventually closed their innings at 120/8 in 20 overs, agonisingly short by just one run.

Medhavi Bidhuri starred with the ball for the Superstarz as she picked up 3/26 in 3 overs while Himakshi Choudhary scalped two for 18 runs in 4 overs. Earlier, opting to bat first, the Superstarz too found it tough against a disciplined Queens' bowling attack. Opens Tanishqa Singh (14 off 13) and Shivi Sharma (29 off 36) got the team off to a steady start. The innings gained momentum when Tanisha Singh (28 off 23) joined Shivi in a valuable 50-run stand. But once the set batters were dismissed, the middle order collapsed under pressure. The Queens' spinners took control with Priya Mishra (2/19), Nidhi Mahto (2/24) and Saachi (2/7) delivering economical spells. Despite that, skipper Shweta Shrawat (34 off 24) fought till the end, ensuring that her side had a competitive total of 121/8 on the board. (PTI)

Eala becomes first woman from the Philippines to win a Slam match

NEW YORK, Aug 25: Alexandra Eala became the first woman representing the Philippines to win a Grand Slam match, doing so at the U.S. Open by defeating No. 14 seed Clara Tauson 6-3, 2-6, 7-6 (13-11) after coming back from a 5-1 deficit in the third set and getting some help from a key video review decision that flustered Tauson. "I was playing really bad, anyway. But it definitely didn't help," Tauson told The Associated Press on Sunday. "But that's how life is."

Eala is a 20-year-old who is ranked 75th and trains at the Rafael Nadal Academy. This was her fourth win against a top-20 opponent in 2025, including against Iga Swiatek in March en route to the Miami Open semifinals.

Her milestone victory on Sunday for the Philippines meant a lot to Eala.

"I'm so blessed to be the first to do this. I take so much pride in representing my country," she said. "It makes what I do bigger than myself." The pivotal moment came in the last set at the Grandstand, with Tauson clinging to a 5-4 lead and serving for the match for the second time. Eala hit a shot right up near the net and it wasn't immediately clear during play whether or not her racket had crossed over the tape to make contact with the ball, which isn't allowed.

Chair umpire Kader Nouni employed video review, a system that was introduced at the U.S. Open in 2023 on a small number of courts to allow officials to check calls such as double bounces and was expanded to all 17 competition are-

nas this year.

Nouni ruled that Eala hit the ball fairly and awarded her the point, giving her two break chances at 15-40. There was a lengthy delay before action resumed, though, with Tauson complaining and telling Nouni: "Look at the ball. What is your opinion about this? What is your opinion?"

Some in the stands booed her.

"I don't need to watch it again. (It was an) incorrect call. My coach said the same. Physio said the same. And especially if my coach says that, I know that I'm not in the wrong, because he's often telling me I'm wrong," Tauson said with a hint of a laugh in an interview a little more than a half-hour after the match ended.

"So I have nothing else to say, other than it's an incorrect decision. I don't know we can do that with VR. I don't know how that's even possible."

Even after his decision was made clear to all, Tauson took some extra time before hitting her next serve, standing with both hands on her hips at the baseline. Eventually, Tauson double-faulted, making it 5-all and drawing a rowdy reaction from a crowd that was loudly supporting Eala.

"The whole stadium was with her, so I'm sure the umpire felt pressure," Tauson said.

That gave Eala 16 of 21 points in that span, and soon she was one away from victory. Took a bit longer, though: In the end, she needed five match points to close out the win after more than 2 1/2 hours. (AP)

Chaubey reposes faith in Jamil, wants to give coach time to deliver

BENGALURU, Aug 25: All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Kalyan Chaubey is hopeful of India's new head coach Khalid Jamil reviving the fortunes of the side after a string of disappointing results in recent years and is likely to give the gaffer time to prove his worth.

Jamil, who succeeded Manolo Márquez at the helm of affairs, on Monday named his 23-member squad for the upcoming CAFA Nations Cup, which will mark his first assignment since taking charge of the national side.

Asked about his expectations from the new coach, the AIFF chief said, "As you know that Khalid Jameel has been awarded twice best coach of Indian football. And I believe it is an honour for an Indian to win that respect, when there are several foreign coaches also involved in this same tournament (ISL)."

"I am very happy that after two decades, an Indian has got a chance to prove his merit."

Chaubey said Jamil's appointment has been endorsed by former stars such as IM Vijayan, Shabir Ali and Climax Lawrence, who now forms the federation's technical committee.

"His ability to take Indian national team ahead has been supported by former players like IM Vijayan, Shabir Ali, Climax Lawrence, Subrata Paul, Shabir Pasha, Armando Colaco, Tababi Devi and Pinky Magar. They all have collectively voted for him.



"Jamil understands the Indian players' mentality, psychology, challenge and advantage. I believe as coach Khalid has said that he is looking at one match at a time. And I understand coach needs some time to settle with the team and the players."

"So, I am sure how Khalid has proved his merit in club competition, he will also prove his merit with international team."

Chaubey also acknowledged the ongoing crisis in Indian football due to concerns over the future of top-tier league ISL but expressed confidence of overcoming all the obstacles.

Following the July 11 decision of Indian Super League organisers FSDL to put the 2025-26 season on hold due to the uncertainty surrounding the renewal of the MRA (Master Rights Agreement) signed with the AIFF in 2010, three clubs have either paused first-team opera-

tions or suspended salaries of first-team players and staff.

"In the last few months, people who follow football, they know how the situation occurred, and how it has directly impacted and affected the livelihood of players. And not only players, there are thousands of support staff or someone whose profession is related to football," Chaubey said.

"Therefore, we are in continuous communication with all the stakeholders to ensure that players' livelihood must not be affected. And we will all come together to find a solution. I am very hopeful that with the cooperation from all the stakeholders, we will be able to find a way when we submit our proposal to the honourable Supreme Court."

"And thereafter, the Indian football club can utilize the window of 31st August (transfer window deadline)."

NA Haris, the AIFF vice president and president of the Karnataka State Football Association, has expressed his disappointment when asked about reports that Bengaluru's Sree Kanteerava Stadium failed to get clearance from Asian Football Confederation to host the AFC Asian Cup 2027 qualifier home match between India and Singapore on October 14.

The AFC has now asked the AIFF to look for an alternative venue to organise the game.

"It was deemed unfit for the upcoming qualifier games. See, it is a stadium for all sports. It is an athletic area. So, everyone has to work together. So, there have been some practices going on," Haris told reporters.

"Sometimes, when the match date is fixed, we control that and keep the stadium in good condition. Suddenly, this has come to us. We are very sad that the match is going somewhere else. We are not at all happy. But then, it was not in our hands. It was out of our control."

"And soon, Karnataka Football Association will have a very good stadium coming up in Bangalore. We are just working on that also. And this is like we Bangaloreans, and we missed an opportunity for a good football match," he added.

The away match is on October 9 in Singapore, who lead the group with four points, while India struggle at the bottom with just one point from two games, after a draw with Bangladesh and a loss to Hong Kong. (PTI)

Pranavi finishes as top Indian in 21st place in Hills Open

GOTHENBURG (SWEDEN), Aug 25: A double bogey late in the final round put paid to Indian golfer Pranavi Urs' hopes for a top-15 finish as she ended at tied 21st at the Hills Open here. Pranavi, who is slowly making a comeback after an injury, shot 2-under 69 and totalled 4-over for the week to finish tied-21st at the Hills Golf & Sports Club on Sunday.

After four birdies on the seventh, 11th, 12th and the 14th, she was going great till she double bogeyed the par-4 17th. The back nine saw tough conditions.

Hitaasheet Bakshi (71) finished tied-41st with a total of 7-over while Sneha Singh slipped in the final round with a 76 and ended tied-47th.

The other four Indian golfers, Tvesa Malik, Amandeep Drall, Avani Prashanth and Vani Kapoor missed the cut.

Swedish amateur Meja Orten secured her maiden Ladies European Tour (LET) title on home soil, finishing two shots clear of the field. The 20-year-old Stanford University student impressed in front of home crowd, started the day tied for the lead with Germany's Leonie Harm. She went on to shoot 1-under 70 despite two late bogeys and a double bogey. She finished at 6-under for the week and was two clear of Lisa Pettersson (70) and Leonie Harm (72). Orten joins England's Lottie Woad who won as an amateur at the 2025 KPMG Women's Irish Open, and Jana Melichova at the 2022 Czech Ladies Open. (PTI)

Test cricket is challenging and draining, game demands longevity: Rohit Sharma

MUMBAI, Aug 25: Reflecting on some aspects of his Test career that he decided to end earlier this year, former India captain Rohit Sharma on Monday said the format is both "challenging and draining" but he learnt to cope with its demands by focussing on preparation.

The 38-year-old, who averaged a decent 40.58 for his 4301 runs in 67 Tests, retired from the five-day game in May a year after calling it quits from T20 Internationals, having led India to the World Cup title in the format.

On Monday, he looked back at some of that time during a CEAT event while speaking on preparations for big moments during a panel discussion.

"It is something that you prepare for, because the game demands longevity," he said. "Especially in the Test format, you have to last for five days. Mentally, it is very challenging and it is draining as well. But all cricketers have been brought up playing First-Class cricket.

"When we start playing cricket at a competitive level, even in Mumbai, club cricket (matches) go on for two days (or) three days so we are built like that and it starts at a very young age for us. It kind of makes it a little easier now to respond to situations that are there in front of you," he added.

Rohit said not all young players understand the importance of preparing well at the start of their careers but they learn the significance of it gradually.

"...when I started playing the sport, it was



all about having fun, enjoying (it)," Rohit said

"As you go on, you start playing age group cricket and you kind of keep moving forward from that. Slowly, as you meet a lot

of senior players (and) coaches, they talk about how important it is to prepare well.

"When you are very young, you don't understand the importance of preparation. But as you go along, you understand, it gives

you a kind of discipline that the game asks for, so it starts with preparation, understanding what exactly you need to do," he said.

Rohit said sustaining momentum for high performance, especially in Test cricket, begins with being mentally fresh.

"It takes a lot when you're playing the longest format and concentration is something that is the key, because you are speaking about high level performance and when you are expecting to put in high level performance, it starts with being mentally fresh all the time," he said.

"A lot of work starts behind the scenes. Like I said, in preparation. I have to go back again to that because that is where it all starts. You prepare yourself to sustain for the longer period of time on the field."

Rohit said it did not transpire any differently for him and over time, he began spending a lot of time on preparations.

"It exactly happened to the same (way) with me, when I started playing for Mumbai and then went on to play for India. A lot of the focus, a lot of my time was given (on) how I prepped before the game," he said.

"Because once the game starts, it's all about reaction and you react to whatever is thrown at you, whether it is a pressure situation, whether it is making the right decision on the field with the bat or with the ball.

"A lot of time was devoted to prep and I'm sure it's not just in cricket, but anywhere, whatever you do with life, I think preparation is the key," he added. (PTI)

Harshit Rana ready for Asia Cup duties

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: India pacer Harshit Rana says game time in the ongoing Delhi Premier League has served as ideal preparation for the Asia Cup beginning on September 9. Rana was with the Indian Test team in the UK briefly after the India A shadow tour. He had last played for India in the Champions Trophy in February.

"It is not at all that I am out of practice. In the last 20-25 days, I have played 12-13 T20 matches. So, my practice (for India) is because of DPL (Delhi Premier League), before that our team's practice was going on.

"So that is a plus point for me that I am bowling well in the matches and overall performance has been good," Rana told PTI Videos. Rana is excited about reuniting with Jasprit Bumrah, who would be available for the whole of Asia Cup after playing three out of five Tests in England due to workload management. "I can't tell you what Jassi (Jasprit Bumrah) bhai brings to the table, playing with him is really special, he makes things easy for us. If he's around, the pressure on us is minimal.

"I try to stay calm, it's always pretty exciting to wear the India jersey and play with kind of quality bowling unit we have right now. I try to give my best every time, not thinking much about the outcome," he said. (PTI)

Khalid Jamil names 23-member Indian team for CAFA Nations Cup

BENGALURU, Aug 25: Indian football team's new head coach Khalid Jamil on Monday named a 23-member squad for the CAFA Nations Cup starting August 29, which will mark his first assignment since taking charge of the national side.

The Blue Tigers will travel to Tajikistan to compete in the tournament, where they have been drawn in Group B alongside hosts Tajikistan, defending champions Iran, and Afghanistan.

India face hosts Tajikistan on August 29 followed by matches against Iran on September 1 and Afghanistan on September 4.

Jamil has homed in on his final squad after a camp which was attended by 29 players, with Mohun Bagan refusing to release their seven recruits on the grounds that the tournament is not being held on a FIFA window.

However, the East Bengal trio of Anwar Ali, Naorem Mahesh Singh, and Jeakson Singh Thounaojam joined the camp last Friday before Jithin MS connected with the probables on Sunday after finishing his club engagements. All four of them are part of the squad picked by Jamil for the CAFA Nations Cup.

Seasoned goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu returned to the fold. Talisman Sunil Chhetri is not part of the team as Jamil had not called him for the camp. Also missing out on selection were Mohun Bagan's Liston Colaco, Manvir Singh and Subhasish Bose

after the club's refusal to release them for the national camp.

The tournament format will see the top two teams from each group progress to the play-offs, scheduled for September 8. The group runners-up will contest the third-place match in Dushanbe, while the winners will meet in the final in Tashkent.

Jamil, who impressed during his tenure as head coach with Jamsheer FC, will have his task cut out while leading the national team.

India are struggling in the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers, with just one point from their opening two matches and sitting at the bottom of the group.

Jamil began his first camp with the Blue Tigers on August 1.

India squad:
Goalkeepers: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Hritik Tiwar.

Defenders: Rahul Beke, Naorem Roshan Singh, Anwar Ali, Sandesh Jhingam, Chinglensana Singh, Hmingthamvawia Ralte, Muhammed Mvavia.

Midfielders: Nikhil Prabhu, Suresh Singh Wangjam, Danish Farooq Bhat, Jeakson Singh, Boris Singh, Ashique Kuruniyan, Udanta Singh, Naorem Mahesh Singh.

Forwards: Irfan Yadwad, Manvir Singh (Jr.), Jithin MS, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Vikram Partap Singh.
Head Coach: Khalid Jamil. (PTI)



Sinquefield Cup: Praggnanandhaa still joint second on another day of draws

ST. LOUIS (US), Aug 25: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa settled for his fifth consecutive draw, splitting points with Poland's Jan-Krzysztof Duda in the sixth round of the Sinquefield Cup, part of the Grand Chess Tour.

With this result, Praggnanandhaa moved to 3.5 points from six games, maintaining a joint second position. Meanwhile, American Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana held on to his lead with 4 points, staying half a point ahead of the field.

Giving Praggnanandhaa company is American Levon Aronian. World champion D Gukesh is still tied for the fourth spot on 3 points along with Wesley So and Samuel Sevian of United States, and the French duo of Alireza Firouzja and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

In the sixth round Gukesh survived another scare before steering the game to a draw with Firouzja.

On another all-drawn day, Caruana shared the point with Sevian and Nodirbek Abdusattorov got the same result against Vachier-Lagrave. Aronian also drew with Wesley making it the second day in a row when all the games were drawn. Praggnanandhaa opted for the Alapin variation against the Sicilian defense of Duda and obtained some optical advantage. (PTI)

Fantasy Nightmare: BCCI begins hunt for new sponsor after Dream11 walks out

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: Fantasy sports company Dream11 is no longer the title sponsor of the Indian cricket team and the Board has initiated the process to find a replacement, which is unlikely to be finalised in time for next month's Asia Cup.

As reported by the PTI on Sunday, Dream11 won't be continuing as Indian cricket team's title sponsor, starting from the men's Asia Cup, after the government banned real money gaming under the recently-passed 'Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming' act.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia confirmed that the deal with Dream11 has ended and BCCI is putting the process in motion to get new title sponsor for various national teams.

"Our stand is very clear. With government regulations in place, the BCCI cannot continue its sponsorship relationship with Dream11 or any such other gaming company. Under the new restrictions, there is no scope and we are facing a roadblock with Dream11," Saikia told PTI on Monday.

"So we cannot continue with them and therefore trying to find some alternatives, and that process is now ongoing. The vacant position of the sponsor is something that we are trying to fill and till now nothing has been completed. Once something happens we will let you know with a media advisory," he added.

The ban on real money gaming has affected the revenue stream of



all fantasy gaming companies.

"...no person shall offer any, aid, abet, induce, indulge, engage in offering online money gaming services nor shall involve in any advertisement which directly or indirectly promotes any person to play any online money game," the act states. The legislation also makes it clear that there could be financial penalty upto ₹ one crore or a jail term of three years in case of a violation.

Dream11 won the tender for Indian national teams (Senior Men, women, Emerging (U23), U-19 men and women) in 2023 for a period of three years for ₹ 358 crore (USD 44 million). They are exiting with almost a year still left in the contract but are unlikely to be penalised for it.

"The BCCI fully understands one of our sponsorship partner's plight. It is not their fault and unlike other issues of payment de-

fault, there won't be any penalty levied on Dream11. This is a government rule and full compliance is required and in the current scenario, there business will be impacted," a top official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"Obviously BCCI's profits also get impacted on a short term basis and we now have to put new plans in place," he added.

He also informed that with only 15 days left for India's opening Asia Cup match in the UAE, it will be very difficult to find a new sponsor.

"There is a process in place. We have to put an advertisement inviting bids to become title sponsor of the national team. First you invite bids, then scan and scrutinise the bids and then announce the winner.

"It is a process that takes a certain amount of time and needs to be done keeping legal modalities in mind," the official said.

With Dream11's exit, another company My11Circle will also find it tough to remain the fantasy sports partner of the Indian Premier League. My11Circle has pledged ₹ 625 crore for a period of five years (₹ 125 crore annually).

"Obviously, we are keeping a watch on proceedings. Any company dependent on real money gaming is going to take a huge hit. But for IPL, the BCCI has enough time even if any company pulls out. IPL start in mid-March next year and a process, if required, can be put in place," he said. (PTI)

Sana to lead Pakistan in Women's World Cup, uncapped Eyman in 15-member squad

LAHORE, Aug 25: Uncapped batter Eyman Fatima, who recently made her international debut in the T20Is in Ireland, was on Monday included in the 15-member Pakistan squad to be led by Fatima Sana in the upcoming ICC Women's World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

Eyman, a right-handed batter, had impressed in Pakistan's National T20 tournament in May.

Apart from Eyman, six other players -- Natalia Parvaiz (8 ODIs, 24 T20Is), Rameen Shamim (8 ODIs, 11 T20Is), Sadaf Shamas (15 ODIs, 12 T20Is), Sadia Iqbal (27 ODIs, 50 T20Is), Shawaal Zulfiqar (3 ODIs, 9 T20Is) and Syeda Aroob Shah (2 ODIs, 15 T20Is) -- are set for their maiden ODI World Cup appearances.

The 21-year-old Aroob, 20-year-old Shawaal and 20-year-old Eyman had featured for Pakistan in the inaugural edition of ICC Women's Under 19 T20 World Cup in 2023.

All-rounder Sana will continue to lead the side, and will be hoping for a successful outing in the global mega-event to be held from September 30 to November 2, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement.

The 23-year-old Sana, who represented Pakistan in the previous edition of the women's World Cup, will be leading the side for the first time in the mega event. She had previously captained the side in the women's World Cup



Qualifier held here earlier this year.

Two changes have been made to the 15-member squad that featured in the ICC Qualifiers. Eyman and Sadaf came into the squad in place of Gull Feroza and Najjha Alvi, who have been named in the five-member non-travelling reserves alongside Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar.

Pakistan qualified for the tournament in April this year.

The side finished in the pole position in the qualifiers, after winning all their games, including victories over West Indies and Bangladesh.

Pakistan will play all their group-stage matches at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo. Should Pakistan qualify for the October 29 semi-final and the November 2 final, then both the matches will take place in Colombo.

The same squad will also fea-

India confident of winning Asia Cup after 8 years and qualify for WC: Coach

RAJGIR, Aug 25: Three-time champions India are confident of reclaiming the men's Asia Cup hockey title after a hiatus of eight years and qualify for next year's World Cup when the continental event begins here on August 29.

Reigning Olympic bronze medallist and currently the continent's no.1 side, India last won



the Asia Cup in 2017 in Dhaka, beating Malaysia 2-1 in the final.

In the last edition of the tournament in Jakarta in 2022, India finished third behind champions South Korea and Malaysia.

"The team's preparation has been solid for this tournament. Our approach will be similar to that of Paris Olympics where we began with good wins in the pool stage.

"We want to start well here, take it game-by-game, build on our momentum and we are cognisant that it's been eight years since India last won the title (in 2017, Dhaka). While we are con-

fidant of winning, we don't want to take any team lightly," India's chief coach Craig Fulton said after arriving here for the tournament.

With World Cup qualification at stake, India have fielded a strong squad here under the leadership of Harmanpreet Singh.

The World Cup next year will be co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands from August 14 to 30.

This will also be the first time that the Indian men's hockey team will play in Rajgir.

"We are very happy to arrive in Bihar for this prestigious tournament. It is great that international hockey is being hosted here and we want to inspire the people of this region with our game, and create more fans for the sport," Fulton stated.

India captain Harmanpreet reflected similar emotions.

"We have never played in Bihar and it's exciting to see that Rajgir is already hosting its second international hockey tournament within a span of one year. This shows the government's intent to support the game and we are looking forward to the love and support of hockey fans here throughout the tournament."

India are clubbed in Pool A alongside Japan, China and Kazakhstan while Pool B features Malaysia, Korea, Bangladesh and Chinese Taipei. (PTI)

Neeru strikes trap Gold, silver for Aashima; India sweep women's junior event

SHYMKENT (KAZAKHSTAN), Aug 25: National Games champion Neeru Dhanda experienced one of her finest days in the sport en route to winning the women's trap gold medal while compatriot Aashima Ahlawat claimed bronze at the Asian Shooting Championship here on Monday.

Neeru shot 43 in the final to claim the top prize ahead of Qatar's Basil Ray (37) and Aashima (29). Earlier in the day, double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker finished fourth in the women's 25m pistol competition before the Indian shooters swept the junior event at the continental tournament. Neeru, Aashima and Preeti Rajak also won the team gold in women's trap with 319 ahead of China and Kuwait.

Neeru and Aashima entered the six-women final in fifth and sixth position respectively after being involved in a shoot-off.

Neeru, who reached her first-ever ISSF World Cup final and finished a remarkable fourth at the Shotgun World Cup in Lonato, Italy in July, is a cousin of Indian trap shooter Lakshay Sheoran and picked up the sport after watching him in action.

Bhaker's compatriot Esha Singh ended sixth in the eight-women final with 18 points. Bhaker shot 25, four less than Vietnam's bronze medallist Thu Vinh Trinh (29). India's shooters, however, thoroughly dominated the 25m pistol women junior final, with Payal Khatri claiming the gold with a total of 36, Naamya Kapoor (30) winning silver and Tejaswani (27) bagging bronze. They also won the team silver after aggregating 1700, finishing behind Korea and ahead of host nation Kazakhstan. Naamya and Tejaswani were one and two in the qualifications, while Payal entered the junior final in sixth place.

Earlier in the day, Chinese shooters Yueyue Zhang and Jiariuxuan Xiao won the senior women's gold and silver medal respectively, the former prevailing 4-3 in the shoot-off after both were locked at 39 points.

The Indian trio of Bhaker, Esha and Simranpreet Kaur Brar won the team bronze with an aggregate score of 1749, finishing behind China and South Korea. (PTI)

Eminent athletes to join National Sports Day celebrations

NEW DELHI, Aug 25: Prominent athletes including Sumit Antil, Shreyasi Singh, Bhavani Devi and Vishnu Saravanan will be joining the pan-India celebration for the National Sports Day on August 29 from their home towns or training bases. Pranav Soorma, a Paris Paralympic silver medallist, will also be a part of the festival during which tributes will be paid to hockey icon Major Dhyan Chand, whose birth anniversary is commemorated on that day.

In addition, sporting icons like Abhinav Bindra, Sunil Chhetri, Murali Sreesankar, PV Sindhu, Manika Batra, Mirabai Chanu and others have urged people of all ages and communities to participate in the festival. Acting on a call given by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandavaya last week to transform this year's National Sports Day into a true people's movement, states and union territories across India have begun their preparations for this celebration, a press release stated on Monday.

Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and the UTs of Puducherry, Chandigarh and Delhi have already issued directions to their concerned departments to initiate preparations for the three-day festival. This year the National Sports Day (NSD) celebrations will be led by the Fit India Mission and organised as a three-day, nation-wide sports and fitness movement from August 29 to 31 under the theme 'Ek Ghanta, Khel ke Maidan Main'. (PTI)