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- BJP workers storm Bihar Cong HQ over 'abusive language' targeting PM
- Will write to all MPs urging them to consider my candidature: Reddy

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Manipur HC directs state govt to hold panchayat elections within six months

IMPHAL, Aug 29: The High Court of Manipur on Friday directed the state government to conduct panchayat elections within six months.

The order was issued by a division bench comprising Chief Justice Kempaiah Somashekar and Justice Guneshwar Sharma during a hearing on the long-pending local body polls.

Panchayat elections in the state were last held in 2017.

Although fresh polls were scheduled for June 2023 after the completion of the five-year term, they have remained pending.

Since then, the Panchayati Raj institutions have been functioning through administrative committees.

The court in its hearing noted that "in order to make the Panchayati Raj system workable in Manipur, the state government has been given the liberty to appoint fresh administrative committee for gram panchayat and administrator for zilla parishad not exceeding a period of six months."

The court also quashed all previous state government orders for appointments of administrative committees.

It said, "All orders of appointment of the administrative committee of the gram panchayat and administrator for zilla parishad, issued by state government in pursuance of the interim order dated 29.02.2024 for a term exceeding the period (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP blows 'war bugle' for Assam polls of 2026

Shah targets Gaurav, says Assam cannot be led by people who make frequent visits to Pak ● Himanta govt's achievements hailed

GUWAHATI, Aug 29: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said Assam cannot be led by people who make frequent visits to Pakistan, apparently referring to state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi's alleged links with the foreign nation.

He asserted that the BJP-led NDA will form the third consecutive government in Assam next year, riding on the back of the massive development works of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and CM Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Addressing a rally of panchayat representatives here, Shah blew the 'war bugle' for Assam assembly polls due in March-April next year and said the state cannot be represented by leaders who protect the infiltrators and encroachers.

"Modi carried out immense development works across the country, and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma took that flow to every household of the state. On the back of these works, the BJP-led NDA will form the government in Assam for the third consecutive term next year," he said.

Slamming opposition Congress, Shah said Assam cannot be al-



lowed to be led by people who encourage encroachments by infiltrators.

"Assam will continue to be led by Modi and Sarma," he added.

Alluding to Gogoi, Shah said, "Assam cannot be led by people who visit Pakistan frequently."

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

Sarma had claimed that Gogoi's British wife Elizabeth Colburn had travelled 19 times between India

and Pakistan.

Shah said, "Infiltrators encroached thousands of acres of our land. The BJP government launched a drive to clear encroachments, but Gaurav Gogoi opposed it. The Assam government freed 1,29,548 acres from encroachment by infiltrators."

The home minister asserted that the BJP has restored the sanctity of Srimanta Sankardeva and Mahapurush Madhavdeva's satras (Vaishnavite monasteries) by evicting infiltrators from their lands.

"Infiltrators encroached on the lands of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Cong failed to give due respect to leaders like Borbora: Shah

Assam recalls contributions of first non-Cong CM Golap Borbora on birth centenary

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 29: Contributions of Assam's first non-Congress CM Golap Borbora were recalled as the state celebrates his birth centenary on Friday even as Union Home Minister Amit Shah, while attending a programme to mark the occasion, said that Borbora was among the many leaders sidelined by the Congress despite their towering contributions to the nation.

A socialist leader and freedom fighter, Borbora was also the first opposition member to be elected to the Rajya Sabha from this north-eastern state.

"Celebrating the birth centenary of Golap Borbora, a leader whose



life was a testament to courage, simplicity and dedication to Assam's people," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a post on X.

Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal in a social media post,

paid his tribute to Borbora, and said, "With steadfast dedication and selfless service, Golap Borbora, the first non-Congress chief minister of Assam, earned a lasting place in the hearts of the people."

Expressing gratitude to the state government for marking the birth centenary of Borbora, his son, Pankaj Borbora said, "We are thankful that the state government has taken this initiative. The ideologies that our father stood for are reflected in the work of the present government also."

He recounted his father's active participation in the freedom struggle and several movements for the rights of the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM reiterates Jati, Meti and Bheti protection slogan

Govt to bear medical expenses of panchayat members and their families from 2026

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 29: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday used the massive gathering of panchayat representatives at Khanapara to showcase his government's achievements and deliver a fiery political message aimed squarely at the Congress and its allies.

Addressing more than 21,000 elected representatives, Sarma said the BJP's sweeping victory in the recent panchayat polls was a "mandate for continuity" and proof of people's faith in the party. "Out of 397 panchayat seats, we bagged 301. At the ward level, BJP won over 21,900 seats. This verdict is the people's blessing on the BJP-led alliance," he declared.

In a key announcement, the Chief Minister unveiled a new welfare measure for grassroots leaders: from January 1, 2026, the state government will bear the medical expenses of panchayat members

and their families.

Sarma reminded the gathering that the BJP came to power in 2016 with the slogan of protecting Assam's jati, mati, bheti (community, land, and identity), and insisted that the commitment remains unchanged. He reeled off milestones achieved under BJP rule—UNESCO recognition for Charaideo Maidams, classical language status for Assamese, global promotion of Bihu and Jhumur, implementation of the cattle slaughter ban, and big-ticket projects like AIIMS, the new IIM campus, and the proposed Brahmaputra underwater tunnel.

He also highlighted flagship schemes like Orunodoi and the Entrepreneurship programmes for women and youth, calling them "lifelines for the state's poor and aspirational classes."

But it was his sharp political attack that drew the loudest response. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Putin to meet Modi on sidelines of SCO Summit

MOSCOW, Aug 29: Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in China's Tianjin, Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov said on Friday.

Both Modi and Putin will travel to China to attend the SCO Summit from August 31 to September 1.

"Right after the SCO Plus meeting (on September 1), our president will meet Indian Prime Minister Modi," Ushakov told journalists.

It will be their first meeting this year, although they have been regularly in touch on the phone, he said.

"Our countries are bound by a special strategic partnership," he said. "A relevant statement in this regard was passed in December 2010, which means that this year marks the 15th anniversary since then." "What is especially important is that preparations will be discussed for the upcoming visit of our president to India in December," Ushakov added. (PTI)

India's GDP grows 7.8 pc in Q1: Govt data

NEW DELHI, Aug 29: India's economy grew by a stronger-than-expected 7.8 per cent in April-June, its fastest pace in five quarters, before US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs that now cloud the outlook, threatening key exports like textiles.

The gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal year was mainly driven by good showing by the farm sector, and also helped by services like trade, hotel, financial and real estate, according to the latest government data released on Friday.

The previous highest pace of growth in the country's GDP was recorded at 8.4 per cent during January-March 2024, as per the data.

India remains the fastest-growing major economy, as China's GDP growth in the April-June period was 5.2 per cent.

The agriculture sector recorded a 3.7 per cent growth, up from 1.5 per cent in the April-June period of 2024-25, as per the data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

However, manufacturing sector growth increased marginally at 7.7 per cent in the first

quarter of FY26 compared to 7.6 per cent recorded in the year-ago period. Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India had projected the real GDP growth rate for 2025-26 at 6.5 per cent, with 6.5 per cent in Q1, 6.7 per cent in Q2, 6.6 per cent in Q3, and 6.3 per cent in Q4.

Commenting on the official data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head - Research & Outreach, ICRA, stated that after the unexpectedly strong Q1 FY2026, a lower YoY (year on year) momentum of government capex and the looming hit to exports from the US tariff (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Bangladeshi court imprisons 1971 war veterans, university professor on terrorism charge

DHAKA, Aug 29: A Bangladeshi court on Friday sent 16 people, including several 1971 Liberation War veterans, to jail under the tough Anti-Terrorism Act, a day after a mob allegedly disrupted their scheduled public discussion in the capital.

Magistrate Farzana Haque ordered them to be sent to jail after they were produced in court nearly 24 hours after their detention.

Police had initially detained them for their protection from "public unrest" on Thursday.

Dhaka police after midnight Thursday said the detainees were being charged under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009 without further elaboration.

The initial case document submitted in the court suggested at least six of the 16 arrested were in their 70s.

"For the sake of a proper inves-

tigation, which is yet to be completed, and the identity and address of the accused is yet to be verified, it is 'absolutely necessary' to keep the accused in custody," read the police application submitted in court.

According to media reports, former minister and 1971 war veteran Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Dhaka University law professor Hafizur Rahman Curzon, and journalist Manjurul Alam Panna were among those sent to jail.

Abu Alam Shahid, freedom fighter and retired secretary to the government, who joined Thursday's meeting, said several of those arrested were 1971 veterans.

"Most of the senior persons arrested were 1971 veterans as yesterday's meeting was a freedom fighters discussion," the former bureaucrat said.

Newly-formed veterans' plat-

form 'Moncho 71' organised the discussion at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) auditorium and at the onset of the meeting, the mob allegedly stormed the scene.

They called the organisers and participants of the event "accomplices of the fascist regime" of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina. However, Shahid said to his knowledge "no Awami League leader" was there at the event.

Former minister Siddique was expelled from Hasina's cabinet and the party for breaching discipline in 2014.

The violent uprising led by the Students against Discrimination (SAD) toppled Hasina's Awami League regime on August 5, 2024, when she left the country for neighbouring India.

Three days later, Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus took over as the Chief Advisor (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Himanta pays tribute to Major Dhyhan Chand



GUWAHATI, Aug 29: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday paid tribute to legendary hockey player Major Dhyhan Chand on his birth anniversary, and said the state is taking strides to emerge as a sports hub.

"Remembering the legendary Major Dhyhan Chand on his jayanti, as we mark National Sports Day 2025," Sarma said in a post on X. "Assam has taken giant strides in the sports sector - player welfare, modern infra, Khel Maharan, et al. We are working towards making (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NEW DELHI, Aug 29: The Supreme Court on Friday sought response from the Centre on a plea by former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy seeking a direction to the government to "expeditiously" decide his representation to declare 'Ram Setu' as a national monument.

'Ram Setu', also known as Adam's bridge, is a chain of limestone shoals between Pamban Island, off the south-eastern coast of Tamil Nadu, and Mannar Island, off the north-western coast of Sri Lanka.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta agreed to hear Swamy's plea and issued notice to the Centre.

It posted the matter for hearing after four weeks.

In his plea, Swamy has referred to the January 19, 2023 order passed by the apex court in the matter.

On January 19, 2023, the Centre had told the top court that it was

looking into the issue pertaining to declaring 'Ram Setu' as a national heritage monument.

The top court was then hearing Swamy's plea on the issue.

"The solicitor general states that the process is currently underway in the Ministry of Culture, but if the petitioner would so desire, he may also submit any additional material or communication as he may wish within a period of two weeks," the apex court had noted in its January 2023 order.

The court had asked the Centre to take a decision on the issue and granted Swamy the liberty to move before it again if he was dissatisfied and disposed of his interim application on the issue.

The fresh plea filed by Swamy said no response or decision taken was conveyed either to him or to the apex court till date.

It said the Centre is duty-bound to protect 'Ram Setu' from any form of misuse, pollution or desec-

ration.

"It is also important to note that this archeological site is a matter of faith and 'shraddha' of people treating Ram Setu as a pilgrimage and all these archaeological studies and scientific findings are foundational evidence supplementing the existence of the man-made monument as a pilgrimage for worshippers," the plea said.

It said after the January 19, 2023 order, Swamy had made a representation to the government on January 27, 2023 with all the accompanying documents.

The plea said the petitioner had again written a fresh representation to the government on May 13, 2025.

It has sought a direction to the Ministry of Culture "to decide the representation of the petitioner in an expeditious manner/time-bound manner in compliance of order of this court dated January 19, 2023". (PTI)

Agency currently developing Lunar Module Launch Vehicle (LMLV) with capacity to haul 80-tonne payloads

ISRO eyes Mars landing, building habitats over next four decades

NEW DELHI, Aug 29: India plans to set up 3D-printed dwellings on Mars and launch precursor missions to land humans on the Red Planet in the next four decades, according to a roadmap for the future drawn up by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The roadmap is an outcome of nationwide consultations carried out by the space agency, which culminated at the National Space Day celebrations here last weekend.

According to the roadmap, India plans to build a crew station on the Moon by 2047, mine for minerals and other resources, operate crewed lunar terrain vehicles and also have propellant depots that could fuel inter-planetary missions and support the stay of astronauts on the Earth's only natural satellite.

ISRO has also drawn up plans to upgrade its launch vehicles significantly that would aim to carry 150-



tonne payloads to orbit in a single mission. At present, ISRO's launch vehicle GSLV Mark-III can haul up payloads up to 4 tonnes to the geosynchronous transfer orbit and 8 tonnes payload to low earth orbit (LEO).

The space agency is currently de-

veloping the Lunar Module Launch Vehicle (LMLV) with a capacity to haul 80-tonne payloads to LEO and 27 tonnes to trans-lunar orbit.

The LMLV is designed to be 119 metres in height, as tall as a 40-storey building, and is expected to be ready

by 2035. ISRO plans to use the LMLV for the lunar missions, including the first human mission to the Moon, planned for 2040, chairman V Narayanan said last week.

In 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had set targets for ISRO to build the Bhartiya Antariksha Station by 2035 and land an Indian astronaut on the Moon by 2040, signalling the government's long-term plans for the space sector.

Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla's recent sojourn to the International Space Station as part of a commercial mission and the planned Gaganyaan missions also signal the government's intent to support human spaceflights in a sustained manner.

The prime minister has also asked ISRO scientists to plan deep space exploration to unravel the secrets of the universe for the benefit of humanity. (PTI)

India and Japan resolve to expand defence cooperation

TOKYO, Aug 29: With an eye on Beijing's increasing military muscle flexing in the East and South China Seas, India and Japan on Friday unveiled a comprehensive framework to boost their defence cooperation to respond to contemporary security challenges.

The new initiative was announced after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shigeru Ishiba held summit talks that focused on significantly expanding the 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' between the two countries.

Under the framework, the two sides also resolved to explore co-development and co-production of military equipment and technology for current and future security needs.

In their talks, Modi and Ishiba resolved to uphold the international order based on the rule of law and reaffirmed their steadfast commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, prosperous and resilient, according to a joint statement. The two leaders welcomed the evolution of the four-nation Quad into a vital and enduring regional grouping, and looked forward to its next Leaders' summit to be hosted by India later this year.

Modi and Ishiba expressed serious concern

over the situation in the East and the South China Seas.

"They reiterated their strong opposition to any unilateral actions that endanger the safety as well as freedom of navigation and overflight, and attempt to change the status quo by force or coercion," the joint statement said.

"They shared their serious concern over the militarisation of disputed features. They reaffirmed that maritime disputes must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea," it said.

In his media statement, Modi said both sides have shared interests in the areas of defence and maritime security.

"We have jointly decided to further strengthen our cooperation in the fields of defence industry, and innovation," he said.

Under the new framework for defence cooperation, India and Japan decided to contribute to each other's defence capabilities by promoting interoperability and synergy between their defence forces.

To this end, the two sides decided to explore tri-service exercises and look at collaboration between their special operations units. (PTI)

Measures soon to boost exports Govt committed to shield industry from unilateral actions: Goyal

NEW DELHI, Aug 29: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said the government will soon announce measures to boost exports and domestic consumption, underlining its commitment to shield the industry from the adverse impact of unilateral actions by other countries.

The remarks are important as the US has imposed a steep 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods entering America from August 27.

According to exporters, shipments from labour intensive sectors such as shrimp, chemicals, leather and footwear would be hit from these tariffs.

Goyal assured exporters of all support in dealing with the current global uncertainties at the trade front, which were caused by the imposition of high tariffs.

"The government is committed to make sure that all of you do not face any stress or difficulties in managing the current situation emanating from some unilateral actions," Goyal said here at an industry event.

He urged the industry to highlight sectors that may get impacted by these tariffs and need alternative markets.

"We in the commerce ministry, through our Missions, are reaching



out to other parts of the world, to look at other opportunities which we can capture. We are also looking at giving a boost to domestic consumption...

"You will soon see the GST council meeting next week... So that the impact of these changes can be felt by all of you very quickly and that can give a quick demand booster to the entire domestic manufacturing sector," the minister said.

The upcoming GST Council meeting, he noted, is expected to provide measures that will quickly stimulate demand and give a strong boost to domestic manufacturing.

The government is in consultation with all the stakeholders, including Indian Missions abroad, for diversification of exports, he said.

"I can assure each one of you that in the days ahead, the government will be coming out with a variety of measures to support every sector, both to expand the domestic outreach and look for complementarities in other markets around the world to expand our global foray so that this year, our exports will exceed last year's exports."

"This year will define our self-confidence," the minister added.

In 2024-25, India's goods and services exports touched an all-

time high of USD 825 billion. Further, he said, India's exports share in the global market is low, so "we do not need to worry" too much about the global uncertainties at the trade front.

If a country wants to do a good trade pact with India, "we are always ready" for that, Goyal said, adding if "someone tries to discriminate against us... I feel that India's 140 crore population has self-confidence and self-respect, keeping that in mind, we will never bow down, nor will we ever be weak, together we will keep moving ahead..."

"We will capture new markets... I can say with confidence that this year our exports will be more than last year". He added that India is an import-dependent economy.

The country, Goyal said, has managed crises such as Covid-19 pandemic and nuclear sanctions successfully in the past.

Addressing construction sector players, he said there is a demand for about one million houses in Australia.

He invited Indian businesses, workers, and experts to seize this opportunity, stating that Australia is open to financial collaboration, technical expertise, and workforce support from India. (PTI)

Tariff trouble, foreign fund outflows keep equity benchmarks' slide show on for 3rd day

MUMBAI, Aug 29: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty fell on Friday, extending their downward journey for the third consecutive day, as investors stayed under pressure due to imposition of high US tariffs and relentless foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 270.92 points or 0.34 per cent to settle at 79,809.65. During the day, it declined 338.81 points or 0.42 per cent to 79,741.76.

The 50-share NSE Nifty edged lower by 74.05 points or 0.30 per cent to 24,426.85.

The US has imposed a steep 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods entering America from August 27. This high duty is expected to impact exports of certain labour-intensive sectors like textiles and leather and footwear and shrimp.

"Nifty ended with marginal loss of 74 points to close at 24,426.85 due to persistent concerns over the steep 50 per cent US tariffs on Indian exports," Siddhartha Khemka - Head Of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

From the Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra fell by 2.96 per cent, followed by Reliance Industries which lost 2.21 per cent. Infosys, NTPC, Tata Motors and Tech Mahindra were also among the laggards.

However, ITC, Bharat Electronics, Trent, and Larsen & Toubro were among the major gainers.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.41 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.29 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, realty declined 1.33 per cent, energy (1.01 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.95 per cent), IT (0.94 per cent), auto (0.84 per cent), oil & gas (0.77 per cent) and services (0.63 per cent).

BSE FMCG, industrials, capital goods, consumer durables and power were the gainers.

As many as 2,187 stocks declined while 1,890 advanced and 160 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Meanwhile, Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani on Friday announced the launch of Reliance Jio's initial public offering in the first half of 2026.

Addressing the 48th Annual General Meeting of RIL, Ambani announced that Jio will now expand its operations overseas and develop its own artificial intelligence technology.

On Thursday, the Sensex tanked 705.97 points or 0.87 per cent to settle at 80,080.57. The Nifty



dived 211.15 points or 0.85 per cent to 24,500.90.

In the past three trading days, the BSE benchmark has plummeted 1,826.26 points or 2.23 per cent, and the Nifty tumbled 540.9 points or 2.16 per cent.

"Investor sentiment remained cautious as markets attempted to digest the full impact of the US tariff. The persistence of this issue is likely to heighten the future competitiveness of India's exports in some areas."

"Equity benchmarks underperformed, with mid and smallcap segments particularly affected by risk aversion and stretched valuations," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) off-loaded equities worth ₹ 3,856.51 crore on Thursday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth ₹ 6,920.34 crore, according to exchange data.

"The Sensex ended Friday's trade on a subdued note, slipping 270.92 points to close at 79,809.65 as persistent concerns over US tariffs on Indian exports weighed on investor sentiment and kept foreign inflows under pressure," Vikram Kasat, Head - Advisory, PL Capital, said.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark dropped 1,497.2 points or 1.84 per cent, and the Nifty declined 443.25 points or 1.78 per cent.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled lower while Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended in positive territory.

Markets in Europe were trading lower.

The US markets ended higher on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.80 per cent to USD 68.07 a barrel. (PTI)

HDFC Bank Parivartan impacts 5,000 individuals through sports initiatives

GUWAHATI, Aug 29: Marking National Sports Day in honour of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand, HDFC Bank Parivartan announced that its CSR initiatives have impacted over 5,000 individuals through various sports development programmes across India. The information was shared in an official statement issued by the Bank.

According to the statement, the Bank is supporting 38 women athletes through its partnership with the GoSports Foundation under the Unstoppable - Karke Dikhaungi (UKD) programme launched in 2022. These athletes, representing six disciplines—weightlifting, athletics, swimming, badminton, archery, and table tennis—have collectively secured 204 medals, including 36 at international competitions. The initiative provides holistic support such as training, sports science education, competition exposure and financial assistance, with the aim of building a new generation of female role models in Indian sports.

The statement further informed that HDFC Bank is also working with the Foundation for Promotion of Sports and Games to support both senior and junior athletes, including para-athletes, through funding, equipment, and training support, with a focus on Olympic potential. Alongside athlete development, the Bank is revamping sports infrastructure under the Sports RISE project in states such as Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

In June this year, HDFC Bank, in partnership with Plan International, inaugurated the refurbished District Sports Stadium at Baghat, Uttar Pradesh, benefiting over 2,500 individuals. The upgraded facility now includes a swimming pool, indoor courts, jogging track and solar lighting.

In Haryana, the Bank has supported the upgrade of Tau Devi Lal Stadium and Gymkhana Club in Panchkula, which now feature a 10-lane shooting range, fencing gear, an obstacle course and enhanced swimming facilities. Similarly, at PM Shri Government Senior Secondary School in Nilokheri, Karnal, facilities have been revitalised with new badminton and basketball courts, a boxing ring, solar-powered infrastructure and a Sports Resource Centre.

"Reliance Intelligence will create a home for world-class researchers, engineers, designers, and product builders, combining the speed of research with the rigour of engineering, so that ideas become innovations and applications, providing solutions to India and the world," Ambani said.

RIL also announced an India-focused AI joint venture with tech giant Meta that will build and scale AI solutions for enterprises in India and select international markets. Under the JV agreement, RIL and Meta have jointly committed to an initial investment of Rs 855 crore (about USD 100 million) to capitalise the JV in a ratio of 70 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively.

"Meta and Reliance are going to deliver our open-source AI models to Indian businesses to help them fuel their work. With Llama, we have seen how AI can amplify human potential, boosting productivity, inspiring creativity, and accelerating innovation. And now, with Reliance's reach and scale, we can bring this to every corner of India," Meta Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg said. (PTI)



Intelligence promises to deliver AI everywhere for every Indian," Ambani said.

Reliance Intelligence is conceived with four clear missions: to house India's next-generation AI infrastructure, to house global partnerships, to build AI services for India, and to foster AI talent, he said.

"Work has already begun on the gigawatt-scale, AI-ready data centres in Jamnagar. These facilities will be delivered in phases aligned to India's growing needs, powered by Reliance's new energy ecosys-

tem, and custom-made for AI training and inference," Ambani said. Reliance Intelligence will also cater to global partnerships, bringing together tech titans from across the world to open-source communities.

"Reliance Intelligence will deliver trusted, easy-to-use AI services for consumers, small businesses, and enterprises, and solutions for sectors of national importance such as education, healthcare, and agriculture. The services will be reliable at scale and affordable for every Indian."

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BJP blows 'war bugle'

Srimanta Sankardeva and Mahapurush Madhavdeva's satras during the Congress regime. Even if Gogoi opposes, the BJP will clear every inch of encroached land from infiltrators. You (Gogoi) can do whatever you like, we won't stop," he added.

Shah also claimed that the BJP government in Assam launched special operations to arrest the infiltrators, who used to marry the minor daughters of the state.

"Sarma government is also doing social reforms. He launched a big education scheme for girls. Currently, over nine lakh girls are studying with this scholarship," he added.

About Congress' performance in recent rural polls, Shah said, "If you want to find them in Assam panchayats, you will not find even with binoculars. When Sarma announced the panchayat polls and results were declared, the Congress was wiped out from the scene."

The panchayat poll was significant because it was the first election after the delimitation exercise, and Modi's development era in Assam and the Northeast has led to the presence of BJP representatives everywhere - from panchayat to parliament, he added.

"That is why the BJP wins every time. After the 1980's, this panchayat poll's result came with 74 per cent voting. From Assam, we have 11 MPs in the Lok Sabha out of 14 seats, five Rajya Sabha MPs. BJP has won all the 11 bypolls that took place after 2021. We have won the autonomous council polls in Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills and Rabha-Hasong," Shah said.

Praising the Modi-led central government, the former BJP national president asserted that the PM has developed the entire Northeast.

"Modi popularised Ahom general Lachit Barphukan. He established the 125-feet-tall statue of Lachit Barphukan and translated his biography into 23 languages. Now, every child knows about the person," Shah said.

Claiming that peace has returned to Assam during Modi's tenure, he informed the gathering that over 10,000 youths have laid down arms and a number of peace accords have been signed with many militant organisations across the region.

"This has led to peace not only in Assam, but the entire Northeast. In the Advantage Assam summit, over 5 lakh-crore worth of MoUs were signed. Out of that, MoUs worth Rs 1.4 lakh-crore have already started on the ground. The Rs 27,000-crore semiconductor factory by Tatas in Jagiroad is a game-changer for development in Assam," he added.

Shah also said the Sarma government has already appointed 1.21 lakh youths in four years without any corruption and nepotism, against the promise of one lakh jobs.

"I believe this figure will touch 1.5 lakh by the time the state goes to polls next year," he said.

The BJP had promised to provide one lakh government jobs every year in Assam during the campaigning of the 2021 assembly polls, but later modified that the figure was for the entire five-year tenure.

"Once Congress had said bye-bye to Assam, now Modi and Sarma are taking Assam to new heights by all-round development," Shah said. (PTI)

Manipur HC directs state

of 6 (six) months and till the election are held, are all set aside." The court said, "The state government is directed to conduct fresh election within a period of 6 months." The court also said the "state government is at liberty to appoint fresh administrative committee for the gram panchayat and administrator for zilla parishad for a period not exceeding 6 months." (PTI)

Cong failed to give due

working class in Independent India, including imprisonment for 19 months for opposing the emergency. Panjaj Borbora, a BJP state spokesperson, maintained that certain measures, like the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in some states, were also adopted during the Janata Party government in Assam.

"It was the intensive voters' list revision under his government ahead of the 1978 Mangaldai bye-election, which was similar to the ongoing SIR, that had brought forth the illegal Bangladeshi issue. He wanted to go for such revision in another 60 Assembly constituencies," Borbora told PTI.

"Had the revision been done, the illegal Bangladeshi problem would not have compounded to this level," he claimed.

Borbora maintained that the ideals of his late father remain relevant in the present context and thanked all those involved in taking forward his legacy, who had died on March 19, 2006, due to age-related ailments.

On the other hand, Shah said that it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government that had restored honour to such figures like Borbora.

Speaking at Borbora's birth centenary celebrations at Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra here, Shah said the socialist leader embodied empathy and service.

"I pay my heartfelt tribute to former CM Golap Borbora on his birth centenary. He played a crucial role in shaping Assam's politics and contributed significantly in the years after Independence," he said.

The Union Home Minister quoted Bharat Ratna Bhupen Hazarika's famous lines "Manuhe Manuhor Babe, Jibon Jibonor Babe", saying Borbora lived by those ideals. Recalling his political journey, Shah highlighted Borbora's tenure as general secretary of the Samyukta Socialist Party in 1965, his support for railway workers during the strike, and his strong stand against Indira Gandhi's Emergency.

"When Borbora became Chief Minister in 1978 as Assam's first non-Congress leader, a new era began for the state," he added.

Targeting the Congress, Shah said the party only celebrated its own icons while neglecting others.

"Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's statue was installed only under PM Modi in 2022. Assam's first Chief Minister Gopinath Bordoloi received the Bharat Ratna only after the BJP came to power. Despite being a Congressman, Bordoloi was ignored by Congress governments," he remarked.

Shah thanked the Assam Chief Minister for organising the centenary event, noting that Borbora had no association with the BJP yet deserved recognition. "He lived by socialist principles, but his voice was always for the poor and the marginalised. The younger generation must know about such leaders," he said. (With inputs from PTI)

CM reiterates Jati

Hitting out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and cleric Maulana Madani, Sarma thundered: "Assam will once again unsheath Lachit's hengdang (sword) against conspiracies to weaken our land. Through Basundhara we are giving land rights to indigenous people, not outsiders. Not a single inch will be compromised."

Challenging his opponents directly, Sarma added: "Rahul Gandhi, Madani—if you have the courage, fight politically with the people of Assam. We will build an Assam where Bharat Mata ki Jai resonates, where jobs are given without bribes, and where our identity remains invincible."

This conclave was widely viewed as the BJP's first big mobilisation ahead of the 2026 Assembly polls, projecting Sarma as the party's key poll general in Assam.

India's GDP grows

and penalties, would dampen growth prints in the coming quarters, notwithstanding the balm offered by GST rationalisation.

"Amidst continuing uncertainty, we maintain our baseline GDP growth forecast at 6.0 per cent for FY2026. The sharper than expected GDP growth print, which represents an acceleration over the previous quarter, has doused any expectations that the tariff related turmoil could prompt monetary easing in the October 2025 policy review," she added.

The NSO statement said, "Real GDP or GDP at Constant Prices in Q1 of FY 2025-26 is estimated at Rs 47.89 lakh crore, against Rs 44.42 lakh crore in Q1 of FY 2024-25, registering a growth rate of 7.8 per cent. Nominal GDP or GDP at Current Prices in Q1 of FY 2025-26 is estimated at Rs 86.05 lakh crore, against Rs 79.08 lakh crore in Q1 of FY 2024-25, showing a growth rate of 8.8 per cent."

It also stated that mining & quarrying (-3.1 per cent) and electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services sector (0.5 per cent) has seen moderated real growth rate during Q1 of FY 2025-26.

Tertiary sector has recorded a substantial growth rate of 9.3 per cent at Constant Prices in Q1 of FY2025-26, over the growth rate of 6.8 per cent in Q1 of FY 2024-25.

Tertiary sector includes services like trade, hotel, transport, financial institutions, real estate, professional services, public administration and defence. NSO also stated that the Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE) has bounced back, registering a 9.7 per cent growth rate in nominal terms during Q1 of FY 2025-26, over the growth rate of 4.0 per cent in Q1 of FY 2024-25.

Real Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) has reported a 7.0 per cent growth rate during the reporting quarter as compared to the 8.3 per cent growth rate in the corresponding period of previous financial year.

Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) has recorded a 7.8 per cent growth rate at Constant Prices, as against the growth rate of 6.7 per cent in Q1 of FY25.

The discrepancies (differences in values calculated using different methods of GDP estimation) jumped to Rs 1.11 lakh crore during the first quarter of this fiscal from Rs 33,384 crore in the same period year ago. (PTI)

Bangladeshi court imprisons 1971

of the interim government. The 'Moncho 71' platform was launched earlier this month, announcing that it would uphold the "1971 Liberation War, Bangladesh's founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the 1972 Constitution, the national flag and the national anthem".

The group that stormed the DRU auditorium identified themselves as the 'July warriors' as they tore down the banner of the discussion and allegedly assaulted some of the participants.

"Freedom fighters of all political backgrounds were invited to the event. Soon after the programme started, more than 25 men came to the scene and created chaos," 1971 veteran Golam Mostafa told media persons.

Liberation War veteran and lawyer ZI Khan Panna, a key-organiser of 'Moncho 71', who had not joined the event due to health issues, in a video message on social media called the mob "a group of miscreants".

He said the assault "reflects what freedom of expression now exists in the country" under the interim government.

The DRU later issued a statement saying the organisation is an open platform. "Everyone has freedom of expression here. Threats or obstruction from any party are not acceptable here," it said.

The 1971 veterans were sent to jail two days after secretary general of former prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir alleged that efforts were underway to erase the 1971 Liberation War from people's memories.

"Many efforts are going on to make people forget 1971... those who helped the enemies at that time are now speaking loudly," the BNP leader said, referring to the country's largest Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami party, that opposed Bangladesh's 1971 Independence from Pakistan.

"We fought in the (independence) war of 1971. We have not forgotten 1971. It is not possible to forget," he added. (PTI)

Himanta pays tribute

Assam one of India's most preferred sports hub," he said. The birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand is observed as National Sports Day. (PTI)

NDA sets target to win 100 seats in Assam assembly polls

GUWAHATI, Aug 29: Slamming the Congress over alleged corruption during its tenure, several NDA leaders, including Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and AGP chief Atul Bora, on Friday set a target of winning 100 of the 126 assembly seats in next year's elections in the state.

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

"We will give land to our known people and will snatch away every inch of land from the unknown people. We will not settle down until we achieve our objectives," he added. Sarma also alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, along with "Islamic scholar Madani", threatened him in recent times.

"Madani and Rahul Gandhi came and threatened me. We know how to use 'hengdang' (Ahom sword) and give a befitting reply. We need to fight the battle of Saraighat again.

"I challenge Madani and Rahul Gandhi to fight with Assamese people. We will fight and win this battle," he added.

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

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

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

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

"But now, there has been an overall improvement in law and order. Many peace accords have been signed with in-

surgents under the NDA government," he added.

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

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

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

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

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

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



The six-year-long Assam Agitation, which culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord in August 1985

BJP will keep its promise to make country free of infiltrators: Amit Shah

GUWAHATI, Aug 29: Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the BJP will keep its promise to make Assam and the rest of the country free of infiltrators.

Addressing a programme in Guwahati on the birth centenary of the state's first non-Congress CM Golap Borbora, he said the high-powered demography mission, announced by PM Narendra Modi on Independence Day, is a definitive step towards studying the demographic pattern of the country and identifying infiltrators.

"We had made a promise to Assam, but we have not been able to fulfil it in 10 years. We will keep our promise and make Assam and the entire country free of illegal foreigners," he said.

Shah said the high-powered demography mission is based on Borbora's ideology, and it is befitting that it was announced in the same year the socialist leader's birth centenary is being celebrated.

"This mission will study the demographic pattern change in the country and also identify infiltrators... I am confident that it will be a major step towards freeing the country of infiltrators," he said.

"I am among those people who believe that not a single infiltrator should stay in our country," he added.

Shah recounted how Borbora, who led a Janata Party government from March 1978 to September 1979 in the state, had undertaken a drive to cleanse the voters' list when by-elections were necessitated for the Mangaldai Lok Sabha seat.

"In Assam, awareness against infiltrators was created for the first time through this



voters' list cleansing during Borbora's tenure. In that age, without computerised electoral rolls and technology, Borbora's government deleted the names of 36,780 illegal voters. If someone looks for the roots of the Assam Agitation, it will be in this cleansing exercise," he said.

The six-year-long Assam Agitation, which culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord in August 1985, was against illegal Bangladeshis living in the state.

Shah said the Election Commission is also undertaking a cleansing of the voters' list through Special Intensive Revision (SIR), but some parties are opposing it through the 'Ghusepetiya Bachao Yatra', in an apparent reference to the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra'. Main-

taining that the voters' list is the "heart" of any democratic country, he said, "This campaign was started in 1978 by Borbora and such is the moral degradation in society today that in order to strengthen their own vote bank, grab power, the move to delete names of infiltrators from the voters' list is being opposed."

"If Borbora was alive today, he would have come out on the road to protest against these parties," Shah maintained.

He lauded the state government for its actions against 'infiltrators', especially evicting encroachment and freeing over 1.29 lakh acres of land.

"The government here has freed not just Kaziranga forest land or other forest areas,

but also land of the Satras (Vaishnavite monasteries)," he said.

Shah also appreciated CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and his government for honouring Borbora, a staunch socialist leader who had no links with the BJP.

One has to rise above party politics and ensure that those who have contributed towards the nation are recognised and the future generations are aware of them, he said.

Shah claimed that after Indira Gandhi became the PM, contributions of only her family members were recognised by the Congress governments.

Stating that it was a trait of the BJP to recognise efforts of all, he said, "Sardar Patel's contributions were forgotten until PM Modi built his statue in Gujarat. Netaji did not have a notable memorial in Delhi before a statue was installed at Kartavya Path."

"Even Gopinath Bordoloi, the first CM of Assam, was bestowed the Bharat Ratna when the Congress was not in power," he added.

Shah said that Borbora's coming to power was a historic moment for the state as he was the first non-Congress leader to become the CM, and though his term was short, he left an indelible mark. Several decisions taken by his 18-month-government have impacted the socio-economic scenario of the state over the years, he said.

Free education till class 10, waiver of 'lagan' for up to 10 bigha of agricultural land, policy for small tea gardens, opening of passport office in Guwahati, and setting up of banking and railway recruitment boards in the state are among the notable decisions of his government, he added. (PTI)

Sensitization on HIV conducted at Luxmi Tea's Lepetkatta tea estate



HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Aug 29: An HIV Awareness programme was held at Lepetkatta Tea Estate with an aim at educating the local community on the causes, transmission, and prevention of HIV. The awareness meet was organised by Lepetkatta Tea estate in collaboration with Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH).

The session was conducted with the active participation of Ananta Hazarika and his team from AMCH, along with Dr. B.V. Topno, Senior Medical Officer (SMO). Representatives from SEWA (an NGO), Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), and around 70 tea estate workers were also present.

Hazarika gave a detailed explanation of HIV its causes, modes of transmission, and effective prevention strategies. Dr. Topno further elaborated on the same topic in the local language, ensuring the message was accessible to all attendees.

"Awareness is the first step in preventing HIV. Through community education and open dialogue, we can reduce stigma, promote early testing, and empower individuals to protect themselves and others," said Ananta Hazarika.

The collaborative effort aimed to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote early detection and care within the community. Such initiatives continue to play a vital role in public health outreach, especially in rural and plantation areas.

"HIV awareness has become very important today. It is not something to be associated with shame or untouchability. We should address HIV without prejudice and with compassion," said Ranu Ghoutwar, a worker from Lepetkatta Tea Estate.

AROHA mentor mentee programme held at Golaghat

HT Correspondent

GOLAGHAT, Aug 29: A flagship mentor - mentee programme for the meritorious students of secondary classes under the AROHAN scheme 2025-26 of the government of Assam was held at the auditorium of Sati Sadhani Kalakhetra, Golaghat today. The Programme was organized by the Golaghat District administration in association with the education department of the district. Altogether 176 selected students of the Govt. schools from the entire district participated in this programme.

District Commissioner Pulak Mahanta, Senior Superintendent of Police Rajen Singh and other high officials of the administration and the education department and other resource persons of the district were present there as mentors, upholding the necessity of taking everyone along with knowledge and good human values and about giving back to society.

Bhaba Goswami donates ₹50 Lakh to ASS for educational trust

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 29: Noted Advocate and writer Bhaba Goswami has contributed an amount of ₹50 lakh to establish an educational trust under the Assam Sahitya Sabha. Advocate Goswami has been associated with the Assam Sahitya Sabha since 1970 and has been serving the apex literary body of the state in various capacities during the years.

In a press release issued by the Sabha's Principal Secretary Debajit Bora, he stated that the formal agreement was executed on Thursday at Goswami's residence in Jorhat in the presence of Goswami's wife, Deepthi Dutta Goswami, son Advocate Sudipta Nayan Goswami, daughter-in-law Dr. Pranabika Mahanta Goswami, Sabha President Dr. Basanta Kumar Goswami, Central Office Secretary Dr. Jyotirekha Hazarika and Sabha Secretary Ashok Kumar Senapati. The trust will primarily focus on preparing students for administrative services and other competitive examinations. It aims to provide free coaching and guidance to economically disadvantaged students.

NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati handed over 3 ambulances to district administration

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 29: As part of its CSR initiatives, NTPC Bongaigaon, Salakati handed over three Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances to the District Administration, Kokrajhar, to strengthen medical facilities and provide timely support to patients in need.

The ambulances, fully equipped with modern medical support systems, were formally handed over by Arnab Maitra, Head of Project, NTPC Bongaigaon, Salakati to Smt. Masanda Magdalin Pertin, IAS, District Commissioner, Kokrajhar, in the presence of Kabita Deka, ACS, Additional District Commissioner, Kokrajhar, Amit K Asthana, AGM (HR), NTPC Bongaigaon, Dr. Atul Chandra Baro, Principal, Kokrajhar Medical College and Hospital, along with officials of the District Health Services, Kokrajhar, and the HR Department of NTPC Bongaigaon.

Speaking on the occasion,

Masanda M Pertin, IAS, District Commissioner, Kokrajhar, thanked NTPC Bongaigaon for its support in strengthening healthcare facilities in the district. Shri Arnab Maitra, Head of Project, NTPC Bongaigaon, reiterated NTPC's commitment to community well-being, highlighting that health and

welfare remain key focus areas of the company's CSR efforts. The ambulances were facilitated following a request from the District Administration.

As a part of strategic CSR to provide enhanced medical help for the needy and underserved sections of Kokrajhar district.

The District Health Services, Kokrajhar will operate and manage these vehicles with its staff, ensuring efficient and effective service delivery to the community. This initiative reflects NTPC Bongaigaon's continued commitment to promoting healthcare and extending meaningful support to the communities in its neighbourhood.

Cachar District Administration hosts live streaming of Home Minister and Chief Minister's address on birth centenary of former CM Borbora

HT Correspondent

SILCHAR, Aug 29: The Cachar District Administration on Friday organized a live streaming session of the speeches delivered by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma to commemorate the 100th birth anniversary of former Chief Minister of Assam, Late Golap Borbora.

The programme was held at the new Conference Hall of the District Commissioner's Office, Silchar, and marked a moment of reverence for one of the most respected leaders in the state's political history.

The event commenced with the gathering of officials and staff members from various wings of the district administration. District Commissioner Mridul Yadav, IAS, graced the occasion along with senior administrative officials including Dr. Khaleda Sultana Ahmed, ACS; Hemanga Nobis, ACS; Phyllis Hrangchal, ACS; Assistant Commissioner, Unhale Ashish Vidyadhar, IAS; Smt. Deepa Das, ACS, Assistant commissioner



who also serves as incharge DDIPR Barak Valley Zone, Silchar.

The program also saw active participation from the staff of the DC's establishment, the personnel of DDIPR Barak Valley Zone, and a significant representation of media fraternity,

who were present to cover the event and witness the historic addresses being broadcast live.

During the live telecast, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma paid glowing tributes to

Jorhat DC warns social organisations against compulsion donations for festivals

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 29: The Jorhat District Commissioner Jay Shivani, who is also the District Magistrate, has prohibited individuals, groups and organisations from forcing people to donate money as subscription or contribution, etc. for any purpose in Jorhat district.

An order passed by the DC under Section 163 in of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) has barred forceful collection of chanda/ donations, its subscription or contribution, etc., for any purpose from any public, business establishments, institution and the vehicles plying on road throughout the district of Jorhat. The order mentioned that in the event of violation of the prohibitory order by anyone, action would be initiated against the violator under Section

223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The order stated that the ban on collection of forceful donation has been imposed in view of reports of such instances (forcing people to donate) being carried out by certain social organisations for the sake of organising festival, utsavs, gatherings etc., in the district. The order also mentioned that there has been instances where such forceful collection of donations have been found to have links with various other anti-social elements having potential of disrupting peace and public tranquility in the district.

Further, the order stated that the developmental activities in the district and the economy as a whole suffers on account of such forceful collection of donations and cause negative impact on the productivity and employment generation in the district.

Education Advisory Committee expresses resentment against BTC education secretary

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 29: The Education Advisory Committee of the government of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) raised allegations against the BTC Secretary's Education Secretary, Amarjyoti Barman, accusing him of creating a deadlock in the education department for the past two months.

Talking the mediapersons in Kokrajhar on Friday, Education Advisory Committee member, Ranjit Narzary alleged that the Education Secretary of Govt of BTC had been showing excuses citing a

government letter, thereby halting various important works, including promotions of college teachers and other higher education-related files across several colleges in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

Narzary said that before the upcoming BTC elections, the process of college teachers' promotions was deliberately stalled under false pretenses. He further clarified that no such official letter was ever sent by the Assam government to the BTC education department. "It is astonishing that the Education Secretary Amarjyoti Barman mis-

guided both the BTC government and CEM of BTC Pramod Boro by citing a letter that does not exist," Narzary alleged. The Education Advisory Committee also revealed to the press that the so-called government letter shown by the Education Secretary was, in fact, only a private application letter and not an official government document. Terming the act as highly negligent and unfortunate, the committee accused the Education Secretary of misleading the BTC administration and causing prolonged hardships for the college teaching staff.

Late Golap Borbora, recalling his exceptional leadership, integrity, and far-sighted vision that contributed immensely to the democratic fabric of Assam. Their speeches emphasized Borbora's enduring values of public service and his steadfast commitment to the socio-economic upliftment of the people of Assam.

The dignitaries present at the DC's Office also reflected on the pivotal role played by Golap Borbora as Assam's first non-Congress Chief Minister, who left an indelible mark on the state's political and administrative history. The event served as a fitting tribute to his legacy, reinforcing the importance of remembering leaders who shaped the destiny of the state through their selfless service and dedication.

The Cachar District Administration expressed its sincere appreciation to all the officials, staff members, and media representatives whose active involvement ensured the successful organization of this significant commemorative program.

Railways Approves 37 stoppages of different trains over NFR

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 29: To enhance passenger convenience and fulfil long-standing demands, Ministry of Railways has approved 37 stoppages under the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) for various express and passenger trains at important stations.

In Dima Hasao district, stoppage has been given to the Agartala Anand Vihar Agartala Tejas Rajdhani Express at New Haf-long station and Rangiya Silchar Rangiya Express at New Harangajao station. In addition Kokrajhar station will now have a stop for the Dibrugarh Lalagarh Dibrugarh Express and Senchoa Junction for Tambaram Silghat Town Tambaram Express and Alipurduar Silghat Town Alipurduar Express.

Among other key locations in Assam are Goalpara Town station, which will now have stoppages for trains such as the Kolkata Silghat Town Kolkata Express and the Ranchi Kamakhya Ranchi Express and Sorbhog station which has been approved for halts of the Delhi Kamakhya Delhi Express and the Tambaram New Tinsukia Tambaram Express. Basugaon station has also been included for the Sealdah Sabroom Sealdah Express, while Agomoni station has received approval for the Alipurduar Silghat Town Alipurduar Express, whereas in the Barak Valley region, stoppages have been approved at Kayasthagram for Agartala Silchar Agartala Express and Katakhal Junction for Guwahati Silchar Guwahati Express.

Apart from Assam, approvals have also been granted for several stations in West Bengal. At Azamnagar Road, stoppages for trains including the Sealdah Alipurduar Sealdah Express, Sealdah Sabroom Sealdah Express and the Sealdah Silchar Sealdah Express have been confirmed. Similarly, stations such as Kumedpur, Sudhani, Taiabpur and Telta have been approved for halts for the Katihar - Siliguri Town Katihar Express and other long distance services. Old Malda and Rautara have also been included for DEMU and express services, enhancing local and regional connectivity.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

'When you have a dream, you've got to grab it and never let go.' - Carol Burnett

Trouble for Indian students in US

In 2025, for hundreds of thousands of young Indians, the dream of studying in the United States is alive — but under siege. A fiery Reddit post recently captured the angst: “What’s so wrong with us that every country wants to limit us?” The thread, posted on r/AdmissionProcedure, went viral as Indian students compared horror stories of visa rejections, skyrocketing costs, and hostile immigration laws across the developed world. But nowhere is the storm fiercer than in America — still the top destination for Indian students, still the epicentre of the H-1B job pipeline, and still the country where opportunity collides with politics. Despite the Howdy Modi Houston bonhomie of 2019 and now bitter Tariff war between Trump and Modi add to the fire as India resists any kneel down over its right to sovereignty and trade policies. Donald Trump’s second stint in the White House has been marked by sweeping immigration crackdowns. His play-book is familiar, but the reach has widened. From Visa Denial to Campus Survival, getting into the U.S. is just the beginning. Survival is a more poignant story. American universities are hiking tuition. A master’s degree can cost upwards of \$70,000. Add soaring rents in cities like New York, Boston, and San Francisco, and students are drowning in debt. Currency fluctuations make matters worse: every dip in the rupee adds thousands to the bill. F-1 visas allow only 20 hours of on-campus work per week. Off-campus jobs are illegal unless under Optional Practical Training (OPT). Trump’s policies have narrowed OPT pathways, especially in non-STEM fields. Students risk deportation if caught working cash jobs to survive.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has ramped up raids, even at universities. Fake university scams — like the infamous University of Farmington sting — still haunt Indian families. One visa slip, one expired document, one mistaken shift from full-time to part-time, and deportation looms. Indian students are also targets of hate crimes. Incidents of harassment in Mid-western and Southern states have rattled communities. Families in India now weigh not just costs, but also personal safety. For Indian students, the post-study phase is the biggest gamble. Many invest in U.S. degrees hoping for a work visa. But the H-1B lottery is brutal. Rejections strand graduates with degrees but no jobs, forcing abrupt returns.

As regards green cards even those who “make it” face purgatory. For Indians, the backlog stretches across generations. A student graduating in 2025 could realistically wait until the 22nd century for permanent residency. s Trump’s DOJ has opened an office specifically to audit naturalisation cases. Rumours of retroactive disqualifications terrify young Indians who see citizenship as the final reward. In effect: America beckons students with opportunity but, pushes them into a tunnel of uncertainty.

Language debate and future of Assamese identity

Assam finds itself at the confluence of language, culture, and politics, where the debates around the Assamese language have far-reaching consequences not only for cultural survival but also for the broader imagination of identity in the state. Language has historically been the defining symbol of Assamese selfhood, binding together communities in the Brahmaputra valley while also standing at the center of many conflicts that have tested the resilience of the state. To understand the present debate and its implications for the future of Assamese identity, one must revisit its history, confront the present challenges, and anticipate the trajectories ahead with clarity.

The roots of the Assamese language movement can be traced back to the nineteenth century when the colonial administration replaced Assamese with Bengali as the medium of instruction and administration in 1836. This decision created a rupture in cultural continuity and set into motion the first major battle for linguistic self-determination. Assamese intellectuals and reformers such as Anandaram Dhekial Phukan and the American Baptist missionaries fought for the reinstatement of Assamese, leading to the revivalist spirit that would later define the Orunodoi-era literary renaissance. This revival was not merely about securing a language in schools or courts; it was about affirming a collective identity in the face of marginalization. That experience remains etched in Assamese consciousness as the first assertion of cultural pride against both external imposition and internal erasure.

The decades that followed showed how language and identity became deeply intertwined with politics. Census figures from the early twentieth century reflected the shifts in linguistic affiliations, sometimes driven by demographic changes and at other times by the politics of assimilation. The growth of Assamese speakers between 1931 and 1951, from about a third to more than half the state’s population, was not solely a natural development but also linked to political efforts to unify diverse communities under a common linguistic umbrella. Yet this expansion also planted the seeds of contestation, as other linguistic groups felt alienated by what they perceived as forced assimilation into an Assamese identity.

The tensions came to a head during the Official Language Act debates of 1960 and the tragic events of 1961 in Silchar, where protests against the imposition of Assamese as the sole official language led to police firing and the death of eleven people in the Barak Valley. This remains one of the darkest chapters in Assam’s history, a reminder that language can unify but also divide when imposed without consensus. For Assamese speakers, the official recognition of their language was a historic victory, but for Bengali-speaking communities in Barak Valley, it was an existential threat. This duality illustrates the complexity of Assamese identity, which must constantly negotiate between assertion and accommodation.

In recent decades, demographic shifts caused by migration — both internal and cross-border — have reignited concerns about the future of Assamese language and identity. The Assam Accord of 1985, signed after years of agitation, sought to safeguard the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Assamese people through Clause 6, which promised constitutional, legislative, and administrative safeguards. Yet, decades later, the promise of Clause 6 remains largely unfulfilled, leaving space for anxieties to fester. For many Assamese speakers, the fear is not simply of numerical decline but of cultural dilution, where the language might lose its primacy in everyday life,

education, administration, and public discourse.

These anxieties became visible again during the census debates when certain organizations encouraged communities of Bengal-origin Muslims to declare Bengali as their mother tongue. This triggered sharp political responses, with the Chief Minister asserting firmly that Assamese would remain the official language of the state and any attempts to undermine it would not be tolerated. Such statements reflect the sensitivity

and dialects — Bodo, Mising, Karbi, Dimas, Rabha, and many more — each carrying its own cultural pride. For Assamese to remain the lingua franca, it must be seen not as a tool of dominance but as a shared platform of communication. The strength of Assamese identity will come not from rejecting diversity but from embracing it, positioning Assamese as the bridge language that connects all communities while respecting their distinctiveness.

The cultural heritage of Assamese literature, music, and cinema continues to inspire confidence in the vitality of the language. From the devotional verses of Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhabdeva to the modern plays of Jyotiprasad Agarwala, from the timeless Borgeets to the contemporary voices of Assamese cinema, the language has demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Its creative richness is a reminder that Assamese is not in decline but is very much alive, provided it is nurtured with care and foresight.

Education will be the key battleground in shaping the future of Assamese identity. Policies that strengthen Assamese-medium schools, update curricula with modern knowledge systems, and make learning attractive through technology will play a decisive role. At the same time, it is equally important to create space for English and other languages, so that Assamese students are not disadvantaged in global competition. The goal should not be to insulate Assamese speakers from global languages but to equip them to move fluidly between Assamese and English, between local and global spheres, thereby ensuring that Assamese remains relevant without becoming insular.

The political class has a responsibility to rise above short-term electoral gains and address the language debate with a vision for the future. Weaponizing linguistic insecurities for votes may yield immediate dividends but will ultimately weaken Assamese identity. Instead, leaders should commit to cultural policies that institutionalize support for the language across media, technology, and education, while simultaneously promoting harmony among communities.

The language debate in Assam is therefore not simply about Assamese versus Bengali or Assamese versus other ethnic languages; it is about redefining Assamese identity in a way that acknowledges both historical pride and contemporary pluralism. To secure its future, Assamese must be projected not as a language under siege but as a language of opportunity, creativity, and inclusivity. Only then can it command the loyalty of future generations, not through fear of decline but through the promise of relevance.

The history of Assam demonstrates that language is the core of its identity, but also that identity is not static. It evolves with time, responding to new challenges and embracing new realities. The task ahead is to ensure that Assamese evolves without losing its essence, that it speaks for all communities without being seen as a tool of exclusion, and that it thrives in the digital age while remaining rooted in its cultural soil.

Assam today stands at a linguistic crossroads, where decisions made in education, politics, and technology will determine whether Assamese emerges stronger or weaker in the coming decades. Its future lies not in retreating into isolation but in confidently asserting its place in both local and global contexts. For a state whose soul has always been expressed most vividly in its language, the path forward is clear: Assamese identity must be safeguarded not by erecting walls of exclusion, but by building bridges of belonging, ensuring that the language continues to carry the voices, dreams, and aspirations of its people for generations to come.



of the issue, as even census classifications are seen as direct threats to identity. The strong pushback against efforts to expand Bengali linguistic identity in Assam underscores the deep entanglement between language and political survival. It is no coincidence that leaders across parties frequently invoke the primacy of Assamese language when addressing issues of migration, citizenship, and demographic change.

Yet the politics of language in Assam is not only about confrontation. It is also about preservation, adaptation, and modernization. The Assamese language today faces challenges from globalizing forces, particularly the dominance of English in higher education, technology, and professional spheres. While Assamese continues to thrive in literature, cinema, and cultural life, its presence in digital platforms, scientific discourse, and higher academia remains limited. Without significant investment in modernizing Assamese language tools, creating robust digital infrastructure, and producing content

across diverse domains, there is a risk that younger generations may see Assamese as culturally im-

portant but practically dispensable.

The future of Assamese identity thus depends on how the language adapts to new realities. The digital age has opened new possibilities for regional languages to thrive, provided there is conscious effort to build resources and platforms. Assamese newspapers, television, cinema, and online content creators have expanded the reach of the language beyond traditional spaces. Technological advancements in natural language processing and digital publishing now allow Assamese to claim its place in global communication networks. Initiatives such as developing Assamese versions of popular software, increasing its visibility on social media platforms, and incorporating it into AI-driven tools are crucial steps to ensure the language’s survival in the twenty-first century.

But language is not just a technological or administrative issue; it is deeply social. Assamese identity cannot be preserved through exclusion or coercion but through inclusivity that acknowledges the multilingual nature of the state. Assam is home to numerous ethnic groups with their own languages

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Assam’s Landmark free drugs scheme An appraisal of the Indian ports bill 2025

By: Dipak Kurmi

In the evolving story of India’s public health landscape, Assam has recently carved a milestone that could set a precedent for the entire country. On August 26, Health Minister Ashok Singhal proudly declared that the state had achieved complete availability of free essential drugs across all public health facilities. This announcement was not a routine administrative update but a statement of vision, determination, and humanity. It revealed how deliberate investment in medicines — the most fundamental of health interventions — can become a transformative tool for equity and social justice.

The government of Assam has spent Rs 378.67 crore during the financial year 2024–25 to procure and distribute free medicines under its flagship healthcare initiative. For the ongoing fiscal year, an even larger allocation of Rs 445.73 crore has been made, underscoring the seriousness with which the state approaches this mission. At its core, the Free Drugs Scheme is about dismantling the financial barriers that have long separated the privileged from the vulnerable when it comes to accessing healthcare.

Minister Singhal’s words were emphatic. He stressed that the state has ensured one hundred per cent availability of free medicines as listed in the Essential Drugs List (EDL). These medicines are now accessible across every tier of the health system — district hospitals, sub-district hospitals, community health centres, primary health centres, urban primary health centres, urban Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, and sub-health centres. What this means, in tangible terms, is that a villager in a remote corner of Assam has as much right to free essential medication as a patient seeking treatment in a state-of-the-art medical college hospital.

At the heart of this achievement lies the Essential Drugs List, a carefully compiled inventory that ensures the population’s priority health needs are addressed. The Assam Free Drugs Scheme makes 352 generic drugs and 69 specialty drugs available at medical colleges and hospitals. In district and sub-divisional civil hospitals, community health centres, first referral units, and model hospitals, as many as 261 drugs are supplied. Primary health centres stock 125 varieties, and even the smallest sub-centres carry about 30 drugs, thereby ensuring that essential treatments reach the grassroots. The scale of this outreach is extraordinary. For the first time, access to healthcare in Assam is not being defined by geography or economic status but by the principle of universality.

The array of drugs covered is impressive both in scope and detail. General and local anaesthetic medicines such as ketamine, propofol, and bupivacaine are available, along with opioid analgesics like morphine and fentanyl that are crucial in pain management. Anti-inflammatory and non-steroidal medicines including diclofenac, ibuprofen, and paracetamol are part of the package. Life-saving categories such as medicines for hyperuricemia, rheumatoid disorders, neuropathic pain, and hyperlipidaemia are all included. Drugs essential in emergency care like adrenaline, atropine, diazepam, and magnesium sulphate are also free of cost.

The list extends far beyond routine treatment. It covers cancer drugs such as 5-Fluorouracil, Paclitaxel, and Rituximab; antiviral medicines like acyclovir; antimalarials including artemether and chloroquine; and antitubercular medicines vital to India’s continuing battle against tuberculosis. Psychiatric and mental health medicines, often the most neglected in terms of affordability and access, find an equal place in this scheme, with drugs such as haloperidol, risperidone,

and lithium carbonate available free of cost. From simple antacids and antihistamines to highly specialised drugs for haemophilia, thalassemia, and organ transplant rejection, the list reflects comprehensiveness. Even vitamins, minerals, saline solutions, plasma substitutes, growth hormones, and antineoplastic monoclonal antibodies are included, ensuring a level of medical preparedness across all levels of care.

This is not just a state-driven measure in isolation. The free drugs service is a flagship programme of the Central government under the National Health Mission (NHM). Assam’s adaptation of this programme, executed through the Assam Medical Services Corporation Limited (AMSCL), has made it one of the most effective state-level healthcare models in India. AMSCL is tasked with procurement, logistics, and quality assurance. Every drug supplied undergoes rigorous testing, and the distribution system is continuously monitored to prevent interruptions or shortages. This quality assurance addresses a long-standing criticism of public healthcare systems where concerns about efficacy and safety often undermine patient trust.

To ensure that people are aware of their entitlements, the government has launched awareness campaigns. Posters in hospitals, advisories in rural health centres, and even WhatsApp helplines have been introduced to let citizens know that these drugs are their right, not a privilege. The state has provided a helpline number for citizens to report unavailability, thus building accountability into the system. Patients and doctors alike are being educated about the availability of these medicines so that no one is forced into unnecessary expenses due to ignorance or misinformation.

The financial impact of this initiative is immense. In India, household out-of-pocket expenditure on health accounts for nearly two-thirds of total health spending, and a majority of that is spent on medicines. This burden has often forced families into cycles of debt and poverty, especially in rural areas where incomes are unstable. By bearing the cost of medicines through the state budget, the Assam government is redistributing opportunity and easing the economic pressure on its people. A family that would have once struggled to afford an antibiotic course for their child can now access it without fear of financial distress. A diabetic patient who requires regular insulin injections no longer has to make choices between medication and food.

Beyond immediate financial relief, this measure strengthens the very foundation of Assam’s healthcare system. By ensuring uniform drug availability at every level, the scheme eliminates disparities between urban and rural healthcare. For too long, rural sub-centres have been synonymous with scarcity, offering little more than primary first aid. Today, they can dispense life-saving drugs, becoming credible centres of healthcare delivery in their own right.

This initiative is also aligned with global health priorities. Access to essential medicines is one of the pillars of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), an objective endorsed by the World Health Organization and central to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Assam’s achievement mirrors SDG target 3.8, which calls for universal access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medicines and vaccines. It positions Assam not merely as a state catching up with national health targets but as a model that others might emulate.

The path, however, is not free of challenges. The logistical complexities of maintaining uninterrupted supply chains in a state prone to floods, difficult terrain, and dispersed populations cannot be underestimated.

Regular monitoring and technological interventions like digital inventory tracking, GPS-enabled logistics, and barcoded packaging will be essential to prevent shortages or leakages. There is also the risk of misuse and pilferage, which has historically plagued free medicine programmes in India. To counter this, the government must rely on transparency, third-party audits, and community participation in monitoring distribution.

The vision extends beyond numbers and logistics to the human dimension of healthcare. Each free vial of insulin or strip of paracetamol represents hope. For the elderly woman in rural Barpeta suffering from arthritis, free access to methotrexate can restore mobility and dignity. For the young father in Dibrugarh struggling with tuberculosis, free rifampicin can mean a second chance at life. For the child in Tezpur suffering from severe anaemia, free iron supplementation could secure a healthier future.

Minister Singhal’s assurance summed up the spirit of this initiative: “Our government remains committed to providing quality healthcare services to all citizens. The free drugs initiative is a significant step towards achieving this goal, and we will continue to ensure that all citizens have access to essential medicines and quality healthcare services.”

Ultimately, the Free Drugs Scheme of Assam is not just about stockpiling medicines in government facilities. It is about redefining the contract between the state and its citizens, where health is not treated as a commodity to be purchased but as a right guaranteed. It is about ensuring that a poor farmer in Karimganj has the same access to treatment as a wealthy professional in Guwahati. It is about recognising that the health of a state is measured not merely in GDP or infrastructure but in the well-being of its people.

The scheme also has broader economic implications. Healthier populations are more productive, less prone to absenteeism, and contribute more actively to the economy. Reducing the financial burden of medicines frees up household resources for education, nutrition, and livelihood, creating a ripple effect of progress.

Assam’s success in implementing the Free Drugs Scheme should serve as a clarion call for other states. While many Indian states have announced free medicine schemes, their coverage often remains partial, plagued by irregular supply, and limited lists of drugs. Assam’s example demonstrates that with political will, robust institutional frameworks like AMSCL, and significant budgetary commitment, universal access is achievable.

As the state continues to strengthen its health infrastructure, the Free Drugs Scheme will be remembered not merely as a welfare programme but as a historic leap toward equity and justice. In an era where the affordability of healthcare continues to divide societies, Assam has made a bold statement: that medicines are not a privilege reserved for the few but a right owed to every citizen.

The Free Drugs Scheme represents a moral victory as much as a medical one. By ensuring 100 per cent availability of essential medicines across its health facilities, Assam has taken a giant step toward achieving universal health coverage. It has lightened the financial burdens of its people, improved healthcare outcomes, and reaffirmed the principle that access to health is a fundamental human right. The long-term impact of this initiative will not only be measured in healthier bodies but also in stronger, more resilient communities that can look to the future with renewed confidence. (the writer can be reached at dipakurmipltd@gmail.com)

By: Diganta Barooah (CONTD FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE)

✓ Non-major ports: 724 million tonnes (47%), with Mundra (173 MT, 11%) and Sikka (128 MT, 8%) leading.

• Fisheries and Aquaculture : India is the second-largest fish-producing country globally, with aquaculture contributing 96.5% of aquatic plant output.

• Initiatives : • Modernizing fishing harbors (e.g., Chennai, Kochi) under Sagarmala. • Promoting seaweed cultivation for sustainable livelihoods.

• Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) : ✓ Targets 22 million tonnes of fish production by 2025, boosting coastal economies.

• Impact : ✓ Supports 4 million fisherfolk, enhances export potential, and reduces environmental impact through sustainable practices.

• Coastal Tourism : • Development of cruise terminals (e.g., Kochi International Cruise Terminal, Mumbai International Cruise Terminal targeting 1 million passengers annually). • Promotes high-value tourism, creating jobs and diversifying coastal economies.

• Renewable Energy and Sustainability : ✓ Focus on wind power, wave energy, and shore power systems to reduce emissions. ✓ Green Energy Corridor in Andhra Pradesh (₹28,436 crore) to connect 11,000 MW renewable energy by 2029.

✓ Compliance with MARPOL and Ballast Water Management Convention for pollution control.

• Green Ports Initiative : ✓ Promotes renewable energy and waste management at ports like Vizhinjam and Tuticorin.

• Marine Biotechnology : ✓ Exploration of marine organisms for pharmaceuticals, biofuels, and agricultural applications. ✓ Emerging sector for innovation and economic diversification.

• Maritime Development Fund (MDF) : • Objective : ✓ Fund ship acquisition and expand the Indian-flagged fleet. • Corpus : ✓ ₹25,000 crore (49% government, 51% from port authorities, PSUs, private players). • Goal : ✓ Increase India’s share in global cargo movement to 20% by 2047, reducing reliance on foreign vessels. • Impact : ✓ Promotes self-reliance, improves balance of payments, and supports Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Government Initiatives • Recent Legislative Reforms : ✓ Coastal Shipping Bill, 2025 (Passed in August 2025) : • It replaces Part XIV of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. • Targets 230 million metric tonnes of coastal cargo by 2030. • Simplifies licensing, regulates foreign vessels, and promotes Indian-flagged ships to reduce foreign exchange outflow. • Mandates National Coastal and Inland Shipping Strategic Plan and National Database for Coastal Shipping for transparency and investment.

✓ Merchant Shipping Bill, 2025 and Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2025 : • Part of a legislative trilogy to modernize maritime laws, aligning with global cabotage standards.

• Revised Coastline Length : Updated to 11,099 km in 2024, impacting maritime security and Blue Economy strategies.

• Sagarmala Programme (2015) : • Objective : Promote port-led development through : ✓ Port Modernization : Upgrading existing ports (e.g., Tuticorin, Chennai) and developing

new ports (e.g., Vadavan, Vizhinjam). ✓ Port Connectivity : Enhancing road, rail, and inland waterway networks (e.g., Western DFC spur lines, Bharatmala highways).

• Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) : Developing 14 CEZs for port-proximate industrialization (e.g., Dholera Smart City, Gujarat).

• Coastal Community Development : Modernizing fishing harbors, skill development, and tourism promotion.

• Impact : ✓ Over 800 projects worth ₹5.79 lakh crore identified. ✓ Expected to create ~10 million jobs by 2025. ✓ Reduces logistics costs by ₹35,000–40,000 crore annually.

• Vizhinjam International Seaport (Commissioned May 2025) : ✓ India’s first deep-water transshipment port (18–20 m draft). ✓ Developed by Adani Ports & SEZ Ltd via PPP (Kerala: 61.5%, Centre: 9.6%). ✓ Saves \$200–220 million/year previously lost to foreign ports (Colombo, Singapore, Dubai). ✓ Employs 750+ workers (67% from Kerala, 57% from Thiruvananthapuram), including women crane operators. ✓ Reduces logistics costs by \$80–100 per container and voyage time by 1–2 days.

• Vadavan Port (Maharashtra) : ✓ Planned mega port with ₹76,000 crore investment to ease pressure on JNPT. • Tuticorin International Container Terminal : ✓ Handles 6 lakh TEUs annually, boosting capacity by 4 million TEUs.

• Maritime Financing Summit 2025 : ✓ Launched Financial Digital Maturity Matrix (FDMM) for investor-ready port infrastructure. ✓ 100% FDI allowed in shipping via automatic route. ✓ GIFT City IFSC enabled for ship leasing and financing. • Maritime India Vision 2030 : ✓ Aims to position India as a global maritime hub by 2030.

• Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision (MAKV) 2047 : ✓ Targets India among the world’s leading maritime powers through shipbuilding, port infrastructure, and financial resilience.

• National Policy for India’s Blue Economy (2021) : Promotes sustainable marine-based economic growth.

Key Issues and Challenges • Environmental Degradation : Port expansion and dredging risk coastal erosion, wetland destruction, and marine biodiversity loss (e.g., Vizhinjam protests in 2022–23 over erosion fears). Oil spills (e.g., MSC ELSA 3) underscore pollution threats.

• Displacement of Communities : Infrastructure projects may displace fisherfolk and indigenous communities without adequate rehabilitation.

• High Logistics Costs : ✓ India’s logistics costs (13–14% of GDP) are higher than the global average (8–9%).

• Regional Imbalances : ✓ Gujarat and Maharashtra dominate port investments, potentially neglecting eastern states like Odisha and West Bengal.

• Climate Change Vulnerability : Sea-level rise, cyclones, and flooding threaten coastal infrastructure.

• Regulatory Gaps : ✓ Indian Ports Bill, 2025 lacks appeal mechanisms for conservator penalties and safeguards for inspection powers, risking misuse. ✓ Ambiguity in ‘mega ports’ classification may create regulatory confusion.

(CONTD TO NEXT ISSUE)

Be employment-ready with skill India digital hub

By: Ranjana Kumari

Launched in 2023 as part of the Skill India Mission, the Skill India Digital Hub was created to bridge the skill gap and improve employability across various industries. Developed by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), this all-in-one digital platform brings together government initiatives, industry leaders, and training providers to offer free or affordable skill development programmes. Beyond just learning, the platform helps job seekers find relevant employment opportunities through AI-powered job matching, where machine learning matches candidates with suitable roles based on their skills and experience.

It also uses skill-based profiling to ensure job seekers are connected to the right careers. The platform offers personalised learning paths, gap analysis to identify areas for improvement, digital screening tests to assess problem-solving skills, and AI-powered virtual interviews to help recruiters select the best candidates. With more than 28 industry-specific training categories, government-recognised certifications, and direct access to apprenticeships and job listings, the Skill India Digital Hub is a game-changer for students, fresh graduates, and professionals, making upskilling, career growth, and employment more accessible than ever.

By December 2024, the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) has recorded over 1 crore registrations, marking a major milestone in India's skilling initiative. By June 2024, around 88 lakh candidates had signed up, and by August 2024, the platform had engaged over 60 lakh active learners, highlighting its growing popularity in providing skill development opportunities across various industries.

How Does the Skill India Platform Match Learners with Job Opportunities?

Understanding skill gaps is essential in today's fast-changing job market, where industries demand new skills faster than ever before. Technology plays a key role in identifying these gaps and connecting job seekers with the right skilling opportunities. AI-powered assessments analyse a person's current skills, pinpoint areas for improvement, and suggest personalised learning paths. Big data and labour market analysis track industry trends, helping training

providers align courses with in-demand skills. AI-driven job matching connects candidates with roles suited to their abilities, while virtual training platforms offer flexible and interactive courses. Chatbots and career guidance tools recommend skilling programmes based on individual profiles, and blockchain-based digital certificates ensure quick verification of skills for employers. By combining these technologies, job seekers can upskill efficiently, gain recognised certifications, and access better job opportunities, making career growth more accessible than ever.

The Skill India Digital Hub employ all these technologies to connect learners with employers. Instead of just matching based on qualifications, it takes a skill-based approach, ensuring a better job fit for candidates.

Why Should You Enrol in a SIDH Course?

- Extensive Course Selection - Courses are categorised by industries, job roles, and certification types.

- In-Demand Skills - Training in Web Development, English Communication, Cybersecurity, and more.

- Regional Language Support - Courses are available in multiple Indian languages.

- Cost-Effective Learning - Most courses are free, while some require a nominal fee for training and certification.

- Top Educational Partners - Supported by NSDC, upGrad, and other leading institutions.

- Job and Apprenticeship Opportunities - Learners can find jobs directly through the platform.

How to Get Course Recommendations from SIDH?

- Visits the portal - <https://web.skillindiadigital.gov.in>

- Click on Recommendation

- Select Educational Qualification

- Select Work Experience (if any) and Enter Details.

- Enter Location of Interest (Within India or International)

- Select Domain (example: Agriculture, Electronics, Healthcare, etc.)

- Receive Course Recommendations

How to Enrol in SIDH Online Courses

Step 1: Visit the Skill India Digital Hub portal.

Step 2: Browse and select a course of interest.

Step 3: Register by filling out your details.



Step 4: Upload necessary documents (ID, educational qualifications).

Step 5: Start learning and earn your certificate.

How to Register for a Skill Centre Near You for On-Site Courses

To find and register for a Skill Centre near you through the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH), follow these steps:

- Visit the Skill India Digital Hub website and look for the "Find a Skill Centre Near You" option.

- Use location-based filters to find courses and opportunities near you.

- Click on the centre of choice and discover skill development programmes across various industries.

- Browse and select a course of interest.

- Register by filling out your details.

- Upload necessary documents (ID, educational qualifications).

- Start learning and earn your certificate.

SIDH Assessments and Certifications for Career Growth

The Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) offers more than just skill development courses; it also provides assessments and certifications through TCS iON National Proficiency Tests (NPT).

These certifications help individuals prove their skills and improve their employability.

Who Can Apply for Assessments?

- Students in their final or pre-final year who want to improve their career prospects.

- Freshers and professionals who need to validate their skills and enhance job opportunities.

- Anyone interested in obtaining an industry-recognised certification in a high-demand field. Industry-recognised certifications that are valid for two years, making job seekers more competitive.

- A wide range of tests covering various fields, including IT, finance, business, and artificial intelligence.

- Flexible exam schedules with tests conducted every two to four weeks, allowing multiple attempts.

- Assessments must be taken at authorised TCS iON test centres to ensure credibility.

- Certified candidates can apply for jobs on the TCS iON Job Listing Portal and other recruitment platforms.

How to Apply for Jobs after Completing the SIDH Courses and Certifications?

Once you have successfully completed a Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) course, you can start applying for jobs using the platform's built-in

'Job Exchange' search tools and other career resources. Follow these steps to boost your chances of landing a job:

Update Your Profile on SIDH

- Create a profile of SIDH by entering a valid mobile number (in which you will receive an OTP) and by entering your AADHAR number.

- Log in to your SIDH account and ensure your profile is complete with updated skills, certifications, and course completion details.

- Download your Skill India certificate, as many employers require proof of training.

Use the SIDH 'Job Exchange' or 'Apprenticeship' Search Tool

- Explore the 'Job Exchange' section on the Skill India Digital Hub.

- Apply filters based on industry, job role, and location to find suitable openings.

- Apply for Internships & Apprenticeships

- Many courses offer on-the-job training or apprenticeship opportunities with partner companies.

- Register for an apprenticeship to gain hands-on experience before applying for full-time roles.

- Connect with Employers & Training Partners

- Some SIDH-affiliated employers directly recruit candidates from the platform.

- Attend virtual job fairs or recruitment drives organised by Skill India.

Leverage AI Job Matching

The platform's AI-based job recommendation system suggests roles that match your skills and training. Use this feature by entering details like your location, domain, expertise etc., to apply for relevant jobs faster.

Prepare for Interviews

- Some companies conduct online screening tests or virtual interviews via SIDH.

- Practise common interview questions and enhance soft skills to improve your chances.

Apply on External Job Portals

- Use other job platforms like the National Career Service and look out for opportunities highlighting your SIDH certification to stand out.

By following these steps, you can successfully transition from learning to employment, making the most of your Skill India training.

(The author is a Patna-based academician and career coach. Feedback can be sent to feedback.employmentnews@gmail.com).

DEE Assam Recruitment 2025 – 228 Special Educator Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 30/09/2025.

Directorate of Elementary Education (DEE), Assam has released two employment notifications for the recruitment of 228 Special Educator posts in Lower Primary and Upper Primary schools under the Directorate of Elementary Education, Assam. Eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of posts: Special Educator
No of posts: 228 posts
Category-wise vacancy:
Lower Primary (LP) Schools: 120
Upper Primary (UP) Schools: 108
Pay scale:
LP: Pay Band – 2 (PB-2) @ Rs. 14,000/- to Rs. 70,000/- plus Grade Pay Rs 7400/-
UP: Pay Band – 2 (PB-2) @ Rs. 14,000/- to Rs. 70,000/- plus Grade Pay Rs 8700/-

Name of organization: Directorate of Elementary Education, Assam
Age Limit: 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 August, 2025.

Small Family Norms: 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.

Citizenship: Candidates must be an Indian Citizen as defined in Article 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India and permanent residents of Assam.

Educational Qualification:
Special Educator (LP School):

a) Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and a 2-year Diploma in Education (Special Education), recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI).

b) The candidate must have the ATET/CTET passed certificate for LP Schools.

Special Educator (UP School):

a) Graduate with at least 50% marks and B.Ed. (Special Education), recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI).

b) The candidate must have the ATET/CTET passed certificate for UP Schools.

Medium of Instruction: Either the Language-I or the Language-II of both ATET and CTET candidates shall match the medium of instruction of the School wherein the candidate wishes to apply.

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy by visiting Official DEE Assam Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section.

Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "Click Here to Register".

In the next stage, fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

At the end, submit the form.

After submitting the online application, the candidates will get a Unique Number against the submitted application and will keep the printout of the unique Number for all future references.

Following documents need to be submitted in colour along with online application form

a. Passport Size Photograph.

b. HSLC Admit Card.

c. HSSLC Mark-sheet and Certificate.

d. Any other Mark-sheet and Certificate of higher education.

e. B.Ed. in Special Education Mark sheet and Certificate (Recognized by RCI).

f. Document in support of Permanent Resident of Assam.

g. Certificate and Mark sheet of ATET/CTET.

h. Candidates with disabilities will have to enclose certificates of disabilities issued by Govt. authority.

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

j. Working experience certificate (if any)

Starting date of submission of online application: 28th August, 2025

Last date of submission of online application: 30th September, 2025

NHPC Limited Recruitment 2025 – 248 Non-Executive Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 01/10/2025.

National Hydro Electric Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 248 Non-Executive Posts under NHPC Limited. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

1. Assistant Rajbhasha Officer
No of posts: 11

Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification & Experience: Master's degree from a recognized Indian University in Hindi with English as an elective subject at the degree level or Master's degree from a recognized Indian University in English with Hindi as an elective subject at the degree level.

Candidate must have secured minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade in Master's degree for General/OBC/EWS and 50% marks or equivalent grade for SC/ST/PwBD.

Three years' post qualification experience as on last date of application in the relevant field in any Central / State Government Department / PSU out of which at least two years' in the scale of pay of 27,000-3%-1,05,000 (IDA) or equivalent scale. The candidate should have experience of using / applying terminology (terminological work) in Hindi and/ or translation work from English to Hindi and vice-versa, preferably of technical or scientific literature in any Central / State Government / PSU or teaching, research, writing in any Central / State Government / PSU. Specialization / Research work in the relevant area would be an added advantage.

2. Junior Engineer (Civil)

No of posts: 109

Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification & Experience: Full time three years regular Diploma in Civil Engineering from Government / Government recognized Institutes with minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade for General/OBC/EWS and 50% marks or equivalent grade for SC/ST/PwBD.

3. Junior Engineer (Electrical)

No of posts: 46

Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification & Experience: Full time three years regular Diploma in Electrical Engineering from Government / Government recognized Institutes with minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade for General/OBC/EWS and 50% marks or equivalent grade for SC/ST/PwBD.

4. Junior Engineer (Mechanical)

No of posts: 49

Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification & Experience: Full time three years regular Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from Government / Government recognized Institutes with minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade for General/OBC/EWS and 50% marks or equivalent grade for SC/ST/PwBD.

5. Junior Engineer (E & C)

No of posts: 17

Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification & Experience: Full time three years regular Diploma in Electronics & Communication Engineering from Government / Government recognized Institutes with minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade for General/OBC/EWS and 50% marks or equivalent grade for SC/ST/PwBD.

6. Supervisor (IT)

No of posts: 1

Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification & Experience: Graduate with DOEACC 'A' level course from Government / Government recognized Institutes with minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade. OR

Three years polytechnic Diploma in Computer Science/ IT from Government / Government recognized Institutes with minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade. OR BCA / Bsc (Computer Science / IT) from Government / Government recognized Institutes with minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade.

7. Sr. Accountant

No of posts: 10

Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification & Experience: Inter CA Pass or Inter CMA Pass candidates are eligible to apply.

8. Hindi Translator

No of posts: 5

Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification & Experience: Master's degree from a recognized Indian university in Hindi with English as an elective subject at the Degree level or Master's Degree from a recognized Indian university in English with Hindi as an elective subject at the degree level. Pass candidates are eligible to apply.

Experience: One-year post qualification experience as on last date of application in the field of using / applying terminology (terminological work) in Hindi and translation work from English to Hindi and Vice Versa in Central/State Govt./ PSU. OR

One-year post qualification experience in research or teaching in Hindi in Central/State Govt. Educational Institute. OR

Degree/Diploma in translation from English to Hindi and vice versa from recognized Indian University.

Application Fee:

General, OBC and GEN-EWS: Rs 600/-plus taxes.

SC/ST/PwBD/Ex-Servicemen: NIL

Payment Mode: Online

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official NHPC Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for NHPC Vacancy.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section.

Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "Register Now".

Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

Next, pay the application fee as per your category and submit the form.

At the end, take a print out of the application form.

Starting date of submission of online application: 2nd September 2025

Last date of submission of online application: 1st October 2025

Oil India Limited Recruitment – 102 Officer, Engineer & Other Posts

Oil India Limited.

Last Date: 26/09/2025.

Oil India Limited has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 102 Posts in Grade C, Grade B and Grade A for postings in Dulaijan, Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may apply here.

1. Superintending Engineer (Production)

No of posts: 3

Pay: Rs.80000-220000/-

2. Senior Officer (Chemical)

No of posts: 6

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

3. Senior Officer (Chemical Engineering)

No of posts: 6

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

4. Senior Officer (Civil)

No of posts: 5

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

5. Senior Officer (Electrical)

No of posts: 6

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

6. Senior Officer (Petroleum)

No of posts: 1

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

7. Senior Accounts Officer/Senior Internal Auditor

No of posts: 5

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

8. Senior Officer (IT)

No of posts: 3

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

9. Senior Officer (Mechanical)

No of posts: 35

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

10. Senior Officer (Fire & Safety)

No of posts: 1

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

11. Senior Officer (Public Affairs)

No of posts: 2

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

12. Senior Officer (HSE)

No of posts: 1

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

13. Senior Officer (Geophysics)

No of posts: 4

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

14. Senior Officer (Geology)

No of posts: 3

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

15. Senior Officer (Legal/Land)

No of posts: 5

Pay: Rs.60000-180000/-

16. Senior Officer (HR)

Two more high profile Sri Lankan politicians arrested

COLOMBO, Aug 29: In continuation of the arrests of former parliamentarians on charges of corruption, two more political leaders in Sri Lanka were arrested after they surrendered at local courts on Friday.

These arrests come days after former president Ranil Wickremesinghe was arrested on charges of corruption.

Rajitha Senarathne, a former minister, and Athuraliyie Rathana, a former parliamentarian Buddhist monk, were both absconding and surrendered in the court on the day of hearing in their respective cases.

A magistrate's court remanded Senarathne until September 9 while Rathana was remanded until September 12 by the suburban Nugegoda court, police said.

Senarathne, a senior politician,



was charged with awarding a questionable contract to a Korean company for sand dredging causing a loss to the government when he

was the minister of fisheries in 2013.

Rathana has been evading arrest in connection with an ongoing in-

vestigation in the 2020 abduction of a fellow Buddhist monk.

The monk, Vedinigama Wimalathissa, had alleged that Rathana was behind his abduction to force him to sign documents so that Rathana could be appointed to parliament from the Ape Janabala Party in the 2020 August parliamentary election.

The arrests and subsequent remanding of the two former parliamentarians follows the August 22 arrest of former president Ranil Wickremesinghe in a case of alleged misuse of state funds. He became the first head of state of the country to be arrested and remanded.

President Anura Kumara Disanayake rode to power last year after campaigning on the anti-corruption plank. (PTT)

Kabul blames Pakistan for airstrikes that killed 3 people in eastern Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, Aug 29: Airstrikes that Afghanistan's Taliban government blamed on neighbouring Pakistan struck two eastern provinces of the country, killing at least three people, wounding seven others and damaging homes, officials and witnesses have said.

In Kabul, the foreign ministry decried the strikes that took place late Wednesday in Nangarhar and Khost provinces, calling them a "provocative act" by Pakistan and summoning the Pakistani ambassador in Kabul on Thursday.

The Afghan Defence Ministry also condemned the strikes. "Such

barbaric and brutal actions benefit neither sides; rather intensify the distance between the two Muslim nations and fuel hatred. These irresponsible activities will have consequences," it wrote on the X social media platform.

Neither the Pakistani government nor the military commented on the alleged strikes.

Kabul previously has accused Pakistan of launching airstrikes in Afghanistan against suspected hideouts of the Pakistani Taliban, a militant group banned in Pakistan and blamed for some of that country's deadliest terrorist attacks.

In Nangarhar's Shinwari district, members of a family whose house was reduced to rubble sifted through the debris to try to recover what they could. "They dropped the first big bomb on my house. My house was completely destroyed," said Shah Sawar, a resident of Nangarhar's Shinwari district. "First I pulled a child out of the rubble, then I pulled four children and a woman out."

Nangarhar's deputy governor, Maulvi Azizullah Mustafa, said the strikes were fired by Pakistani drones. The Afghan foreign ministry said three people were killed and seven wounded in Nangarhar

and Khost. Kabul in December 2024 accused Pakistan of carrying out airstrikes against suspected hideouts of the Pakistani Taliban in Paktika province. Pakistan also did not acknowledge those strikes at the time. Kabul claimed hitting several points inside Pakistan in retaliation.

The latest violence comes a week after top diplomats from Pakistan, China and Afghanistan met in Kabul and pledged closer cooperation against terrorism. It also came three months after Pakistan and Afghanistan upgraded their diplomatic ties to improve bilateral relations. (AP)

Thai court dismisses Prime Minister over compromising phone call with Cambodian leader



BANGKOK, Aug 29: Thailand's Constitutional Court on Friday dismissed Paetongtarn Shinawatra from her position as prime minister, ruling that as the country's leader she violated constitutional rules on ethics in a phone call with Cambodia's Senate President Hun Sen.

The ruling means she immediately loses her job, which she had

held for about a year. Paetongtarn was suspended from her duties on July 1 when the court agreed to hear the case against her, and Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai took over her responsibilities.

The Cabinet led by Phumtham is expected to stay in place on a caretaker basis until Parliament approves a new prime minister. The caretaker Cabinet could also dissolve Parliament and call a new election.

Paetongtarn's leaked June 15 call with Hun Sen was aimed at easing tensions over competing claims to territory along their border, but sparked outrage in Thailand because Paetongtarn seemed overly friendly in discussing a matter of national security and appeared to malign a Thai army general. (AP)

Israel declares Gaza's largest city combat zone as bodies of 2 hostages recovered



GAZA CITY, Aug 29: Israel on Friday declared Gaza's largest city a dangerous combat zone and said it was in the "initial stages" of a planned offensive that has drawn international condemnation.

Israel's military said it suspended mid-day pauses to fighting, which

had allowed food and aid supplies to enter from 10 am to 8 pm, while also reporting it had recovered the bodies of two hostages and vowed its military offensive would return more.

The shift comes weeks after Israel first announced plans to widen

its offensive in Gaza City, where hundreds of thousands of displaced people are sheltering and enduring famine. The resumption of around-the-clock fighting is the latest escalation after Israel reported strikes in some of the city's key neighbourhoods and called up tens of thousands of reservists.

"We will intensify our strikes until we bring back all the kidnapped hostages and dismantle Hamas," Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee said.

Bodies of hostages recovered
Israel on Friday said its military had recovered the bodies of two hostages, including an Israeli man who was killed in the Oct 7, 2023, attack that sparked the war.

The bodies of Ilan Weiss of Kibbutz Be'erai and another unnamed hostage were returned to Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said. (AP)

At least 49 died when boat carrying migrants capsized

NOUAKCHOTT (MAURITANIA), Aug 29: At least 49 people died and nearly 100 are still missing after a boat carrying migrants capsized this week, the Mauritanian coast guard said Friday.

Authorities said the boat came from Gambia and capsized Tuesday morning off the coast of Mhei-jrat.

"The boat left Gambia a week ago and had 160 people on board, including Senegalese and Gambian nationals," Mohamed Abdallah, the head of the coast guard, told The Associated Press.

"When the migrants saw the lights of the Mhei-jrat, they tried to move to one part of the boat, causing it to capsize," Abdallah said.

The official said 49 bodies have washed ashore and just 17 people have been rescued so far. The others remain missing, the official said.

In recent years, Mauritania's waters have become a highway for migrants across sub-Saharan Africa seeking to reach Europe, primarily the Canary Islands. In July 2024, a similar incident killed more than a dozen migrants on their way to Europe off Mauritania, with 150 others declared missing.

The country's authorities have tightened control and expulsion measures for migrants. Last year, it signed a 210 million-euro deal (USD 225 million) with the European Union in a deal aimed at deterring migrants from using the country to get to the European Union.

Mauritania has also been accused of abuse towards migrants who are transiting through the country in a nationwide coastal crackdown, according to human rights groups. (AP)

Peace efforts in limbo as Kyiv mourns 23 dead after Russian attack

KYIV, Aug 29: The death toll in a major Russian missile and drone strike on the Ukrainian capital rose to 23, including four children, officials said Friday, as US-led efforts to end the three-year war remain stuck in apparent limbo.

Authorities in the Kyiv region declared Friday an official day of mourning. Flags flew at half-staff and all entertainment events were cancelled after Russia hammered Ukraine with almost 600 drones and more than 30 missiles overnight from Wednesday to Thursday, including rare strikes on downtown Kyiv.

Rescue workers pulled 17 people from the rubble after the Kyiv attack, among them four children, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said. The youngest victim was a 2-year-old girl. Some bodies have yet to be identified, and eight people remain unaccounted for, authorities said. More than 50 people were injured.

"Thousands of personnel from the Interior Ministry's agencies and units worked at the strike sites in Kyiv, rotating every few hours," Klymenko said of the non-stop 30-hour rescue operation.

Efforts to stop the fighting with a ceasefire and end Europe's biggest conflict since World War II through a comprehensive peace settlement have made no progress.

US President Donald Trump has bristled at Putin's stalling on an American proposal for direct peace talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Trump said a week ago he expected to decide on next steps in two weeks if direct talks aren't scheduled.

Trump complained last month



that Putin "talks nice and then he bombs everybody". But the latest attack on Kyiv drew no public condemnation from the Trump administration, with White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt noting that Ukraine has been striking Russian oil refineries.

European Union defence ministers expressed outrage Friday over Russia's continuing onslaught in Ukraine and vowed to exert more pressure on Moscow.

Putin is due to attend a summit meeting in China from Sunday that will also include Iran and North Korea, countries which like Beijing have aided Russia's war effort, according to the United States.

From Sept 9 world leaders are expected to attend the UN General Assembly where Russia's invasion will likely be discussed.

Meanwhile, Western officials are working on security guarantees for Ukraine that aim to deter another Russian invasion if a peace deal is signed.

Zelenskyy noted Friday that Russia hasn't budged from its terms for stopping its invasion. Ukraine, on the other hand, has accepted an American proposal

for a ceasefire and a meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy.

The Ukrainian leader urged countries to crank up the pressure on Russia's economy through sanctions and tariffs.

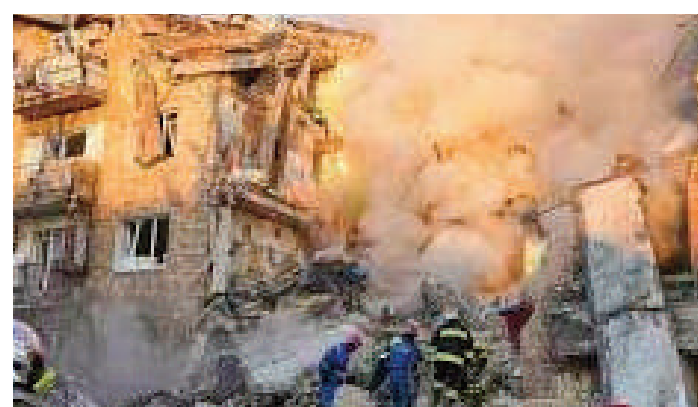
"Russia refused to stop the killing — they even said no" to President Trump. We're seeing negative signals from Russia regarding a possible leaders' summit," Zelenskyy said in a social media post. "Honestly, we think Putin is still interested only in continuing this war."

The Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank, noted that recent American presidents have shied away from taking a tougher line with Putin over fears of a potential nuclear conflict.

"Putin knows that Washington and its allies have more than enough capacity to reverse his gains in Ukraine, but it is nearly certain that he doubts the United States has the will to do so," the Atlantic Council said in an assessment this week.

It added that "the second Trump administration has repeatedly signalled that the United States has no vital interests at stake in this war." (AP)

Outraged over Russian strike on Kyiv, European defence leaders pledge pressure to end war



BRUSSELS, Aug 29: European defence ministers are meeting in Copenhagen to discuss the war in Ukraine, the day after a Russian air assault on Kyiv killed 23 people and badly damaged a European diplomatic compound.

Outrage over the attack propelled the political leaders of Europe's armed forces to condemn Russia even before Friday's meeting and call for stronger measures on Moscow like seizing frozen assets, further sanctions and increasing support for Ukraine's military and membership in the European Union.

They will also discuss European troops' deployment in Ukraine to guarantee security and monitor a peace that seems distant as American efforts to broker peace between Ukraine and Russia appear stalled.

"Everybody understands that, considering how (Russian President Vladimir) Putin is mocking the peace efforts, the only thing that works is pressure," said Kaja Kallas, foreign policy chief for the European Union.

Two missiles landed about 50 metres from an EU diplomatic mission in Kyiv, shattering the office's windows and doors but causing no injuries there. The EU summoned the Russian envoy in Brussels over the attack.

The UN Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on airstrikes against Ukraine on Friday afternoon at the request of Ukraine and the five European council members — Britain, France, Slovenia, Denmark and Greece. Two of Ukraine's top envoys were set to meet Friday with the Trump administration regarding mediation.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt criticised both Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy after the Thursday attack on Kyiv.

She said that Trump "was not happy about this news, but he was also not surprised".

Leavitt noted that Ukraine has also launched effective assaults on Russia's oil industry in recent weeks.

"Perhaps both sides of this war are not ready to end it themselves," Leavitt said. "The president wants it to end, but the leaders of these two countries... must want it to end as well."

In Copenhagen, Kallas said defence ministers from across the 27-nation bloc would discuss increasing sanctions on Russia, ramping up defence supplies to Ukraine's army and

European contribution to post-war security guarantees, which could include EU training missions into Ukraine once a ceasefire is in place.

"We are discussing today how to change the mandate of those missions in order to be ready after any peace agreement is put in place," said Kallas, who called for harsher sanctions targeting Russia's economic lifelines.

On Thursday, the United States approved a \$825 million arms sale to Ukraine that will include extended-range missiles and related equipment to boost its defensive capabilities.

Lithuania's defence minister Dovile Sakalinskiene said that the attack on Kyiv on Thursday shows that hope now for peace is "naive" and that "all Putin is doing is really stalling, actually cheaply buying time to kill more people and to imitate sort of willingness to maybe stop his own murderous actions."

She said Europe must deal with Russia more forcefully, like seizing frozen Russian assets.

"That is actually one power that we are not using enough yet," she said. "Over 200 billion of Russian assets would be extremely helpful in both pumping this money in Ukrainian defence industry and buying American weapons."

Simon Harris, Ireland's defence minister, said that more must be done to force Russia to end the war. "It's imperative that those of us in the European Union now consider further sanctions, what more measures can be taken to increase the pressure on Russia to end this brutal and aggressive war on Ukraine and the huge impact that that's having on civilians," he said. (AP)

Vice President Vance says prepared for top job if 'terrible tragedy' strikes

WASHINGTON, Aug 29: US Vice President JD Vance has said that he is ready to lead the country if "God forbid" there is a "terrible tragedy", as he hoped that President Donald Trump would serve his full term.

In an interview with USA Today on Thursday, Vance dismissed ongoing speculation about the health of Trump, the oldest president ever to take the oath of office.

The 41-year-old said that he has got a lot of "good on-the-job training" in the last 200 days of being in office and stressed that Trump is in "incredibly good health".

"Yes, terrible tragedies happen, but I feel very confident the President of the United States is in good shape, is going to serve out the remainder of his term and do great things for the American people. And if, God forbid, there's a terrible tragedy, I can't think of a better on-the-job training than what I've got over the last 200 days," he said.

His comments come amid growing concern among Democrats over Trump's health and age. The president has dismissed such concerns, insisting he remains energetic and vigorous.

Trump, who turned 79 in June this year, became the oldest US President to be sworn into office on inauguration day in January this year at 78.

Former President Joe Biden was also 78 when he was sworn in as President in 2021, but Biden was five months and six days younger than Trump on his inauguration in January 2021.

Trump, who earlier this month described Vance as the "most likely" heir to his Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement, has fuelled speculation about the vice president's prospects in the 2028 presidential election.

However, the vice president dismissed suggestions that he is already eyeing the Oval Office.

Vance said he and his wife, Usha, are focused on the job he has right now and "if that door opens later on, we'll figure it out then".

The White House had released Trump's health records that said he remains in excellent health and "exhibits excellent cognitive and physical health and is fully fit to execute the duties of the Commander-in-Chief and Head of State."

However, bruises on Trump's hands have raised concerns over the state of his health.

In July, the White House announced that Trump is suffering from chronic venous insufficiency, a common vein condition, after speculation regarding photographs showing bruises on his hand.

White House physician Sean Barbabella described the condition as "benign and common", saying they were "consistent with minor soft tissue irritation from frequent handshaking". (PTT)

India, Japan ink pact for Chandrayaan-5 to explore moon together

TOKYO, Aug 29: India and Japan on Saturday signed the implementing arrangement for the Chandrayaan-5 mission, a joint exploration of the polar region of the moon by the space agencies of the two countries.

The Implementing Arrangement between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) concerning Joint Lunar Polar Exploration Mission was inked on the sidelines of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit here.

The Chandrayaan-5 mission aims to study the lunar volatile materials, including lunar water, in the vicinity of a Permanently Shadowed Region (PSR) in the lunar South pole. The mission will be launched by JAXA onboard its H3-24L launch vehicle, carrying the ISRO-made lunar lander, which



will carry the Japan-made lunar rover.

ISRO, apart from developing the lunar lander, is also responsible for developing a few scientific instruments for the mission for exploration and in-situ analysis of the volatiles reserved in the lunar polar region. "I am glad that India and Japan are joining hands for the next edition of the Chandrayaan series or the LUPEX (Lunar Polar Exploration) mission.

This will contribute to deepening our understanding of the permanently shadowed regions at the lunar south pole," Modi said in an interview with The Yomiuri Shinbun.

"Our G2G collaboration in the space sector, between ISRO and JAXA, is fostering a culture of cooperation between our industries and startups. This is creating an ecosystem where innovation flows both

ways — from labs to launch pads, and from research to real-world applications," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said he was confident that the scientific teams of India and Japan will be working together to push the boundaries of space science. "And, our partnership in space will not only expand horizons above us, but also improve lives around us," Modi said.

He said India's space journey is a story of determination, hard work and innovation of the country's scientists.

"From Chandrayaan-3's historic landing on the moon's south pole to our advances in interplanetary missions, India has consistently demonstrated that space is not the final frontier, it is the next frontier," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said the impact of space science is linked to progress in our daily lives, from agriculture, disaster management, to communications and beyond. (PTT)

Arunachal Guv lauds Army units, NIMAS for service, patriotism



ITANAGAR, Aug 29: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) KT Parnaik on Friday lauded the dedication and service of the armed forces and Dirang-based National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS), saying it is because of their tireless efforts the state continues to progress at a remarkable pace.

He praised the Army units for guiding and preparing the youths for admission into Sainik schools and recruitment in the armed forces, thereby shaping the future defenders of the nation.

He recalled the invaluable support extended by the people of the state to the Indian Armed Forces during the 1962 war, which stands as a testament to their courage and commitment to the nation.

Parnaik said the state is an example of unity in diversity, making it a true model for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.

He also highlighted the Centre's vibrant villages programme, aimed at strengthening border areas and empowering people living there, and urged the Army units to actively support the state government in its implementation so that the borders remain secure and the people in frontier regions fully benefit from this vital initiative.

Earlier, Parnaik conferred Governor's Citations to NIMAS, 1900 Field Regiment, the 2nd Battalion of the Dogra Regiment, the 16th

Battalion of the Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry, 4 Corps Signal Regiment, 305 Field Hospital, and 667 Army Aviation Squadron at the Raj Bhavan here.

NIMAS and the Army Units received the citations for their outstanding professionalism, sharp operational insight, and indomitable spirit, as well as for fostering a deep bond of trust and synergy with the district administration and the people of the state.

NIMAS Director Col Ranveer Singh Jamwal received the citation for the institute, while Col Arun Kumar M S, Commanding Officer, received the honour for the 1900 Field Regiment.

Col Amarjeet Singh, Commanding Officer, and Subedar Chander Pal received the citation for 2 DOGRA; Col Abhishek Tyagi, Commanding Officer, and Subedar Major Rajesh Kumar for 16 JAK LI; Col Ajay Fuloria, Commanding Officer, and Subedar Major Dharmender for 4 Corps Signal Regiment; Col Milind Sawant, Commanding Officer, and Subedar Banger Vivek Uddhav for the 305 Field Hospital.

Col Pradeep Singh Rathore, Commanding Officer, and Subedar Major Rakesh received the citation for the 667 Army Aviation Squadron.

The governor congratulated NIMAS and the Army units for their outstanding contribution, adding that NIMAS has helped bring out the best in mountaineers of the state. (PTI)

Khandu, Mein pay tributes to Major Dhyani Chand on National Sports Day

'With sustained investment in talent development, Arunachal Pradesh is poised to emerge as a powerhouse in Indian sports'

ITANAGAR, Aug 29: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu and his deputy Chowma Mein on Friday paid tributes to hockey legend Major Dhyani Chand on the occasion of National Sports Day, calling for renewed commitment to nurture young sporting talent in the state.

In a post on X, Khandu reflected on the spirit of sportsmanship symbolised by the hockey wizard.

"National Sports Day reminds us of the magic Major Dhyani Chand created on the hockey field and the timeless lessons sports teach us in life, perseverance, unity, and courage," he said.

He urged people to carry forward the spirit of sports so that "every child finds strength in play, discipline in training, and pride in representing our nation".

Mein, in a social media post, highlighted the growing enthusiasm for sports among the youth of the northeastern state.

"On this National Sports Day, we honour the birth anniversary of Major Dhyani Chand, the hockey icon whose sporting spirit continues to inspire generations," he wrote.

Pointing to the achievements of sports persons from the state at both national and international platforms, Mein said, "We are committed to further strengthening sports infrastructure, nurturing young talent, and empowering our athletes to shape a brighter future through sports."

National Sports Day is celebrated every year on August 29 to commemorate the birth an-



niversary of Major Dhyani Chand, regarded as one of the greatest hockey players in history.

Later in the day, Khandu attended the Chief Minister Meritorious Sportspersons Scholarship and Cash Incentive Award ceremony at the D K Auditorium in the state assembly here, and distributed Rs 2.49 crore in cash incentives to 411 sports persons who brought laurels to Arunachal Pradesh at the state, national and international events.

Khandu said that over the years, his government has extended Rs 7.1 crore to 940 athletes as part of our commitment to promote sports

and empower youth.

He also launched the Chief Minister's Athlete Coaching and Empowerment Scheme, formerly known as the CM's Meritorious Sportsperson Scholarship, which was renamed to reflect a broader vision.

"We aim not only to reward achievements but also to provide coaching, training, and holistic support to nurture champions of tomorrow," Khandu said.

The chief minister highlighted the state sports policy, which provides cash incentives to meritorious sports persons who achieve

medals at national and international levels.

Khandu also underlined major initiatives of the government, including the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence at Sangay Lhaden Sports Academy, near here, which is nurturing elite-level players with advanced training and sports science support.

Additionally, he said, 54 Khelo India centres are now functioning across all districts of the state to promote grassroots sports development.

The Chief Minister's Athlete Coaching and Empowerment Scheme aims at identifying and nurturing talent with holistic support in the areas of high-performance training, world-class mentorship, coaching, and sports science interventions.

Currently, 25 able-bodied and five para-athletes from disciplines such as Badminton, Boxing, Judo, Karate, Taekwondo, Weightlifting, Para Athletics, Para Shot Put, Para Javelin, Para Badminton, and Para Powerlifting have been inducted into it.

Khandu assured sports persons of continued government support for creating a robust sports ecosystem in the state.

"Our athletes have made us proud, and with sustained investment in talent development, Arunachal Pradesh is poised to emerge as a powerhouse in Indian sports," he added.

The event was also attended by Mein, Arunachal East MP Tapir Gao, Speaker Tesam Pongte, Education Minister Pasang D Sonu, Sports Minister Kento Jini and Deputy Speaker Kardo Nyigyor, among others. (PTI)

Body of missing student found in school compound

ITANAGAR, Aug 29: Police have recovered the body of a student, missing from his hostel, in Arunachal Pradesh's Kra Daadi district, an officer said on Friday.

Fifteen-year-old Taku Kania, a class 8 student of a private school in Palin, went missing on Thursday afternoon, Kra Daadi, Superintendent of Police Sepraj Perme said.

He said the school's principal had filed a missing report at the Palin police station.

Later, police and school authorities launched a manhunt for the missing student, but he could not be traced.

At around 6 am on Friday, police received a call from school authorities informing them about the recovery of the body of the missing student from the school compound, the SP said. The boy's body was found behind the hostel kitchen near a power transformer.

Prima facie, it appears to be a case of electrocu-

tion, the SP said, adding that an inquest and post-mortem have been done.

Police said the student must have been stressed as they were writing their exams and must have wandered and come into contact with a live wire.

He said the body has been handed over to the family for last rites.

An unnatural death case has been registered at Palin police station, and the investigation in the case is going on, the SP added. (PTI)

SC finds no 'misbehaviour' charge against Arunachal public service commission member

NEW DELHI, Aug 29: The Supreme Court on Thursday did not find any proof of charges of "misbehaviour" against an Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) member in the examination paper leak case and directed revocation of her suspension forthwith.

A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and Aravind Kumar answered the Presidential Reference Article 317(1) of the Constitution of India which deals with removal and suspension of the chairman or member of a public service commission and said no charges were made out against APPSC member Mepung Tadar Bage. "The actions alleged against the Respondent do not meet the threshold of 'misbehaviour'; rather, they do not even meet the threshold of 'lapse' which has a lower threshold. It is not a case where the Respondent was unable to maintain the standard of conduct expected of a Member of a Commission and her actions alone brought disrepute to the APPSC," the bench said.

It added, "In view of the foregoing, the inescapable conclusion on the allegations of charges as made in the reference is that the allegations have not been proved. In terms of Order XLIII Rule 5 of the Supreme Court Rules, 2013 and answering the reference under Article 317(1) of the Constitution of India, this report with recommendation shall be sent to the President of India that the charges as alleged do not bring about any act of 'misbehaviour' by Ms. Mepung Tadar Bage for taking action within its contours."

The bench said the court further recommends that her suspension be revoked forthwith and she would be entitled to all consequential and monetary benefits.

The top court also found fault with the decision of the state government to recommend for Presidential reference under Article 317 (1) which contemplates that the chairman or any other member of a public service commission can only be removed by an order of the president of India on the ground of misbehaviour.

It further contemplates that the said misbehaviour may be proved by inquiry before the Supreme Court following the procedure prescribed in Order XLIII of the Supreme Court Rules, 2013 framed under Article 145(1)(j) of the Constitution of India and the report in this regard shall be submitted to the president of India.

"In our view, the act of the State requesting the President of India to initiate the removal of the Respondent is arbitrary, unfair and discriminatory," the bench said in its 77-page verdict.

It noted that after the leakage of the question paper for Mains Examination for the post of Assistant Engineer (Civil) came to light, the state made a reference to the Inquiry Committee and the chairman and fellow members of the APPSC submitted their resignations on moral grounds and for other reasons.

The bench noted that following the resignation, two members of the commission were sworn in as the state chief information commissioner of Arunachal Pradesh and as chairperson of the Arunachal Pradesh Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Commission.

"If the members of the APPSC who were allegedly collectively found involved in the paper leak as per the letter of Chief Minister, later resigned and got assignment of new post by the State, it is a question to ponder upon, which ought to be looked into by the State especially so when Article 319(d) of the Constitution of India bars members of a State Public Service Commission from taking up any other employment either under the Government of India or under the Government of a State after they cease to be in office," the bench said.

It added that in the court's view, if the members were collectively involved, the act of the state government bequeathing responsibility upon such members, giving them assignment of posts having responsibilities, clearly goes to indicate that there was nothing against the chairman or any member of the commission showing their indictment in a personal capacity of committing any act or omission which may prove misbehaviour on their part. (PTI)

Graduation Day held at Don Bosco College Itanagar, 445 students conferred degrees

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 29: Koloriang MLA and Advisor to the PHED Minister, Pani Taram, urged the student community to use their knowledge and degrees in the service of humanity and society while addressing the Graduation Day-cum-Felicitation of Rank Holders ceremony of Don Bosco College, Jollang, recently.

Speaking as chief guest, Taram said that graduation symbolises maturity and responsibility.

"From today onwards, your degree certificate is your knowledge, and your knowledge needs to be shared with the world. You are our future, so you must lead the society, the state and the country with positivity and commitment," he said.

He further encouraged the graduates not to lose hope even if unemployed, but to pursue opportunities with dedication and hard work.

The MLA congratulated the graduates and sponsored cash awards for all RGU rank holders, assuring continued support for the next five years.

He also committed to aiding the ongoing toilet block construction at the college and announced assistance for a bore well and underground water tank for the sports hostel.

Guest of honour Prof Boa Reena Tok, HoD of Education at Rajiv Gandhi Univer-



sity, in her address, highlighted the importance of education in empowering communities and urged students to stay determined despite challenges in life.

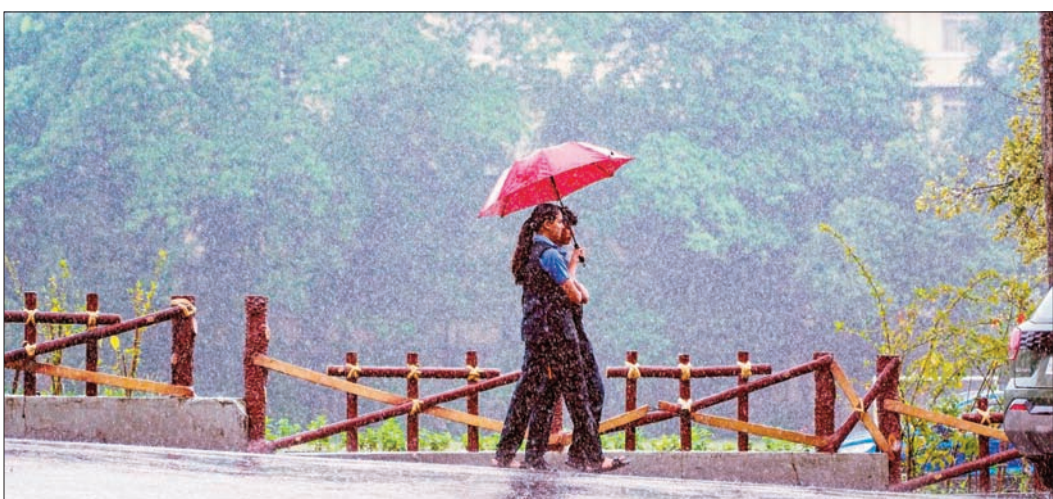
Principal Dr Fr Jose George, in his welcome address, recalled the humble beginnings of the college in 2002 under the Salesians of Don Bosco and informed that the institution was accredited with an "A" grade by NAAC in 2023.

He congratulated the graduates and welcomed the alumni to their alma mater.

Altogether, 445 students graduated this year, including 38 top-ten rank holders, of whom five were gold medalists in Commerce, English, Sociology and Social Work.

Fr CD Mathai, Rector of the college, also addressed the gathering, urging students to live by the values and principles they imbibed during their time at Don Bosco College.

IMD issues heavy rain alerts for Arunachal Pradesh



ITANAGAR, Aug 29: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast thunderstorms, lightning and heavy to very heavy rain in parts of Arunachal Pradesh for two days since Friday.

Heavy rain measuring 7 to 11 cm in 24 hours is very likely at isolated places in West Siang and Namsai districts, while Papum Pare may experience very heavy

rainfall in the range of 12 to 20 cm in a single day.

The shower, with comparatively less intensity, is likely to continue till September 3.

A bulletin issued by the meteorological centre here said that the weather conditions could cause poor visibility, temporary disruption of traffic due to waterlogging and uprooted trees, and longer

travel time.

It also warned of flooding of low-lying areas, landslides, mudslides and flash floods triggered by intense spells of rain.

The department further pointed out that agricultural and horticultural crops face risks from heavy rain and gusty winds, with chances of soil erosion, seed displacement and poor germination in fields al-

ready sown.

Advisories issued by the weather office suggested that residents avoid waterlogged and landslide-prone areas, follow traffic guidelines, and stay away from weak structures during heavy rainfall.

Farmers were asked to provide proper drainage in fields, use mulching materials to protect soil and roots, support vegetable pandals, and postpone sowing of seeds where possible.

The rainfall will gradually reduce in the next few days.

On August 30 and 31, heavy rainfall is likely to persist over the eastern and central parts of the state.

On September 1, widespread moderate rain with isolated heavy spells will occur, particularly in the foothill districts adjoining Assam. The rainfall is expected to become scattered the next day, although isolated heavy showers may occur over the eastern and central belts. Light to moderate rain is expected at many places on September 3, the IMD said. (PTI)

Khandu thanks PM for showcasing Arunachal's culture in Japan



ITANAGAR, Aug 29: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Friday expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for highlighting the state's cultural heritage on the global stage during his official visit to Japan.

In a post on X, Khandu wrote that the Prime Minister "Has once again made us proud by showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh on the global stage."

Modi, during his engagements in Tokyo, wore the traditional Tuko of the Galo tribe, a customary outfit symbolising the vibrant identity and craftsmanship of the people of the northeastern state.

"On behalf of the people of Arunachal Pradesh, I extend heartfelt gratitude to Hon'ble PM for ho-

nouring our traditions and giving them international recognition," Khandu said, adding that the "gesture was in true spirit of the #Vocal-ForLocal campaign".

Modi addressed the India-Japan Economic Forum, describing strong business ties as a vital pillar of friendship between the two nations.

"The world is not just watching India but counting on India," he said, urging Japanese industry to deepen engagement with India's growth story under the 'Make in India' initiative.

The PM also underlined the potential of combining Japan's advanced technology with India's skilled talent to drive a "technological revolution of this century". (PTI)

NAME CORRECTION

I, Gautam Majumdar, D.O.B. 12/03/1983, S/O- Tanuram Majumdar, resident of vill-Telahi, Bhakatgaon, P.O.-Bangaldhara, P.S.-Dharamtul, Dist.- Morigaon, Assam have corrected my name from Papu Majumdar to Gautam Majumdar through a notary public at Morigaon court. Gautam Majumdar and Papu Majumdar is the same and one person.

NAME CORRECTION

The name in the Birth Certificate of Titiksha Sarma issued vide no.3479605 is changed as "Titiksha Sarma" instead of "Titiksha Sarmah" and names of father and mother is changed as "Sanjib Sarma" and "Runumi Sarma" instead of "Sanjib Sarmah" and "Runumi Sarmah" in her Birth Certificate.

ASSOCIATE SIGNALLING WORKS

E-Tender No. : SNT-13-LMG-2025-26; Dated: 26-08-2025; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Name of work :** Associate Signalling work in connection with Yard improvement Lumding-Furkating section (i.e. CTR & TIR) and associate signalling works in connection with work "Aghori-Narangi-Tiptur with TVWS and WCMS for laying of CWR". **Tender Value:** ₹59,68,224.66/-; **Bid Security:** ₹1,19,400/-; **Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hours and opening at 15:30 hours on 17-09-2025.** For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website www.ireps.gov.in

DSFE, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

ANNUAL UPKEEP, MAINTENANCE AND HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES

E-Tender Notice No.: LMG/Engg/62 of 2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Name of work:** Annual upkeep, maintenance and housekeeping services at Hill Queen, Officers and Engineering rest houses, MDDTI Hostel, Subordinate rest house and other civil engineering related repairing works of Hill Queen, Engineering Rest house and horticulture, beautification services & developmental works at DRM/Lumding office complex, Div. Rly. Hospital, Vivekananda Railway stadium, Rabindra nursery, road rotaries, Officers bungalows, service buildings etc Under Jurisdiction of ADEN/III/Lumding for The Period of One(1) Year. **Tender Value:** ₹1,99,58,185.20/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹24,98,00/-; **Date & time of closing of tender: 15:00 hrs. of 22-09-2025 & opening at 15:00 hrs. of 23-09-2025.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 22-09-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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Rio hints at breakthrough after cabinet's talks with MHA officials in Delhi

FNTA issue almost resolved: Nagaland CM Rio



KOHHIMA, Aug 29: Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Friday said the discussions on the demand for Frontier Nagaland Territory Authority (FNTA) by the people of the six eastern districts are nearing conclusion.

The Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO), the apex body representing eight tribes across Mon, Tuensang, Longleng, Kiphire, Noklak, and Shamator

districts, has been demanding a separate state since 2010, alleging decades of neglect.

"For your information, we have almost resolved the FNTA issue," Rio said while briefing the press on the recent visit of the state cabinet to New Delhi.

Responding to PTI on why the cabinet returned without meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he said, "No, he sent his delega-

tion, the home secretary, the IB director, and the joint secretary (Northeast). We had a long discussion, and I also had one-to-one meetings with them. So our mission is accomplished, and next time when I go, I am asked to have a one-to-one meeting again."

The organisation has also stated that it will not sign any agreement without firm assurances of financial, legislative, and executive autonomy. (PTI)

TCK. A tripartite meeting was held in New Delhi on July 23 among officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Nagaland government, and ENPO representatives.

The meeting was understood to have resolved several contentious issues, leaving only a few for the Nagaland government to work on.

On the speculation that the final agreement on FNTA will be signed by October, Rio said, "We have already cleared our side, so it is up to them to arrange, and then bring us the final draft."

The ENPO boycotted the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and also did not participate in urban local body polls over its demand for a separate state.

In April, the organisation agreed to the Centre's proposal for a certain degree of autonomy under the FNTA framework, suspending its agitation for statehood.

The ENPO has stated that the FNTA arrangement would be subject to review after 10 years, and that remaining issues will be addressed through democratic and political means.

The organisation has also stated that it will not sign any agreement without firm assurances of financial, legislative, and executive autonomy. (PTI)

Tripura CM mulls to use Bangladesh's Titas River water for 51 wards of Agartala



HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Aug 29: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday said he is contemplating the use of water from the Titas River for supplying drinking water to all 51 wards of the Agartala Municipal Corporation.

Saha made this announcement after inaugurating the Vivekananda Township Project at Kaman Chowmahani, Agartala.

"Our government is transparent and we are working for the betterment of the people. These flats are for the lower-income group, middle-income group, and higher-income group. We were waiting to hand over the keys to the flat owners, and now we have done it. I want to thank TUDA for constructing such flats in the heart of Agartala," said Saha.

He added that these flats are earthquake-resistant. "We are working for development, and there is no talk without development. From January till August, we have inaugurated and laid foundation stones worth Rs 800 crore. This is what the BJP-led government is about. We have formed TUDA to construct beautiful buildings for comfortable living. We have also given permission for high-rise buildings by following all rules," he said.

Saha further informed that the main aim of TUDA is to build

modern flats for economically weaker and middle-class people.

"We are also constructing roads. Another project of 216 flats at a cost of around Rs 96 crore is underway near the Bhagat Singh Youth Hostel. It is expected to be completed by March next year," he said.

The Chief Minister also said he has requested the Centre to remove the cap on loan amounts for externally aided projects.

"There are many states where such a cap does not exist. But in our case, due to many ongoing development works, we are facing issues because of this cap," he said.

He also informed that work on preparing GIS master plans for 20 urban areas of the state is underway. The master plan for Agartala

city is already about 70% complete and development projects worth around Rs 530 crore have been undertaken in the first phase of the Mukhyamantri Nagar Unnayan Prakaalp with the help of ADB.

Speaking about the drinking water issue, Saha said, "The water of the Haora, Kalapania, or Katakhal canal mix with the Titas River. I have good knowledge of the Titas River. I have proposed that water from the Titas River be supplied to the 51 wards of Agartala Municipal Corporation as drinking water. Proposals have been given, and if everything goes as planned, we will raise this matter with the Centre so that we can provide iron-free water. We are working on this," he added.

Meth tablets worth ₹ 144 crore seized, 3 arrested

AIZAWL, Aug 29: In a major blow to trans-border narcotics smuggling, the Border Security Force (BSF) in a special joint operation with the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) seized 9.6 lakh tablets of methamphetamine (Yaba) worth over ₹ 144 crore and arrested 3 persons in Serchhip district, the paramilitary force said in a statement on Friday.

This is the second such major haul of meth tablets by the BSF in the past few days. Acting on a tip off, the BSF troops and NCB officials launched a joint operation and intercepted a pickup truck near Serchhip town on Thursday, the statement said.

The team recovered 9.6 lakh methamphetamine tablets worth ₹ 144 crore from the vehicle and arrested three residents of Aizawl for possessing the contraband, it said.

Earlier on August 21, the BSF, NCB and Mizoram Excise and Narcotics department seized 5 lakh tablets of methamphetamine and 36 grams of heroin altogether worth ₹ 75 crore during a joint operation on the Aizawl-Champhai highway (NH-6) between Keifang and Seling villages about 60 km from Aizawl.

Eight people and four vehicles used for transporting the contraband were seized during the special joint operation. (PTI)

M'laya felicitates 136 athletes, 22 coaches on National Sports Day

SHILLONG/TURA, Aug 29: The Meghalaya government on Friday felicitated 136 athletes and 22 coaches who participated in the 6th Meghalaya Games, on the occasion of National Sports Day.

Cheques of ₹ 45 lakh were also distributed among 103 beneficiaries under the YESS Meghalaya initiative.

The celebrations, organised by the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, were held simultaneously in Shillong and Tura, showcasing the government's focus on strengthening sporting culture and infrastructure across the state, officials said.

Sports Minister Shakliar Warji, who attended the programme in Shillong, said the state's objective is to be able to produce local athletes by the next Olympic Games.

He also launched the first phase of 'Megha Fit' initiative with an initial investment of over ₹ 20 lakh and announced that ₹ 100 crore had been sanctioned for establishing sports hostel facilities to nurture young talent. "We believe this will empower sports associations and the youth as a whole," Warji said.

Warji highlighted the successful conduct of the Meghalaya Games as a testament to the state's growing sporting culture and urged young athletes to seize every opportunity and actively engage with the government. In Tura, the event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Nipon Hajong, who emphasised the role of sports in fostering unity and well-being. (PTI)

Nagaland legislators to meet

KOHHIMA, Aug 29: The Home Department, Political Branch, Government of Nagaland, has notified that a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee along with all the MLAs of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly is being convened on September 1, 2025 at 2 pm at State Banquet Hall, Chief Minister's Residential Complex in Kohima to review and discuss all major issues relating to the Nagaland political issue, an official notification said today.

The Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Ministers, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker will be present in the meeting.

All the ministers, the Rajya Sabha MP and the Lok Sabha, Advisors and MLAs have been requested to kindly make it convenient to attend the meeting. Meanwhile, in view of the 7th Session of the Fourteenth Nagaland Legislative Assembly being summoned from September 2, 2025 onwards, Minister for Power and Parliamentary Affairs, KG Kenye has called for a meeting of all the 60 legislators of the Fourteenth House of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly on September 1, 2025 (Monday) at 11 am in the State Banquet Hall, Kohima. Therefore, all the legislators have been requested to attend the meeting.

In another notification, Minister for Power and Parliamentary Affairs, KG Kenye has called for a meeting of all the NDPP Legislature Party on September 1, 2025 (Monday) at 10 am in the State Banquet Hall, Kohima, for which all the members of the NDPP Legislature Party have been requested to attend the meeting. (NNN)

Air Force chief stresses preparedness, synergy

SHILLONG, Aug 29: Air Chief Marshal A P Singh on Friday underscored the crucial role of the Eastern Air Command (EAC) in safeguarding India's northern and eastern frontiers and called for a unified approach to counter emerging security challenges.

"The Eastern Air Command is pivotal in securing our northern and eastern borders. We must remain vigilant and maintain the highest levels of preparedness to respond to any situation," Singh said while addressing the EAC Commanders' Conference in Shillong.

The annual conference is being held from August 27 to 30 at the EAC headquarters. Singh attended the deliberations on August 28 and 29, a Defence spokesperson said.

Emphasising jointness, Singh added, "Future threats demand seamless coordination and synergy with sister services to ensure effective operations across the region."

On his arrival, the Chief of Air Staff was received by Air Marshal Surat Singh, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of EAC, and accorded a guard of honour. He later interacted with commanders and senior officers of the command.

The IAF chief also presented trophies to Air Force stations excelling in operations, maintenance and administration. (PTI)

Nagaland honours 151 sports persons on National Sports Day

KOHHIMA, Aug 29: Nagaland honoured 151 sportspersons from across the state, who excelled at Northeast, national and international levels, on the occasion of National Sports Day on Friday.

In his address at a function, Advisor for Youth Resources and Sports, S Keosho Yimkhung, announced that the state government is drafting a new sports policy in line with the 'Khelo Bharat Niti 2025'. He said the policy will strengthen the state's sports ecosystem and reflect athletes' interests.

Extending greetings on behalf of the government, Yimkhung congratulated the awardees and said the day marks the birth anniversary of the hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand, whose life remains an inspiration for generations of athletes.

He said the state has been developing sports infrastructure across all 17 districts.

"Most districts have already been equipped with modern stadiums, futsal courts and other facilities, while projects are in the

pipeline in the remaining districts," he said.

He urged the police to provide job opportunities to promising athletes.

Nagaland Director General of Police Rupin Sharma, in his address, highlighted both the passion and challenges of pursuing sports in the state.

While stressing that sports build discipline, resilience and character, he pointed out the short career of athletes and the lack of private sponsorships in Nagaland due to economic limitations and isolation.

He said Nagaland Police will soon conduct recruitment, where preference would be given to sportspersons who qualify, and encouraged integration of athletes as referees, coaches and trainers within the system.

Underscoring the importance of collaboration, he appealed for a stronger partnership between government departments and private stakeholders, including through CSR initiatives, to create a sustainable sporting ecosystem. (PTI)

Former Arunachal minister Thinghap Taiju dies, leaders pay tributes

ITANAGAR, Aug 29: Former Arunachal Pradesh Minister Thinghap Taiju died at his residence in Changlang district on Friday, family sources said.

Taiju had been unwell for the past two days and was on oxygen support. He was aged over 70 and is survived by wife, two sons, and a daughter. Taiju first entered the Assembly by winning the Changlang North constituency seat in 1995 as an independent candidate and later retained it in 1999 on a Congress ticket. In 2009, he returned as a Congress legislator from the same constituency.

He had served as deputy minister of Geology and Mining under the Gegong Apang government, and later as a minister of state for IFCD and education under the Mukut Mithi and Dorjee Khandu governments, respectively.

In September 2022, Taiju formally joined the BJP. Chief Minister Pema Khandu expressed deep sorrow at Taiju's demise.

"I am deeply saddened by the demise of former Minister Shri Thinghap Taiju Ji. His dedicated service and contribution to the state will always be remembered. My heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones during this difficult time. May his soul find eternal peace and light," Khandu said in a post on X.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein also conveyed grief over the passing away of the veteran leader.

"Saddened to learn about the demise of former Minister Shri Thinghap Taiju Ji. He devoted his life to the service of Arunachal Pradesh, leaving an enduring legacy of leadership, dedication, and commitment to the people. His contributions to the state's growth and welfare will always be remembered," Mein said in a social media post. He added, "My heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and all his well-wishers. May his soul rest in eternal peace." (PTI)

No law in Nagaland prohibits women from working during night hours

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Aug 29: Nagaland labour commissioner SL Wati Aier on Friday clarified that notwithstanding the wording of Section 20 of the Nagaland Shops & Establishments Act, 1982, there is no law presently in force in Nagaland that prohibits women from working during night hours.

Issuing a clarification regarding Section 20 of the Nagaland Shops & Establishments Act, 1986 - Employment of women during night hours - Aier said women may be engaged in employment beyond 7 pm or before 6 am, subject to their safeguards.

The official said employment during

night hours will be only with the voluntary and written consent of the concerned woman employee.

Regarding safety measures, Aier stated that adequate transportation, lighting, and security arrangements must be provided to ensure safety during travel and at the workplace.

He stated that all provisions relating to working hours, overtime, rest intervals, and weekly holidays under the Act and relevant labour laws must be complied with in full, as per the labour laws.

The labour commissioner added that this notification, issued with the approval of the competent authority, will be applicable with immediate effect.

BEE index lauds states' progress in energy audits, retrofits, and clean mobility initiatives

Tripura and Assam among top performers in State Energy Efficiency Index 2024

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Aug 29: Tripura and Assam have emerged as leaders among smaller and medium energy-consuming states in the recently released State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2024, an initiative by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in association with the Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE).

The index, unveiled by Akash Tripathi, IAS, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power and Director General, BEE, assesses the energy efficiency performance of 36 Indian states and Union Territories for FY 2023-24.

Tripura, with a total final energy consumption of less than 1 MToe, and Assam, consuming 1.5 MToe, have been recognised as top performers in their respective groups, reflecting strong on-ground implementation of energy efficiency measures.

SEEI 2024 evaluates states across seven critical sectors—Buildings, Industry, Municipal Services, Transport, Agriculture, Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOMs), and Cross-Sector initiatives—using 66 indicators.

Speaking at the launch, Tripathi said, "India's energy transition is not just a response to climate imperatives—it is a strategic opportunity to foster innovation, resilience, and inclusive growth. Energy efficiency is a foundational pillar, offering impactful, low-cost solutions across sectors. The State Energy Efficiency Index 2024 brings a sharper focus on ground-



level implementation, sectoral outcomes, and measurable progress."

The sixth edition of the SEEI highlights significant advancements across sectors.

In Tripura and Assam, state-led initiatives such as energy audits, retrofits, technology demonstrations, and capacity-building programmes have strengthened performance.

Key developments include the adoption of the Energy Conservation Building Code in the Buildings sector, MSME energy efficiency poli-

cies in Industry, climate action plans in municipalities, electric mobility policies in Transport, and solar-powered agricultural pumps in the Agriculture sector.

The SEEI 2024 also shows growing adoption of demand-side management strategies and reports that all 36 states and UTs have developed State Energy Efficiency Action Plans, with 31 forming State-Level Steering Committees on Energy Transition under the chairmanship of their Chief Secretaries.

MUMBAI, Aug 29: Director Om Raut is elated to be working with Dhanush on "Kalam: The Missile Man of India" as he believes there is no one better than the south superstar to portray J Abdul Kalam on the big screen.

"There could be nobody better than him. Dhanush is a phenomenal actor. I'm glad that he is kind of accepted to do the part. He is somebody that I really look up to and I'm looking forward to working with him on this film," Raut, who has helmed films like "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior" and "Adipurush", told PTI in an interview.

The first look of the film, which will trace Kalam's life as a scientist and as the president of India, was unveiled at the Cannes Film Market in May this year.

Raut made his directorial debut with a biopic on social reformer and freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Marathi titled "Lokmanya: Ek Yugpurush" and followed it up with Marathi warrior Tanaji Malusare's story in "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior". It was his Hindi debut.

Raut said while he loves making biopics, they are a challenging genre.

"It's always difficult to make a film on any personality. The episodes of their life that you select to go in the film, versus the episodes of their life that you choose not to put is important. You let go of a few things and realise that whatever you've selected is good, and what's omitted is even better. Having said that, one wants to make the best effort to tell the story and make it inspirational."

With his new movie, the filmmaker said his aim is to celebrate Kalam's enduring vision for India and his profound impact on the youth.

"Dr. Kalam is an inspiration. He was an inspiration to me when I was growing up. His

NOBODY BETTER THAN DHANUSH TO PLAY APJ ABDUL KALAM: DIRECTOR OM RAUT



books have actually changed my life. If I can tell the story in a way that it becomes an inspiration to a lot of people, predominantly youngsters, he believed in youngsters, just like Lokmanya Tilak."

"Kalam" is produced by Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar of T-Series and Abhishek Agarwal and Anil Sunkara of Abhishek Agarwal Arts.

Raut's home production film "Inspector Zende", starring Manoj Bajpayee and Jim Sarbh, will release on September 5. (PTI)

Shilpa Shetty Kundra remembers late Sridevi: My ode to my forever OG



MUMBAI, Aug 29: Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty Kundra on Friday shared glimpses from her new photoshoot, which is inspired by Sridevi's popular character "Chandni".

She uploaded a video on her Instagram handle on Friday and paid tribute to the late star. In the video, she is dressed in a yellow sari and styled in the same way as Sridevi was in the film. She completed the look with a pearl necklace and matching earrings.

"My Ode to my forever OG Srij. #Chandni #Chandnivibes #icon #sridevi," the 50-year-old actor wrote in the caption.

Released in 1989, "Chandni" was directed by Yash Chopra and also featured late actors Rishi Kapoor and Vinod Khanna alongside Sridevi. (PTI)

Rishabh Sawhney says 'Echoes of Valour' fulfils his dream of going international

NEW DELHI, Aug 29: Actor Rishabh Sawhney, who became popular after playing the antagonist in Siddharth Anand's "Fighter", says his upcoming film "Echoes of Valour" is a milestone in his career as it has been selected for a closed-door screening at the Venice Film Festival.

Directed by filmmaker Indira Dhar, "Echoes of Valour" is described as an emotional story of love, sacrifice and justice.

It features Divya Dutta and Neeraj Kabi in the lead roles with Sawhney essaying the role of a teacher.

The actor said the project has a special place in his heart.

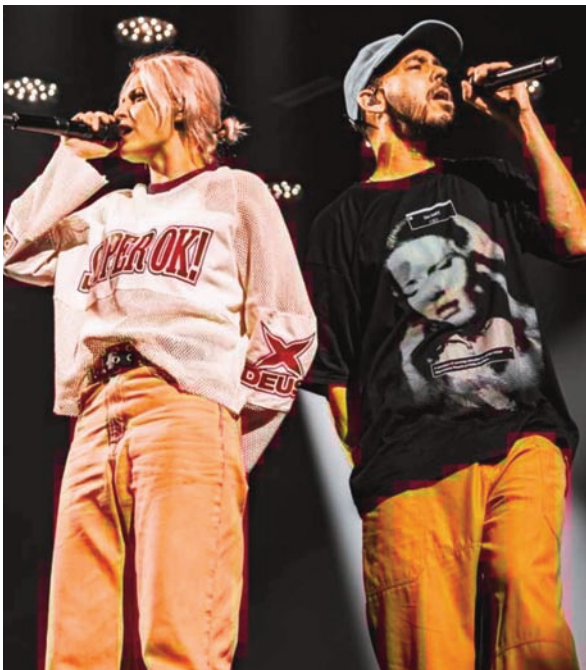
"Ever since I started acting, I wanted to be part of a film which will go international to the festival circuit and I'm getting to travel because of the film... so it's a very proud moment for me. This is something I had in my bucket list and now we have ticked it off," Sawhney said in a statement.

"The main crux of the film is a mother's love for her child and the story resonated with me at so many levels because I have seen my mother go to lengths to just help me. And when you see the lengths to which the mother in the film goes to get justice for her child, you will be shocked," he added.

Sawhney said the film also allowed him to explore a completely different shade as a performer. "I'm playing a teacher in the film and my character plays a catalyst which takes the story ahead. I don't want to give out more details as I want people to come and watch the film. But we are happy that the film has been selected for the closed-door screening at the Venice Film Festival and I couldn't be more excited. It just feels special," he said. "Echoes of Valour" produced by Margaret Zambonini and IKA Studios. (PTI)



Linkin Park to make India debut at Lollapalooza 2026 in Mumbai



NEW DELHI, Aug 29: Legendary rock band Linkin Park will perform in India for the first time as one of the headliners of Lollapalooza India 2026, organisers announced on Friday.

The band, known for genre-defining hits such as "In the End", "Numb" and "Crawling", will take the stage in Mumbai at the festival, which will run on January 24 and 25, making a historic concert debut that fans have waited for years.

"India has been somewhere we've wanted to play for a long time. Our fans there are incredibly passionate and we can't wait to finally bring our live show to them," band member Mike Shinoda said in a statement.

Linkin Park, which paused live shows following the death of frontman Chester Bennington in 2017, made its comeback in 2024 with a new lead vocalist, putting to rest years of speculation about the band's future.

The group, which now includes -- Shinoda, Emily Armstrong, Brad Del-

son, Joe Hahn, Dave Farrell and Colin Brittain, introduced its new album "From Zero", led by singles "Lost" and "Friendly Fire".

"For over 20 years, Linkin Park's music has soundtracked personal journeys across the world and in India their fan base has only grown stronger. Their debut is one of the most anticipated moments in India's live music history," BookMyShow Live, promoter and co-producer of the festival, said.

Lollapalooza India, returning for its fourth edition, will also feature rapper Playboi Carti, Yungblud, Kehlani, Knock2, LANY, Fujii Kaze, Calum Scott and several other global acts.

BookMyShow Live, the live entertainment experiential division of BookMyShow, spearheads Lollapalooza India as the promoter and co-producer for the festival's Indian edition along with global producers, Perry Farrell and C3 Presents.

Tickets for the festival are available on lollaindia.com. (PTI)

Gujarat to host Filmfare Awards 2025; tourism corporation inks MoU with Times Group firm

AHMEDABAD, Aug 29: The prestigious Filmfare Awards ceremony will be held in Gujarat for a second year in a row in 2025 with the state government saying the high-profile event will serve as a platform to highlight Gujarat's rich, diverse attractions and also boost local economy.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) for hosting the Filmfare Awards 2025, its 70th edition, in Gujarat was signed by the state government's tourism corporation with the organising firm, Worldwide Media (WWM), on Thursday, said an official release.

This is the second consecutive year when the Filmfare Awards -- which honour artistic and technical excellence in the Hindi film industry -- will be organised in the western state. Gujarat hosted the awards ceremony for the first time in 2024 (at GIFT City, Gandhinagar). The MoU between the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd (TCGL) and WWM was signed in Gandhinagar in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Managing Director of The Times Group, Vineet Jain.

WWM, India's leading entertainment and lifestyle content company, is part of The Times Group.

Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar and actor Vikrant Massey were also present at the signing ceremony, said the release.

Under the Cinematic Tourism Policy 2022, Gujarat has emerged as a hub for the film industry and hosting the Filmfare Awards will be a landmark in this journey, noted the CM at the MoU signing event.

On the occasion, Patel also unveiled the iconic Filmfare Trophy -- the Black Lady.

The CM highlighted that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance, Gujarat has received a new direction in economic, social, and cultural development, making it a preferred destination for entertainment investments.

Hosting the prestigious Filmfare Awards ceremony in Gujarat will not only boost the local economy and generate employment, but also encourage purchase and sale of domestic products, fulfilling the PM's call for 'Vocal for Local' and reinforcing the adoption of indigenous goods and services, the release quoted the CM as saying.

Patel emphasised that hosting the 70th Filmfare Awards will serve as a milestone, showcasing Gujarat's tourism legacy and heritage to the world.

He opined that Gujarat is also emerging as a major centre for the concert economy, with the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, having a seating capacity of one lakh, proving the city's capability to host mega events.

The awards ceremony will serve

as a platform to highlight Gujarat's rich and diverse attractions to both national and international audiences, including the White Desert of Kutch, Sabarmati Ashram, Somnath, Dwarka (both temple towns), Gir National Park, the Statue of Unity, and Shivrappur Beach (Dwarka), he stressed.

To ensure successful hosting of the prestigious event, the state government and local authorities will invest in improving infrastructure, transport, and hospitality facilities, Patel said.

These development initiatives will not only support the awards ceremony but also strengthen Gujarat's tourism infrastructure, making the state an even more attractive destination for visitors in the long term, the CM affirmed.

Speaking on the occasion, Times Group MD Vineet Jain expressed gratitude on behalf of the organisation to the state government and its citizens for their support for the event under the leadership of CM Patel. With the return of the awards to the state, he maintained, Gujarat has become a confluence of culture and entertainment, opening new opportunities in both the film and tourism sectors.

For over 70 years, the Filmfare Awards have celebrated the best in Indian cinema, and Gujarat's association with this legacy further highlights its progressive vision, Jain stated. (PTI)



Nagaland honours 151 sportspersons on National Sports Day

KOHIMA, Aug 29: Nagaland honoured 151 sportspersons from across the state, who excelled at Northeast, national and international levels, on the occasion of National Sports Day on Friday.

In his address at a function, Advisor for Youth Resources and Sports, S Keoshu Yimkhung, announced that the state government is drafting a new sports policy in line with the 'Khelo Bharat Niti 2025'.

He said the policy will strengthen the state's sports ecosystem and reflect athletes' interests.

Extending greetings on behalf of the government, Yimkhung congratulated the awardees and said the day marks the birth anniversary of the hockey wizard Major Dhyani Chand, whose life remains an inspiration for generations of athletes.

He said the state has been developing sports infrastructure across all 17 districts.

"Most districts have already been equipped with modern stadiums, futsal courts and other facilities, while projects are in the pipeline in the remaining districts," he said.

He urged the police to provide job opportunities to promising athletes.

Nagaland Director General of Police Rupin Sharma, in his address, highlighted both the passion and challenges of pursuing sports in the state.

While stressing that sports build discipline, resilience and character, he pointed out the short career of athletes and the lack of private sponsorships in Nagaland due to economic limitations and isolation. He said Nagaland Police will soon conduct recruitment, where preference would be given to sportspersons who qualify, and encouraged integration of athletes as referees, coaches and trainers within the system.

Underscoring the importance of collaboration, he appealed for a stronger partnership between government departments and private stakeholders, including through CSR initiatives, to create a sustainable sporting ecosystem. (PTI)

'I HAVE THREE WEEKS FOR WORLDS' TIMING WAS NOT GOOD AT DL FINALE: NEERAJ CHOPRA



ZURICH, Aug 29: Indian javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra acknowledged that his timing was off in the Diamond League Finals in which he finished second but he is hopeful of hitting his strides at the World Championships next month in Tokyo, where he is the defending champion.

The two-time Olympic medalist finished runner-up in the Diamond League Finale for the third time in a row as Julian Weber of Germany lifted his maiden trophy with two 90m-plus throws in a commanding show here on Thursday.

Chopra was lying third till the fifth round following his opening throw of 84.35m before his final effort of 85.01m took him to the second spot, overtaking 2012 London Olympics gold winner Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago who ended third with 84.95m.

"The timing was not so good today (Thursday), run-up was not so good. There is something I didn't find today, but I still have

three weeks for the World Championships, and I will try my best," Chopra said after the event on Thursday.

The Tokyo Olympic gold medalist had crossed 90m for the first time earlier this year at the Doha Diamond League, but has on numerous occasions said he needs to improve his technique to hit the mark consistently.

"This was not too bad. But we are getting very close to the World Championships, so I still need to throw a little bit farther. There were a few things that went well, but still, there were the things which did not go that well," Chopra said.

"In the last attempt, I still managed to throw 85. But I am very happy for Julian (Weber), he managed to throw really far, and to show 91m was really good. We will see in three weeks.

"I still need to train a little bit. In this sport, we do not know. It depends on the day."

On how his season was shaping up ahead of the World Champi-

onships, the Paris Olympics silver-medallist said, "It's going well and today was a hard day. There is always a harder day in sports, so today was a hard day for me, but I still managed in the last (throw) over 85 metres."

Chopra, who has been dealing with a right groin injury for a long time, added that he is in good shape for the track and field showpiece in Tokyo, and that he was only looking to time his throw perfectly.

"I feel good and I just need to find some good timing," he added.

On Thursday, Weber took the top spot in the DL Finals, achieving a season's world-leading throw of 91.57m, his personal best, in his second attempt. He began with 91.37m effort, and after that it was a one-man show in the seven-man field.

None of Weber's rivals could even come near his mark, as his best effort of the day was over six metres more than that of Chopra. The German had a foul, 83.66m,

86.45m and 88.66m after his second throw.

Clearly, Chopra was not at his best as he had three legal throws out of the six attempts.

Known for his consistency in producing 88m-plus throws, it was a rare instance of the 27-year-old Indian star just being able to touch the 85m mark.

He was hoping to regain the trophy he had won in 2022, but ended up finishing second for the third time after 2023 and 2024.

With Thursday's title, Weber extended his head-to-head record against Chopra to 3-1 this season. The German had earlier beaten Chopra to second place in Doha DL in May and ORLEN Janusz Kusocinski Memorial event in Chorzow, Poland, the same month.

Chopra won in Paris DL in June with Weber finishing second. However, Chopra leads Weber in overall head-to-head record by a wide margin of 15-5 in competitions involving the duo since 2016. (PTI)

Lacklustre India scrape past lowly China 4-3



RAJGIR (BIHAR), Aug 29: Skipper Harmanpreet fired a hat-trick but India were far from impressive in their narrow 4-3 win over lower-ranked China in their Asia Cup opener, here Friday.

Harmanpreet (20th, 33rd, 47th minutes) converted three penalty corners but missed a penalty stroke. The other goal getter for India was Jugraj Singh (18th).

China's goals came through Shihao Du (12th), Benhal Chen (35th) and Jiesheng Gao (41st).

India stood on the right side of the result but the hosts didn't have a very good day in office and were guilty of letting China come into the match.

India also squandered plenty of chances, converting just four out of 11 penalty corners.

As expected India started on an offensive note and created their first opportunity with the first move. Mandeep Singh set it up for Sanjay but his shot was saved by Chinese goalkeeper Weihao Yang.

India kept up the pressure and seconds later secured their first penalty corner from which Mandeep scored but the goal was disallowed for a push by the striker after China went for referral.

Minutes later Dilpreet Singh's reverse hit from close range was saved by the Chinese custodian. It was China who took the lead from their first penalty corner in the 12th minute through Shihao Du.

A minute from the end of first quarter India had two more bright chances but on the first occasion Abhishek was denied by Wehah and then skipper Harmanpreet Singh

flicked wide from the home team's second penalty corner.

India restored parity three minutes into the second quarter with a perfect penalty corner conversion by Jugraj. Two minutes later India earned their fourth set piece and this time Harmanpreet scored with a powerful dragkick.

A minute later the hosts secured another penalty corner but wasted the chance.

China also got another penalty corner soon but shot wide.

It was raining penalty corners for India as the hosts secured another three minutes from halftime, but Harmanpreet's flick was brilliant saved by a diving Weihao to his left.

India continued from where they left in the first half and extended their lead three minutes into the third quarter from another penalty corner conversion by Harmanpreet.

China, however, pulled a goal back two minutes later through Benhal Chen, whose flick from a penalty corner went through the legs of India keeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak.

In the 39th minute India had a golden opportunity to extend their lead when they were awarded a penalty stroke for a foul on Mandeep but Harmanpreet hit the post.

India had to pay heavy price for that miss as two minutes later Jiesheng Gao converted a penalty corner to level the scores at 3-3 as Pathak was found wanting yet again.

But luck favoured India as they secured three back-to-back penalty corners in the 47th minute, the last of which was put into goal by Harmanpreet. (PTI)

So far, so good for Naomi Osaka and her new coach at the US Open

NEW YORK, Aug 29: Naomi Osaka is back in the third round of the U.S. Open for the first time since 2021, the year after she won her second championship at Flushing Meadows.

She's playing rather well at the moment, too, under the guidance of a new coach. Just don't expect Osaka to weigh in on whether she feels as if she is ready to make another deep run at the place.

"Honestly, I don't really know. I don't make it my business to know anymore. I kind of just leave it up in the air," the 23rd-seeded Osaka said after eliminating Hailey Baptiste 6-3, 6-1 in the second round in just 70 minutes Thursday. "For me, I realize that I've done everything that I could. I've trained really hard. I practiced really hard. If it happens, it happens."

Osaka's four Grand Slam trophies all arrived on hard courts: two at the U.S. Open, two at the Australian Open. Since her 2020 title in New York, her trips there have gone this way: losses in the third round in 2021, first round in 2022, second round last year.

The surface tends to favor the big serves and powerful, first-strike tennis Osaka is best known for, and something she displayed against Baptiste, of course, although she also demonstrated a willingness to vary speeds and spins.

The other talent Osaka is using to great effect so far this week is returning that gets an opponent on the defensive. Osaka already has won 11 of the 18 return games she's played so far, including during a 6-3, 6-4 win over Greet Minnen in the first round.

After her third-round exit at Wimbledon last month, Osaka split from coach Patrick Mouratoglou and began working with Tomasz Wiktorowski, who used to be part of Iga Swiatek's team. One key, Osaka said: Wiktorowski has encouraged her to focus more on the placement of her shots "and not necessarily

going for winners most of the time." They appear to be making quick progress — and Osaka said her impression of him changed quickly.

"Honestly, I didn't know him, I thought he was very scary, because he's very tall and he didn't smile," she said. "Now that we're working together, I see that he smiles often. He has a very friendly smile, and it's very nice. That's my little fun fact about Tomasz."

Venus Williams earned her first win in a U.S. Open women's doubles match since 2014 — and this time, her partner wasn't younger sister Serena but Leylah Fernandez. The 45-year-old Williams, who recently returned to the tour after a 16-month absence, and Fernandez eliminated the sixth-seeded pair of Lyudmyla Kichenok and Ellen Perez 7-6 (4), 6-3.

What else happened at the US Open on Thursday?

Wimbledon champions Swiatek and Jannik Sinner both won — his victory was much more straightforward than hers. Swiatek had some trouble before getting past Suzan Lamens, a Dutch player ranked 66th who'd never appeared at a Grand Slam tournament until this year, by a 6-1, 4-6, 6-4 score. Sinner was just fine in a 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 win against Alexei Popyrin, who beat Novak Djokovic at the U.S. Open a year ago. In prime time, Coco Gauff fought through serving issues and wiped away tears on the way to beating Donna Vekic 7-6 (5), 6-2, and fellow American Amanda Anisimova defeated Maya Joint 7-6 (2), 6-2, while on the men's side and on the men's side No. 3 seed Alexander Zverev rolled past Jacob Fearnley 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 and 14th-seeded Tommy Paul needed nearly 4 1/2 hours to put away Nuno Borges 7-6 (6), 6-3, 5-7, 5-7, 7-5 early Friday morning after winning the first two sets and losing the next two. The match ended at 1:46 a.m. (AP)

F1 tension builds as Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris resume title fight at the Dutch GP

ZANDVOORT (NETHERLANDS), Aug 29: The Formula 1 title race is back and the tension is building.

Ahead of this weekend's Dutch Grand Prix, the first race in four weeks, Oscar Piastri is just nine points ahead of his McLaren teammate and title rival Lando Norris, who won three of the last four races before the mid-season break.

"The intensity will naturally increase as we get closer to the end of the year, and I'm ready for that," Piastri said Thursday.

The Australian has won praise for his ability to stay cool in his first season as a true title contender, but he acknowledged that the nerves are there, even if they're not always obvious.

"I don't believe anyone that says they don't get nervous because I don't think that's possible, and I think it would be a bit

weird if you weren't nervous," he said. "Ultimately the nerves can be good or bad and it's how you manage it that decides that. I think for me, being calm is part of who I am, but definitely I've learned through the years that is how I get the most out of myself as well."

A slow start actually ended up helping Norris win the last race in Hungary. He had to take a gamble on his strategy and hit the jackpot by stopping once, instead of twice, to get ahead on track and then hold off his teammate on old tires.

That prompted questions of how the situation fit McLaren's stated aim of letting its drivers race each other for the title. Typically, the driver in the lead would get the preference on strategy.

"Maybe it wasn't a perfect harmonic race between us as a



team because it didn't fall exactly into the place with what we normally go by," Norris said. "It's an example of what can happen in racing sometimes. I think we both want, as drivers, things not to be overly strict. We don't want to be told not to race." Piastri also favored keep-

ing things simple and not letting McLaren's "papaya rules" get too complicated.

"Ultimately there are race situations where being the second car from the team on track ... you've got a lot less to lose," Piastri said. "I think it would be unfair to neutralize that just be-

PSG gets tough slate of Champions League opponents; Real Madrid going to Liverpool and Almaty

MONACO, Aug 29: Paris Saint-Germain was handed a tough start to the defense of its Champions League title when the draw was made Thursday with no opponent from any of the lower-ranked nations. PSG was drawn against Bayern Munich and Barcelona from the pot of top-ranked teams, while Tottenham came from the pot of third-seeded teams in a repeat of their tight Super Cup game two weeks ago. And the French champion was paired with arguably the two toughest opponents from the lowest-ranked teams: Newcastle and Athletic Bilbao.

Bayer Leverkusen, Atalanta and Portuguese champion Sporting Lisbon complete the title holder's slate of eight games in the 36-team league phase. "It's always difficult," said PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi, whose team stumbled to 15th place in the single-standings league last season before surging to its first Champions League title. "We forgot last season, we



think about this season."

Real Madrid also got a challenging draw, including a long-haul trip to play Kairat Almaty of Kazakhstan — 6,420 kilometers (4,000 miles) from the Spanish capital, which is the furthest east the Champions League has ever gone.

Record 15-time champion Madrid got two English opponents from the pot of highest-ranked teams. Madrid will host Manches-

ter City, which it beat in the knockout playoffs last season, and return to Liverpool after losing 2-0 at Anfield in the league phase last year.

Madrid also will face Juventus in a repeat of its 2017 final win, and two French opponents, Marseille and Monaco — where superstar forward Kylian Mbappe started his career. Liverpool fans will welcome Trent Alexander-Arnold back to Anfield with

Madrid which he joined in June, and have away trips to the vibrant stadiums of Inter Milan, Eintracht Frankfurt, Marseille and Galatasaray.

"That is, I am sure, a fixture that the whole world will be looking at," Liverpool coach Arne Slot said about another Madrid challenge.

Bayern Munich will have rematches of two recent finals — at home to Chelsea where the German champion lost the 2012 title game on home turf, and away to PSG, which it beat in the 2020 final. Bayern also will go to Cyprus to face Pafos. Manchester City will travel north of the Arctic Circle to face Bodo/Glimt of Norway, and host former fan favorite Kevin De Bruyne with his new club Napoli.

Inter Milan, which lost two of the last three finals, will host the top two teams in the Premier League last season, Liverpool and Arsenal. Inter beat Arsenal at the San Siro last season. Kairat also

will host Club Brugge, Olympiakos and Pafos. The team also must travel four time zones west to play at Arsenal and Sporting Lisbon.

Bodo/Glimt also will host Juventus, Tottenham and Monaco. Qarabag in Azerbaijan is another long-haul trip east to Baku for Chelsea, Eintracht, Ajax and Copenhagen.

This is the second season of the league phase format with 36 teams playing eight different opponents on a weighted schedule through January, and ranked in a single-standings table. Four newcomers to the main stage of the Champions League are: Bodo/Glimt, Kairat Almaty, Russian-owned Pafos and Belgian champion Union Saint-Gilloise. Games in Bodo and Almaty shape to be the longest-ever trips for visiting teams, and their home games in January among the coldest in competition history. Bodo plays on a heated artificial turf field. (AP)

Tendulkar, Bindra pay tribute to athletes on National Sports Day



NEW DELHI, Aug 29: Sachin Tendulkar marvelled at India's rise in newer disciplines, while Abhinav Bindra paid tribute to all those who "silently carry the athletes forward" as the two icons offered their views on India's sporting growth on National Sports Day.

August 29 is celebrated across the country as National Sports Day in memory of Major Dhyan Chand, widely regarded as the greatest field hockey player in the history of the game.

Dhyan Chand earned India three Olympic gold medals -- 1928, 1932 and 1936 -- with his extraordinary ball control skills and goal-scoring ability. The national hockey stadium in the heart of the capital is named after the legend.

"In our present age of smartphones and constant use of screens, the more connected I am to my body through sports and exercise, the stronger and healthier I feel. That, in turn, allows me to give my all to other areas of my life: my family, friends, and my work with our family foundation," Tendulkar posted on 'X'.

"On National Sports Day this year, I urge everyone to celebrate our athletes, pick up a sport or try some exercise, and take the first step toward healthier minds and bodies," said the cricketing icon.

"Interest, talent, and opportunities to participate in sports come in different arenas, and all athletes deserve our admiration and respect both for participating, and for the hard work and persistence required to excel."

Tendulkar said India's athletes were excelling in different disciplines, which was a reflection of the diversity in the country.

Praising the likes of chess world champion D Gukesh and 19-year-old women's World Cup winner Divya Deshmukh, among others, he said the growth of leagues was a big factor in more athletes rising through the ranks.

"Divya Deshmukh who just became the youngest-ever FIDE Women's World Cup chess champion, and D.Gukesh, who became the youngest among men; Rachana, the talented

wrestler, who won the gold medal at the U17 World Championship 2025; and Naisha Mehta, who at just 17 secured India's first-ever gold in Junior Girls Solo Dance at the Asian Roller Skating Championship 2025..."

"We also congratulate athletes like Tulika Maan who excels in Judo, and Rupa Rani Tirkey, Lovely Choubey, Pinki, and Nayanmoni Saikia, whose team won the gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Women's Fours Lawn Bowls, a sport that was previously almost unknown in India," said Tendulkar, enumerating the achievements.

He said sports leagues, not just in cricket, were playing a big role in generating interest among the young generation.

"The growth of leagues in a wide range of sports is one important factor that has helped generate interest and nurture talent from all around the country. In addition to cricket's IPL and Women's Premier League, we have the Indian Super League for football, Pro Kabaddi League, Indian Street Premier League for tennis ball cricket, Premier Badminton League, Premier Handball League, Pro Volleyball League, Hockey India League, etc. "These diverse leagues help promote local talent and empower our young people through sports. I have always said that building a culture around sports and fitness as well as outdoor play is crucial for individuals and society."

Bindra, the 2008 Beijing Olympics gold medalist in 10m air rifle shooting, said he hoped the citizens of the country follow the Olympic values for the betterment of the nation.

"On National Sports Day my thoughts are with every Indian athlete, known and unknown, and with all those who silently carry them forward, parents, coaches, teachers, physios, friends.

"Sport teaches us to strive, to respect, to stand together. May Olympic values guide not just our athletes but all of us as a nation," said Bindra. (PTI)

National Sports Day

Committed to making India global hub for sporting excellence: PM



NEW DELHI, Aug 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday joined the country in paying rich tributes to hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand on his birthday, taking the occasion to reiterate the government's commitment to making India a "global hub for sporting excellence".

August 29 is celebrated as the National Sports Day in memory of Major Dhyan Chand, who is widely regarded as the greatest field hockey player in history. He earned India three Olympic gold medals -- 1928, 1932 and 1936 -- with his extraordinary ball control skills and goal-scoring ability. The national hockey stadium in the heart of the capital is named after the legend.

"Greetings on National Sports Day! On this special occasion, we pay tribute to Major Dhyan Chand Ji, whose excellence continues to inspire generations," wrote the PM on 'X'.

Reflecting on India's evolving sporting landscape, the PM reaffirmed his government's dedication to fostering a culture of sports and fitness, strengthening institutional support for athletes, and expanding access to modern training and competition venues across the country.

"In the last decade, India's sporting landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation. From grassroots programmes that nurture young talent to creating

world-class facilities, we are seeing a vibrant sports ecosystem in our nation. Our government remains committed to supporting athletes, building infrastructure and making India a global hub for sporting excellence," Modi added.

Union sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya, following a ceremony at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium which was attended by several sportspersons, expressed confidence that the National Sports Governance Bill, passed in Parliament recently, will make India a sporting powerhouse.

"By passing the Sports Governance Bill, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has worked towards placing India among the top sporting nations,"

said the minister.

"The tradition of sports has been present in India for centuries. Under the leadership of Modi ji, India is today advancing towards becoming a sports superpower/

"On the birth anniversary of the great hockey player Major Dhyan Chand, I offer him countless salutations and extend my heartfelt wishes to all fellow countrymen on National Sports Day," Mandaviya said.

The minister called upon the people to spend at least an hour on the sports field to bring about a change in the sporting landscape.

"Let us make this day even more meaningful -- be sure to spend at least one hour on the sports field," he said. (PTI)

National Sports Day celebrates at Pasighat

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, Aug 29: National Sports Day was celebrated on August 29 at outdoor stadium Pasighat to commemorate the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand, India's greatest sporting legend popularly known as "The Wizard of Hockey". He is remembered for his many contributions to the Indian sports. National Sports Day' 2025 makes a special tribute to the Olympic spirit and integrate the three core volumes of Excellence, Friendship and Respect in sports ECO-system.

The programme was attended by Sonalika Jiwani, IAS, DC East Siang as chief guest. DC East Siang on her speech said that sports play significant role in our life, it teaches us how to strive for excellence, handle both victory and defeat with grace. On this day, DC also distributed prizes to both the winner in Tug of War game of Boys and Girls category.

Other dignitaries present were General Jamoh, Executive member Arunachal Pradesh Football Association, Vijoy Mize, General Secretary, DOA, Dana Moyong, General Secretary, DFA.

The programme ended with vote of thanks from Ajong Sitek, District Sports Officer East Siang District, Pasighat.

National Sports Day celebrated at Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 29: National Sports Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Nagaon Gopinath Dev Goswami Commerce College, a leading institution of commerce education in Assam, here on Friday.

To mark the occasion, a day-long programme was organised, which began with a lecture on "Strategies for Living a Healthy Life" in the mini auditorium of the college.

The lecture, delivered by Prabbhat Chandra Borah, Vice President of Indian Yoga Federation and Secretary of Assam Yoga Association, emphasized the importance of physical fitness and yoga in daily life. The Principal of the college, Dr Mriganka Saikia, welcomed the gathering and highlighted the significance of sports and physical activity in overall development.

The programme was attended by the faculty members of the college, including the Vice Principal and Librarian, and over 200 students. The event also included recreational competitions such as carrom, chess, rope pulling, and Tekeli Bhonga.

The National Sports Day celebration concluded with a vote of thanks by Principal of the college, Dr Mriganka Saikia for bold and active participation of the students as well as other faculty members of the college.

KA district administration organises National Sports Day

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 29: National Sports Day was celebrated at Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) stadium, here on Friday, commemorating the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand. District Administration, Karbi Anglong has organised the celebration in collaboration with District Sports Office.

The event highlighted the importance of sports in fostering unity, building character, and inspiring the youth to dream big.

The programme witnessed active participation from students, showcasing their dedication to fitness, discipline, and teamwork. Amarsing Tisso, MP, graced the occasion along with Nirola Phangchopi, District Commissioner, Johnny Timung, MAC, and other dignitaries. On the other hand PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya Diphu, he celebrated the National Sports Day here today with a vibrant celebration that saw the esteemed presence of



Member of Parliament (MP) Amarsing Tisso. The event resonated with the spirit of sportsmanship and national pride.

In his address, Tisso emphasized the importance of sports in shaping a healthy and disciplined society. He lauded the school's efforts in promoting sports and nurturing young talent. The students of Kendriya Vidyalaya

Diphu showcased their athletic prowess through various sports activities. Secondary students participated in volleyball and tug of war at the school's main field, while primary students enjoyed sack races, three-legged races, and spoon races at the primary section playground.

The event concluded with a dance performed the students.

India take centre fire pistol Gold, Manini bags 50m rifle prone Bronze

SHYMKENT (KAZAKHSTAN), Aug 29: Veteran pistol shooter Gupreet Singh came up with a commanding performance for the second day in a row to help India win the team gold in the 25m centre fire event on the penultimate day of the Asian Shooting Championships here on Friday.

A day after he won the 25m standard pistol individual gold and helped the country to a top-podium finish in the team category as well, the 37-year-old Army shooter, along with Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu and Ankur Goel, secured another big win in centre fire with an aggregate score of 1733 points, as India showcased its dominance in non-Olympic disciplines in the continental showpiece.

The Olympian, who came close to making it to the rapid-fire pistol final at the 2016 Rio Games, had a combined precision and rapid round score of 579, and together with Sandhu (583) and Ankur (571), the trio aggregated 1733

points, which earned them the team gold. Vietnam (1720) and Iran (1700) won the silver and bronze respectively.

Young Indian shooter Manini Kaushik clinched her maiden individual international medal, bagging a bronze in women's 50m rifle prone event after guiding the team to silver earlier in the day.

The 24-year-old from Jaipur, who also competes in 50m rifle 3 positions, shot 617.8 to take the individual bronze. The South Korean duo of Hana Im 620.2 and Eunseo Lee 620.2 took the gold and silver respectively.

Manini had finished fifth in the competition but since two of the shooters ahead of her -- South Korea's Yelin Choi (620.1) and India's Sift Kaur Samra (617.9) -- were competing in the 'Ranking Points Only' (RPO) category, the Jaipur shooter took the bronze.

RPO shooters compete only for international ranking points and not for medals. (PTI)

Three-day National Sports Day programme at Haflong

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Aug 29: Along with the rest of the nation, Dima Hasao also launched National Sports Day at N.L Daulagup Sports Complex on Friday where District Commissioner Munindra Nath Ngatey, ACS inaugurated a three day programme in presence of Sr. Superintendent of Police Mayank Kumar, IPS and NCHAC Dy. Secretary Prabbhat Pegu, ACS and host of other officers from the district administration, District Sports Officer and Dima Hasao Social Welfare. The initiative taken by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports launched a nationwide sports and fitness movement from August 29 to 31.

Addressing the audience District Commissioner spoke about the necessity of such events for both mind and body with much positive outcome. He said, "This 120th anniversary, we remember Major Dhyan Chand for the contribution he made to Indian hockey and Indian sports overall. The man was instrumental in India winning Olympic gold in 1928, 1932 and 1936". Encouraging the sports persons he said that one's ded-

ication, focus and conviction always helps in achieving what their heart desires for.

After the welcome speech by the District Sports Officer, George Chutia felicitation of the remarkable sports persons was done by the guests present. A pledge was taken by all the persons present during the even administered by ADC Shaurya Shamra.

The day long programme on the first day comprised of various sports such as Tug of war, chess, kabaddi, 1 km walk, badminton competition. Indigenous sports showcasing Dimas, Nepali and Biate traditions were also made part of today's programme.

The second day of the programme will continue with various eventful competitions and itineraries throughout the district in different MAC constituencies such as Maibang, Umrangso, Barail, Diger Kuki, Sangbar, Kharthong, Biate, Zion, Jatinga, Hatikhal, Laisong, Hangrum, Dihamlai, Lower Kharthong and Jinam including in Haflong. Debate competitions are also to be held at all colleges to be judged by their respective schools.



Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates Mondo Track at JLN stadium

Mondo track's unveiling highlight of National Sports Day celebrations

NEW DELHI, Aug 29: The unveiling of a brand new Mondo track at the iconic JLN Stadium in the national capital, renewed vows to make India a sporting superpower and tributes to the iconic Major Dhyan Chand marked the opening day of the three-day National Sports Day celebrations across the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is in Japan right now, took to social media to pay tributes to Dhyan Chand on his 120th birth anniversary. The wizard earned India three Olympic gold medals -- 1928, 1932 and 1936 -- with his extraordinary ball control skills and goal-scoring ability.

He reiterated the government's commitment to make India a "global hub for sporting excellence".

"In the last decade, India's sporting landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation. From grassroots programmes that nurture young talent to creating world-class facilities, we are seeing a vibrant sports ecosystem in our nation.

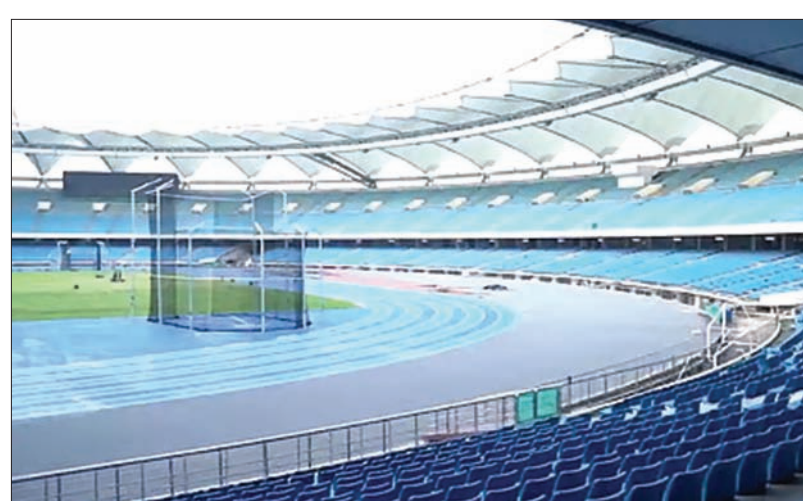
"Our government remains committed to supporting athletes, building infrastructure and making India a global hub for sporting excellence," Modi said in his post.

Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who was in the city, started his day by paying floral tributes to Dhyan Chand's statue at the National Stadium here before inaugurating the Mondo track at the Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium.

The track, which is made of two-layered vulcanized rubber, has been widely lauded for its uniform elasticity, shock absorption, and anti-slip qualities, that enhance the performance of athletes and reduce the risk of injury.

It has been laid keeping in view the World Para-Athletics Championship from September 26 to October 5.

He then went on to engage in some sporting action by playing football and cricket with the guests and media amid a heavy downpour. "By passing the Sports Governance Bill, the Prime Minister



Narendra Modi-led government has worked towards placing India among the top sporting nations," said the Minister in a social media post of his own.

"The tradition of sports has been present

in India for centuries. Under the leadership of Modi ji, India is today advancing towards becoming a sports superpower". "On the birth anniversary of the great hockey player Major Dhyan

Chand, I offer him countless salutations and extend my heartfelt wishes to all fellow countrymen on National Sports Day," Mandaviya said.

The minister called upon the people to spend at least an hour on the sports field to bring about a change in the sporting landscape.

"Let us make this day even more meaningful -- be sure to spend at least one hour on the sports field," he said.

President Droupadi Murmu also met young sportspersons at the Rashtrapati Bhawan's Amrit Udayan, while India's iconic sportspersons like Sachin Tendulkar and Abhinav Bindra shared their views on the country's sporting growth.

"On National Sports Day this year, I urge everyone to celebrate our athletes, pick up a sport or try some exercise, and take the first step toward healthier minds and bodies," said the cricketing icon.

"Interest, talent, and opportunities to participate in sports come in different arenas, and all athletes deserve our admi-

ration and respect both for participating, and for the hard work and persistence required to excel."

Bindra, the 2008 Beijing Olympics gold medalist in 10m air rifle shooting, said he hoped the citizens of the country follow the Olympic values for the betterment of the nation.

"On National Sports Day my thoughts are with every Indian athlete, known and unknown, and with all those who silently carry them forward, parents, coaches, teachers, physios, friends.

"Sport teaches us to strive, to respect, to stand together. May Olympic values guide not just our athletes but all of us as a nation," said Bindra.

On Saturday, Sports Authority of India's Regional Centres will conduct debates, talks, competitions, and panel discussions on sports, and Fit India carnival-style events across the country.

On August 31 'Sundays on Cycle' under the theme of National Sports Movement will be held. (PTI)