

6 WORLD

- 'Global community must ensure LeT, JeM, no longer exploit Afghan territory'
- US-UK trade, investment in focus for Trump-Starmer talks at Chequers

8 NATION

- Rahul stands for 'infiltrators first' politics, seeks to stoke chaos: BJP
- One killed, 11 missing, three rescued after landslides, flooding hit Chamoli villages

NEW KHADI OF NEW INDIA

Khadi artisans have seen a remarkable 275% increase in their remuneration over the last 11 years

KHADI FOR NATION

Dhubri SSP Leena Doley transferred

Police brutality in Golakganj: Assam govt initiates action



HT Correspondent
DHUBRI, Sept 18: Dhubri district has been rocked by public outrage following the police lathi-charge on Koch-Rajbongshi protesters in Golakganj and brutal. Women were beaten, several protesters chased into roadside ponds, and many left bleeding on the streets. Over a hundred protesters sustained injuries, with dozens hospitalised. In response, AKRSU called a 12-hour bandh in Dhubri, paralysing life in Golakganj, Agomoni, Sagolia and neighbouring areas. Roads were blocked, schools and markets closed, and even the Circle Officer's office was shut. At Agomoni Higher Secondary School, bandh supporters forced classrooms to close and sent back students and teachers. Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah visited the injured and announced the suspension of the Golakganj Officer-in-Charge (OC), while the Gau-ripur OC was placed under "reserved close." A DIG-level inquiry (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Protesters block ex-Meghalaya minister's convoy at Jorabat amid taxi strike • Meghalaya taxi body calls off protest Talks to resolve dispute to be held on Sept 23

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 18: Tensions escalated at Jorabat on Thursday when protesters blocked the convoy of former Meghalaya minister and NPP legislator Rakkam A Sangma, forcing him to rely on Assam Police to continue his journey to the Garo Hills. The blockade, staged at the interstate entry point, disrupted several tourists and travellers, with protesters from Assam shouting slogans demanding that Sangma return to Meghalaya. The incident occurred against the backdrop of an ongoing strike by the All-Khasi Meghalaya Tourist Taxi Association (AKMTTA), which is seeking a ban on Assam tourist taxis operating in Meghalaya's popular tourist destinations. Sharing a video of the confrontation, Sangma said he barely managed to pass through the blockade with police assistance.



He called for calm and dialogue, urging both sides to find an amicable solution to prevent further escalation and ensure the safety of commuters and residents along the border.

Meanwhile, the AKMTTA has decided to suspend its indefinite strike until a government meeting scheduled for Tuesday. The East Khasi Hills deputy commissioner will hold discussions involving the Home (Police), Transport, and Tourism departments to address the association's demands. AKMTTA spokesperson Balajied Jyrwa clarified that the protest is non-violent and directed at the state government, not Assam. He added that the strike has only involved distributing pamphlets to raise awareness about the challenges faced by tourist taxi operators. "We have never restricted vehicles carrying passengers or patients. This protest is about regulating outside vehicles in Meghalaya's tourist spots," Jyrwa said. The association hopes the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Ranjit Basumatary launches door-to-door campaign in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Sept 18: With the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections approaching, the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) has stepped up its campaign efforts across constituencies. In Baikhungri constituency, UPPL candidate Ranjit Basumatary on Thursday launched a door-to-door campaign in Kokrajhar town, reaching out to shopkeepers, business establishments, and local vendors. Basumatary personally appealed for public support while

interacting with the business community, outlining the UPPL's vision for peace, equal development, and prosperity in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). He highlighted the party's Community Vision Documents aimed at addressing the concerns of 26 communities, stressing that the UPPL has translated its commitments into action and would continue ensuring justice and development in the region. Responding to queries, Basumatary expressed confidence that the UPPL would win more than 30

No deletion of any vote can be done online by any member of public: EC on Rahul's claim

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: The Election Commission on Thursday dubbed as incorrect and baseless the allegations made by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi that CEC Gyanesh Kumar is protecting "vote chors". No deletion can take place without giving an opportunity to be heard to the affected person, the EC asserted. Gandhi accused Chief Election Commissioner Kumar of protecting "vote chors" and people who have destroyed democracy, and cited data from a Karnataka Assembly constituency to claim that votes of Congress supporters were being systematically deleted ahead of elections. The EC highlighted that unsuccessful attempts were made, and an FIR was lodged and relevant details shared with the state CID. "Allegations made by Rahul Gandhi are incorrect and baseless. No deletion of any vote can be done online by any member of the public, as misconceived by Gandhi," it said.



He said the electoral registration officer of Aland received 6,018 applications in Form 7, which were submitted online using various apps such as NVSP, VHA, and GARUDA apps during December 2022. Suspecting the genuineness of such a large number of applications submitted online for deletion of electors' names in the Aland seat, verification of each application was conducted by the poll machinery, he said. Only 24 applications were found to be genuine, and another 5,994 were found to be incorrect, he added. Accordingly, 24 applications were accepted, and 5,994 incorrect applications were rejected and not deleted. Based on the inquiry findings, the ERO lodged an FIR with the Inspector of Police, Aland Police Station, Kalaburagi district on February 21, 2023. "Based on the instructions given by ECI, the CEO, Karnataka, has handed over to the Superintendent of Police, Kalaburagi district, on 06.09.2023, all the available information with ECI for completing the investigation. "After providing the requested information, meetings were also conducted by the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, with the Investigating Officer and Cyber Security experts of the Police to review the progress of the investigation," the state CEO said in a statement. (PTI)

Drugs worth ₹12 crore seized, one arrested

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: Drugs worth ₹12 crore have been seized and a peddler arrested by police in Assam's Cachar district, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The police seized 40,000 Yaba tablets in a major anti-narcotics operation in the Kathalbasti area of the district, the chief minister posted on X. "High hopes, hard fall. ₹12 crore drug seized! In a precise anti narcotics operation at Kathalbasti, near Kathal Bye Pass, @Cachar-Police seized 40,000 yaba tablets and arrested one peddler", Sarma said. Praising the police for the seizure, the CM said, "Great job, @assampolice". Necessary legal procedures have already been initiated. Yaba, meaning crazy medicine in Thai, is (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Urkhao Gwra Brahma intensifies campaign ahead of BTC polls



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Sept 18: With the Bodoland Territorial Council

(BTC) elections scheduled for September 22, campaigning has picked up pace across the region. In the Kachugaon constituency, Cabinet Minister Urkhao Gwra Brahma has actively participated in a series of pocket campaigns supporting UPPL candidate Ukil Muchahary. The outreach programmes, held across various villages and localities, witnessed enthusiastic public participation. During the visits, Urkhao Gwra Brahma interacted with voters, addressing their concerns and emphasising the UPPL's commitment to peace, stability, and inclusive development in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). He highlighted the achievements of the UPPL-led administration and urged people to support

Ukil Muchahary to ensure continued progress in Kachugaon. In the Salakati constituency, BPF candidate Derhasat Basumatary conducted multiple pocket meetings, engaging with voters and presenting his development agenda. UPPL candidate Lawrence Islary also intensified campaign activities across the constituency. The UPPL received a boost when over 200 individuals from various parties joined the party during a ceremony in Salakati, strengthening its position ahead of the polls. Meanwhile, BJP candidate Kabita Basumatary and Congress candidate Rajib Basumatary were also actively conducting pocket campaigns, adding momentum to the electoral contest in Salakati.

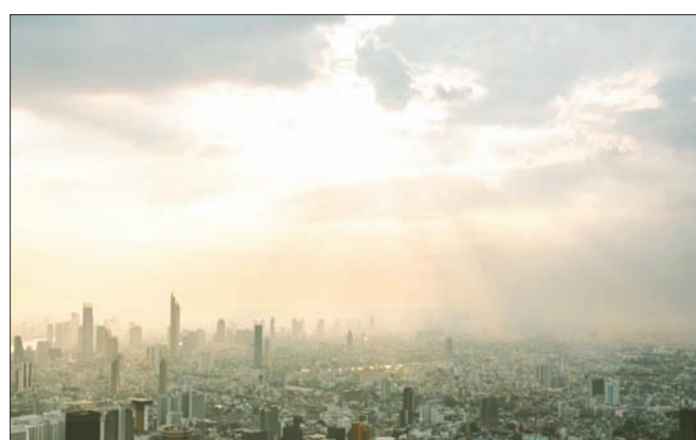
Sonowal leads celebrations for PM's 75th birthday

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Sept 18: Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal led a grand celebration in Dibrugarh on Wednesday to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 75th birthday, coinciding with the nationwide launch of the Swasth Nari - Sabal Pariwar Abhiyan and the eighth Rashtriya Poshan Maah. From Madhya Pradesh, Prime Minister Modi dedicated these initiatives to the nation, highlighting his vision of robust healthcare, improved nutrition, and stronger families. In Dibrugarh, Sonowal spearheaded a day-long programme bringing together citizens, healthcare providers, women's groups, and community leaders, reflecting Assam's commitment to the prime minister's transformative agenda. The celebrations featured free health check-ups, distribution of essential medicines, a voluntary blood donation camp, and a tree plantation drive under the campaign "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam", which encourages citizens to plant trees in honour of their mothers. Sonowal highlighted the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Study encourages companies to act now to protect workforce health, build operational resilience and safeguard productivity

Climate-driven health risks may cost USD 1.5 trn to global economy by 2050: WEF

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: Climate-related health risks can cost the global economy at least USD 1.5 trillion (over ₹ 131 lakh crore) in lost productivity in the next 25 years due to rising illness and labour shortages across key sectors, a new study showed on Thursday. The World Economic Forum report, developed in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group, assessed climate-driven health impacts in four of the most affected economic sectors: food and agriculture; the built environment; health and healthcare; and insurance. The USD 1.5 trillion estimate reflects losses in only the first three sectors, under a mid-range scenario, suggesting the burden on the



global economy could be far higher, it said. The study encourages companies to act now to protect work-

force health, build operational resilience and safeguard productivity before the costs of climate adaptation become unmanageable. The findings highlighted that adapting to extreme heat, infectious diseases and other health risks accelerating due to climate change is now a strategic business imperative. "We are entering an era in which protecting worker health is proving essential to business continuity and long-term resilience," said Eric White, Head of Climate Resilience, World Economic Forum. "Every year we delay embedding resilience into business decisions, the risks to human health and productivity climb and the costs of adaptation rise," White added. Alongside shared disruptions, the analysis also outlined sector-specific vulnerabilities. In food and agriculture, climate health (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NEATEHUB launches Innovation Experience Centre at AAU

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, Sept 18: An Innovation Experience Centre at NEATEHUB (North East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs' Hub), an Atal Incubation Centre (AIC) and agri-business incubator under Assam Agricultural University (AAU), was inaugurated today by vice-chancellor Dr Bidyut Chandan Deka. The launch coincided with NEATEHUB's 6th Foundation Day celebrations. Addressing the gathering, Dr Deka highlighted NEATEHUB's critical role in reshaping the entrepreneurial landscape of Northeast India. "This incubator is a launchpad for students and aspiring innovators in agriculture and allied sectors. By translating research into viable businesses, NEATEHUB contributes directly to economic growth and sustainable development in the region," he said. The permanent experience centre will showcase cutting-edge products and innovations developed by NEATEHUB incubatees, providing startups a platform to display market-ready solutions to investors, industry

partners, farmers, and the academic community. The inaugural exhibits feature products from startups including KraftInn, Rifatak, and Aiseng Winery. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between academic innovation and market commercialisation, offering visibility to grassroots agripreneurs. Bidyut Bikash Rajkonwar, chief operating officer of NEATEHUB, expressed gratitude to AAU administration and former NEATEHUB team led by Dr Karthikeyan K for building the agri-entrepreneurship ecosystem in Assam and the Northeast, reaffirming the hub's commitment to nurturing future agricultural entrepreneurs. NEATEHUB's mission is to identify, mentor, and scale innovative startups in agriculture and allied sectors. Incubatees benefit from mentorship, seed funding, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and networking opportunities to convert innovative ideas into successful, sustainable enterprises that bolster the region's agro-economy. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Do not hesitate to invest more, expand capacities: Sitharaman tells India Inc

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday asked India Inc to take advantage of the policies and reforms undertaken by the government and no longer hesitate to invest more and expand capacities.

Sitharaman also asked the industry to partner with the government for skilling the youth and also to engage with the government throughout the year, and not just before the Budget.

Speaking at the Indian Foundation for Quality Management (IFQM) symposium, Sitharaman said the path to Viksit Bharat will be guided by a seasoned approach to quality management, identifying the levels and sectors within manufacturing and services where interventions are most needed.

To a question by Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran on her key asks from the industry, Sitharaman listed out three points -- invest more, partner with the government in skilling youth, and have a year-round engagement with the government and not just before the Budget.

She said the government has been steadily moving and with necessary seriousness, as per the expectation of the industry and cited several government initiatives for promoting ease of doing business, tax-related benefits, framing policies to make businesses better off and opening up



for more FDI. "... Today I have a basket of things on which the government has delivered," Sitharaman said, adding Prime Minister Narendra Modi has never relented on reforms, nor has he ignored the wishlist of the industry.

"... I hope there is no more hesitation for the industry to invest further, to expand capacities, produce more in India, and spell out what else is required by the government to do," Sitharaman said.

On the point of skilling youth, Sitharaman said she would want the private sector to partner with the government in preparing youth to be fit for quick and direct employment.

On the third point of industry engagement, she said the interaction with the government should be ongoing. "It should not be just before the Budget... We are all here

to hear you and respond," the Minister said.

Responding to the finance minister's call to the industry to make investments, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran acknowledged that the opportunity and the platform that the government has given are enormous, both in the domestic market and in the export market. "I firmly believe that more entrepreneurs, more small and medium companies and big corporates would make a lot of investments. I'm very confident, because without that investment, we will not be able to capture the opportunity," he noted.

Stating that "the world is calling for resilience and supply chain, alternative sources", Chandrasekaran said, "India is the best place with the leadership that the Prime Minister provides for all of

us." To maintain economic momentum during the COVID period, the Modi government has increased capital expenditure by investing in infrastructure.

The government has set a total capital expenditure target of ₹ 11.21 trillion for 2025-26 (Apr-Mar). In the first four months of this fiscal, capital expenditure is up 33 per cent year-on-year at ₹ 3.47 trillion.

The government has been encouraging private sector industries to invest in capacity expansion, but private investment continues to lag behind government capex.

According to a survey released in April by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) private investment is expected to be 26 per cent lower in FY26 at ₹ 4.89 lakh crore.

According to the ministry, private companies had spent ₹ 4.22 trillion on capital expenditure in FY'24, ₹ 5.72 trillion in FY'23, and ₹ 3.95 trillion in FY'22.

Sitharaman further said that India's most significant contributor to the GDP is from the MSME sector, and the government has ensured that the Small Industries Development Bank of India is physically present in MSME clusters.

"Even in this day and age when we are talking about digital banking, we insisted that SIDBI would be present in each of these clusters," Sitharaman added. (PTI)

Tasva inaugurates flagship store in Kolkata

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: Tasva, the wedding and occasion wear brand for the modern Indian man, launched its flagship store in Kolkata on Thursday, in the presence of Bollywood actor Shantanu Maheshwari.

The brand, a collaboration between Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited and celebrated couturier Tarun Tahliani, aims to offer a luxury shopping experience reflecting style, tradition, and craftsmanship.

Spanning 2,500 sq ft, the store features Tasva's festive collection, including luxurious indowesterns, bandhgallas, dinner jackets, achkans, and sherwanis, with the signature angrakha sherwani crafted from premium fabrics and adorned with intricate embroidery.

Ashish Mukul, Brand Head, Tasva, said, "We wanted our new store to stand as a reflection of the brand's ethos -- an embodiment of style, tradition, and craftsmanship." The store also offers personalized styling services, with highly trained in-store stylists guiding customers through fashion choices, ensuring a tailored and modern shopping experience. Tasva has already established its presence in Kolkata, Patna, Bhubaneswar, and Guwahati, reinforcing its foothold in eastern India.

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: The Tax Bar Association, Guwahati, a premier professional body for tax experts in the North-East, has elected its office bearers for the year 2025-26.

The newly elected Executive Committee held a meeting on September 17, during which CA Pankaj Khandelia, a prominent Chartered Accountant from Guwahati, was unanimously chosen as President of the Association. The positions of Vice President were assigned to CA Kailash Prasad Sarma and Advocate Dharmendra Kumar Jain, while CS Chandra Shekhar Sharma was appointed Secretary.

CA Rohit Agarwal will serve as Treasurer, and CA Akash Jain as Joint Secretary. During the meeting, the Immediate Past President, Dinesh Kumar Sharma, felicitated the new office bearers and formally handed over the charge.

In his address, CA Pankaj Khandelia thanked the members for their trust and urged collective efforts towards advancing the common goals of the Association while upholding its dignity and professional values.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Secretary CS Chandra Shekhar Sharma.

Established as a leading professional body in the region, the Tax Bar Association represents Chartered Accountants, Company Secretaries, Cost Accountants, Advocates, and Tax Consultants from the North-East.

The Association serves as a platform for knowledge sharing, professional development, and safeguarding the interests of both taxpayers and tax professionals, fostering collaboration and promoting best practices in taxation matters.

Stock markets rise for 3rd day on US Fed rate cut; Sensex gains 320 pts

MUMBAI, Sept 18: Stock markets advanced for the third consecutive day on Thursday, with the benchmark Sensex gaining 320 points to close above 83,000 level after the US Federal Reserve cut its key interest rate by 25 basis points and signalled the possibility of two additional rate reductions this year.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 320.25 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 83,013.96. During the day, it jumped 447.5 points or 0.54 per cent to 83,141.21.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 93.35 points or 0.37 per cent to 25,423.60.

Shares of pharma, IT and financial companies edged higher while realty and energy stocks ended on a muted note.

The market sentiment was bolstered primarily by the US Federal Reserve's rate cut, which boosted risk sentiment globally, analysts said.

Among Sensex firms, Zomato-owner Eternal rose the most by 2.96 per cent on positive bets by brokerages. Sun Pharma, Infosys and HDFC Bank rose more than 1 per cent. HCL Tech, Hindustan Unilever, Power Grid, ITC and Adani Ports were also among the gainers.

Tata Motors emerged as the biggest loser among Sensex shares, dropping by 1.13 per cent. Trent, Bajaj Finance and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

"Indian equities extended gains after the Fed's 25 bps rate cut and indication for further easing. IT and Pharma outperformed on expectations of higher spending and stronger export prospects. Although elevated valuations and a firm dollar index prompted intermittent profit-booking, comfort in private banks and midcap helped in sustaining the positive bias and regain the trend," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE midcap gauge went up by 0.36 per cent while smallcap index ended flat, marginally lower by

0.01 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, healthcare jumped 0.87 per cent, BSE Focused IT by 0.84 per cent, IT by 0.81 per cent, tech by 0.57 per cent, financial services by 0.48 per cent and metal by 0.35 per cent.

Capital Goods, services, industrials, energy and commodities were the laggards. "The market's upward momentum was underpinned primarily by the US Federal Reserve's rate cut of 25 basis points, which boosted risk sentiment globally. Besides, the sentiment stayed constructive, supported by sustained domestic flows and rotational buying in key sectors," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. As many as 2,182 stocks advanced while 1,993 declined and 167 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Meanwhile, Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran on Thursday said he expects that a solution to the tariff issues with the US is likely to arrive in the next eight to ten weeks.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled over 1 per cent higher while Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended more than 1 per cent lower. Markets in Europe were trading significantly higher. US markets ended on a mixed note on Wednesday.

"On the global front, the US Fed's 25 bps rate cut lifted investor sentiment," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.56 per cent to USD 67.57 a barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) again offloaded equities worth ₹ 1,124.54 crore on Wednesday after a day's breather, according to exchange data. On Wednesday, the Sensex edged higher by 313.02 points or 0.38 per cent to settle at 82,693.71. The Nifty climbed 91.15 points or 0.36 per cent to 25,330.25. (PTI)

HDFC Bank trains over 1,000 teachers on safe digital banking practices

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: HDFC Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks, conducted a virtual session on safe digital banking practices for over 1,000 teachers from schools and colleges across the country.

The initiative aimed to sensitize educators about cyber frauds and equip them with the knowledge to protect themselves and their communities from online scams. The session featured real-life examples, stories, and videos to help participants understand the various techniques used by cybercriminals.

Topics covered included common cyber threats such as phishing, smishing, remote device access, SIM swap, and UPI frauds.

Participants were also briefed on scams disguised as investments, job offers, fake arrests, and courier-related frauds, along with methods to prevent such attacks.

In addition, the workshop provided practical guidance on secure net-banking and safe online shopping, highlighting best practices to safeguard sensitive banking information.

Teachers were advised not to share

confidential credentials and were instructed to report suspicious calls or messages via the Chakshu portal (www.sancharsaathi.gov.in).

Commenting on the session, Manish Agrawal, senior executive vice president - Credit Intelligence and Control, HDFC Bank, said, "Lack of awareness causes people to fall prey to cyber frauds. These sessions aim to equip educators with the knowledge to navigate the online world safely and to prevent inadvertent sharing of confidential banking data or clicking on unverified links." HDFC Bank reiterated its advice to customers to exercise caution while transacting digitally, avoid sharing personal banking details, and immediately report any unauthorised transactions. Customers are encouraged to block the payment mode, contact the bank, and file complaints via the MHA helpline (1930) or the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (<https://cybercrime.gov.in>).

The initiative forms part of HDFC Bank's ongoing efforts over the past four years to promote cyber fraud awareness and secure banking practices through workshops and awareness sessions across India.

Tax Bar Association elects new leadership for 2025-26

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: The Tax Bar Association, Guwahati, a premier professional body for tax experts in the North-East, has elected its office bearers for the year 2025-26.

The newly elected Executive Committee held a meeting on September 17, during which CA Pankaj Khandelia, a prominent Chartered Accountant from Guwahati, was unanimously chosen as President of the Association. The positions of Vice President were assigned to CA Kailash Prasad Sarma and Advocate Dharmendra Kumar Jain, while CS Chandra Shekhar Sharma was appointed Secretary.

CA Rohit Agarwal will serve as Treasurer, and CA Akash Jain as Joint Secretary. During the meeting, the Immediate Past President, Dinesh Kumar Sharma, felicitated the new office bearers and formally handed over the charge.

In his address, CA Pankaj Khandelia thanked the members for their trust and urged collective efforts towards advancing the common goals of the Association while upholding its dignity and professional values.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Secretary CS Chandra Shekhar Sharma.

Established as a leading professional body in the region, the Tax Bar Association represents Chartered Accountants, Company Secretaries, Cost Accountants, Advocates, and Tax Consultants from the North-East.

The Association serves as a platform for knowledge sharing, professional development, and safeguarding the interests of both taxpayers and tax professionals, fostering collaboration and promoting best practices in taxation matters.

India, US trade talks positive, moving in right direction: Goyal

ABU DHABI, Sept 18: Trade talks between India and the US are progressing and is moving in the right direction, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday.

He said Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch was in New Delhi on September 16 for daylong talks with Indian officials.

"Talks are moving positively... it's moving in right direction... India and the US are natural partners... Talks are making good progress and in right direction," he told reporters here.

He also said negotiations are going on and there is no trade fiction.

"Negotiations are going on, and we look at it as a situation. It's not a friction. America is our trusted partner," Goyal added.

The commerce ministry has stated that daylong discussions with the visiting US team on a bilateral trade deal were positive, and both sides agreed to push for an early and mutually beneficial conclusion of the

agreement.

"It was decided to intensify efforts to achieve early conclusion of a mutually beneficial trade agreement," the ministry has said in a statement after a seven-hour meeting with US officials.

The talks were official as the US has imposed a steep 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods.

This was the first visit by a high-ranking US trade official after the imposition of a 25 per cent tariff and an additional 25 per cent penalty on Indian goods entering the American market for buying Russian crude oil.

In February, leaders of the two countries directed officials to negotiate a proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA).

It was planned to conclude the first tranche of the pact by the fall of 2025. So far, five rounds of negotiations have been held, and talks for the sixth round, which were scheduled from August 25-29, were postponed following the imposition of the high import duties. (PTI)

'All key EPFO services now available at single login for members'

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: Retirement fund body EPFO's over seven crore subscribers will now get all key services and access to their 'Employees' Provident Fund' account details using a single login on the members' portal, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Thursday.

Talking to reporters, Mandaviya on Thursday highlighted key reforms undertaken by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to ensure provision of efficient, transparent and user-friendly services to its members.

Currently, members have to login to the passbook portal of EPFO to check their Provident fund contributions and transactions involving advances or withdrawals.

The EPFO has introduced a new facility called 'Passbook Lite' within its member portal (<https://unified-portal-mem.epfindia.gov.in/memberinterface/>).

This feature will enable members to easily check their passbook and related summarised view of the contributions, withdrawals and balance in a simple and convenient format through the member portal itself without having to go to the passbook portal.

This initiative is expected to improve user experience by providing all key services, including passbook access through one login, the minister explained.

However, he stated that for a comprehensive view of passbook details including graphical display, members can continue to access the existing Passbook Portal as well. This approach ensures greater ease of access for members while simultaneously enhancing the operational efficiency by reducing the load on the existing Passbook Portal and simplifying the architecture through integration of existing APIs within the member portal.

The focus of this reform is on providing all key services through a single login for greater ease of access. The initiative is expected to reduce grievances, improve transparency, and enhance member satisfaction.

The minister also rolled out the facility of online access to Annexure K (Transfer Certificate) for PF transfer transparency.

At present, when employees change jobs, their PF accounts are transferred to the new employer's PF office through Form 13 online. After transfer, a Transfer Certificate (Annexure K) is generated by the previous PF office and sent to the new PF office.

Until now, Annexure K was only shared between PF offices and was made available to members only on their request.

A reform has been introduced that now enables members to directly download Annexure K in

PDF format from the Member Portal itself.

This will help members to track status of transfer applications online, ensuring full transparency and allowing members to easily verify their PF transfers.

The member will also be able to get confirmation that PF balance and service period are correctly updated in the new account.

Besides, they will be able to maintain a permanent digital record for future reference, especially important for EPS (employees pension scheme) benefit calculations. This will promote ease of living, transparency, and trust in the EPFO processes.

The minister said that these reforms will help in reduction in number of approvals to fast-track settlements. At present, any EPFO services such as PF transfers, settlements, advances, and refunds require approvals from higher-level officers (RPF/Officer-in-Charge). This multi-layered approval process often led to delays and longer processing times for members' claims.

The EPFO has taken the transformative step to reduce and rationalise the approval hierarchy.

Powers that earlier rested with RPF/Officer-in-Charge have now been delegated to Assistant PF Commissioners and subordinate levels in a structured, tiered manner. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Talks to resolve dispute

upcoming meeting will provide a resolution, and a PIL has also been filed to formally address the issues faced by tourist taxis. (With inputs from PTI and NNN)

Dhubri SSP Leena

was also ordered, with a report expected within five days.

On Thursday night, a major police reshuffle followed. Inspector Navajyoti Roy was posted as Circle Inspector, Golakganj, with additional charge of OC, while Circle Inspector Ratul Haloi was shifted to Bilasipara as OC. At Gauripur Police Station, SI Jyoti Prasad Das was appointed OC, SI Kapil Borah transferred to Tamarhat PS, and SI Debash Melsodha moved to Balajan OP. Amid mounting protests, the demand for SSP Doley's removal grew louder. On Friday, the Home (A) Department issued a notification attaching her to Assam Police Headquarters, Ulubari, Guwahati until further orders. Commandant of 4th APBn, Shri Debashish Borah, has been given temporary charge as SSP, Dhubri.

The transfer of the district's top police officer is being seen as a direct consequence of the protests. While AKRSU welcomed the decision, its leaders said the agitation would continue until those responsible for the police excesses are punished, reiterating their core demands for Scheduled Tribe status and a separate state for the Koch-Rajbongshi community.

Sonowal leads celebrations

importance of preserving Assam's green heritage, quoting Srimanta Sankardeva: "Ek Briksha, Das Putra Sam - we must protect and nurture trees as we do our children."

Addressing the gathering, Sonowal praised women's participation and empowerment, citing examples from Kerala and Tamil Nadu to emphasise courage and resilience.

He said initiatives such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, maternal health programs, and women's economic inclusion reflect Modi's long-standing focus on Nari Shakti. Sonowal also interacted with doctors, nurses, health workers, and mothers at the health camp, acknowledging their contributions.

He emphasised that the Swasth Nari - Sabal Pariwar Abhiyan is a societal mission aimed at promoting women's health, child nutrition, and family wellbeing. "When women are healthy and empowered, families thrive, and when families thrive, the nation prospers," he said.

Drugs worth ₹ 12 crore

illegal in the country because it contains methamphetamine, a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act, and caffeine. (PTI)

NEATEHUB launches Innovation

The inauguration was attended by senior AAU officials, including registrar Tapan Kumar Gohain, comptroller Keshab Sharma, directors Dr Sanjay Kumar Chetia and Dr Manoranjan Neog, dean Dr Mamoni Das, and executive director of Research Dr GN Hazarika, along with heads of departments, NEATEHUB directors, and representatives from RKVY-incubated startups such as KraftInn, Riflak Industries LLP, and Madhuri Food Products.

Climate-driven health

impacts could lead to USD 740 billion in lost output, triggering serious consequences for global food security, according to the WEF, a Geneva-based international organisation for public-private partnership. In the built environment sector, climate health impacts are projected to result in productivity losses of USD 570 billion.

The health and healthcare sector stands to lose USD 200 billion in productivity due to workforce climate health issues, while rising climate-driven disease rates among the wider population could compound demand pressures. The insurance industry, meanwhile, is projected to experience a sharp rise in climate health claims.

"As temperatures rise, millions of jobs become more dangerous - or disappear entirely - pushing families deeper into poverty and changing where and how people can live and thrive," said Naveen Rao, Vice-President for Health, Rockefeller Foundation, which supported this research.

However, the report also indicated that companies investing early in climate health adaptation can benefit beyond risk mitigation, unlocking new opportunities for innovation and growth while meeting emerging market needs. Each sector is uniquely positioned to develop and scale solutions to emerging climate health challenges. From climate-resilient crops that protect food systems, heat-stable medications that expand medicine availability, cooling technologies that keep construction workers safe and new insurance models protecting communities against climate health shocks, examples of innovation are already taking shape.

"Momentum on health adaptation is building, but financing and implementation are still far below what's needed," said Elia Tziambazis, Managing Director and Partner, BCG. The report sourced health data from scientific literature and employment data, and economic cost from the International Labour Organisation and World Bank data. The report pointed out that a global shift to health resilience must be underpinned by supportive policies, interoperable climate health data systems and innovative financing to mobilise capital.

The findings, published ahead of the World Economic Forum's Sustainable Development Impact Meetings 2025, come as preparations intensify for COP30 in Belem, Brazil. This year's climate negotiations are set to bring health adaptation to the forefront of the global climate agenda, signalling a unique opportunity to align private sector innovation with policy action. (PTI)

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PHE),
DIPHU RURAL W/S DIVISION, DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG
Expression of Interest
No 1 of 2025-26 Date:15/09/25

Expression of Interest is invited from registered Contractors/Firms of PHED, KAAC any class for the construction of Community Compost Pit at different Tea Estate in Karbi Anglong District as per approved drawing and rate (fixed) of the Chief Engineer(PHE) Sanitation, Govt of Assam. Within 7(Seven) days from the date of this EOI.

Nos of Community Compost Pit- 09 nos (Nine) @ 5,14,000/Each (Rupees Five Lakh Fourteen thousand only)

List of Community Compost Pit is available in the office of the undersigned

Sd/-
Member secretary, DWSC
Cum Executive Engineer(PHE)
Diphu Rural W/S Division
Date 15/09/25

Memo no. No. EE/PHE/DIP/RWS/SBMG-35/2025-26/6186-90

Karbi Anglong marks PM Modi's 75th birthday

Blood donation camps, Seva Saptah launch, and community initiatives highlight BJP's Sewa Pakhwada observance across East and West Karbi Anglong

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 18: The 75th birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was marked with a series of activities across Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts, blending service-oriented programmes, health initiatives, and symbolic celebrations.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), along with its youth wing, the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), East Karbi Anglong District, organised multiple programmes as part of the nationwide Sewa Pakhwada observance that began on September 17 and will continue till October 2, coinciding with the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.

The BJYM-EKAD organised a free blood donation camp at the Blood Bank of Diphu Medical College & Hospital on Wednesday in collaboration with the hospital's Blood Centre, where over 25 members and karyakartas donated blood.

Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) Executive Member Madhuram Lekthe, who partic-



ipated in the camp, said that BJP workers donate blood several times a year, not only on festive occasions.

BJYM-EKAD president Jiten Bey announced that similar health and blood donation camps would be held LAC-wise—on September 20 in Bokajan, September 23 in Howraghat at Phuloni Model Hospital, and September 24 in Diphu.

BJP-EKADC president Roland Killing praised the BJYM for its initiative, while Bey said the camp reflected the simplicity and kindness of Modi. On the same day,

BJP-EKADC organised a symbolic celebration at its office, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Bhawan in Diphu, where president Roland Killing, KAAC Chairman Raju Tisso, general secretary Sarsing Phangocho, and party workers lit earthen lamps in the evening, praying for the Prime Minister's good health and continued leadership.

Meanwhile, in West Karbi Anglong, the District Administration and District Health Society launched Seva Hi Samarpan: Seva Saptah at Hamren Civil Sub-Divisional Hospital.

The programme, which will run till September 25, was inaugurated by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Health) Pradip Kumar Gupta, who urged citizens and organisations to participate.

Simultaneously, the Swastha Nari Swastha Parijal Abhiyan was launched, to continue till October 2. District Programme Manager of NHM, Hilton Saikia, informed that the week-long initiative will involve multiple departments, highlighting healthcare, education, social welfare, and environmental protection.

He added that on September 22, food packets would be distributed to 161 tuberculosis patients across Dongkamokam, Borchohok, and Baithalango.

The inaugural programme was attended by Assistant Commissioner Himadri Sekhar Bordoloi, SDMO Dr Ranjit Kumar Nath, Nodal Officer of District AIDS Control Society Dr Montu Kumar Shyam, Superintendent of Hamren Civil Hospital Dr Altaf Hussain, M&HO-I Dr Mirdihun Teronpi, and officials from NHM and Hamren Civil Hospital.

AMCH doctor elected to Teachers' Council of Association of Physicians of India

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Sept 18: Dr Prashanta Dihingia, senior professor in the Department of Medicine at Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH), has been elected as a member of the Teachers' Council of the Association of Physicians of India (API), bringing laurels to Assam and Dibrugarh.

Dr Dihingia secured the third-highest number of votes in the election to the academic council of the API, a prestigious national body of physicians.

Doctors from across the country cast their votes in his favour.

For many years, Dr Dihingia has held significant positions in both the Dibrugarh and Assam branches of the API.

He also served successfully as Superintendent of Assam Medical College for the past four years.

"I am happy to be elected as a member of the API from Assam. Many doctors from other states



supported me, and I thank everyone for their encouragement," he said.

AMCH principal Dr Sanjib Kakati, API Assam branch president Dr Anup Kumar Das, secretary Dr Pritam Barthakur, API Headquarters general secretary Dr Anupam Dutta, API Dibrugarh branch president Dr AK Pegu, secretary Dr Rashi Shyam, senior pro-

fessor of Cardiology at AMC Dr Mriganka Sekhar Chaliha, and many other doctors extended their congratulations.

This is the first time a doctor from the Northeast has been elected to the Teachers' Council, a development welcomed by teachers and doctors of Assam Medical College, particularly the Department of Medicine.

Nodal officer appointed

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 18: The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), in an order dated September 17, appointed Bikrom Teron, Assistant Executive Engineer of the PHE Diphu Rural Water Supply Division, as the Nodal Officer in the Department of Power (Solar and Hydro).

Teron will discharge the responsibilities of the Nodal Officer for the Power Department in addition to his existing duties in the PHE.

The order specified that the assignment carries no additional financial benefits.

STIHub empowers women weavers through silk training

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Sept 18: The Science, Technology, and Innovation Hub (STIHub) at CIT Kokrajhar, funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, has conducted a training programme on portable and manual eri yarn spinning machines to boost the silk and handloom sector in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

The initiative, led by Dr Pranav Kumar Singh (PI) and Dr Abhijit Padun (Co-PI), aimed at creating value addition in the silk sector by enabling a smooth transition from cocoon to yarn spinning.

The organisers said the programme was designed to align with regional sericulture development goals while empowering women weavers with modern skills and tools to enhance self-reliance and entrepreneurship.

State Awardee Dhirashree Boro Brahma, who attended as resource person, urged the women participants to weave not only fabric but also a future of economic independence, cultural pride, and sustainable livelihoods.

The organisers said the initiative will contribute to making BTR a hub of silk and handloom where traditional craftsmanship integrates with technology and innovation.

Deomorno Degree College observes World Ozone Day

HT Correspondent

MANGALDAI, Sept 18: Deomorno Degree College observed World Ozone Day with an awareness programme organised by the Department of Geography on September 16.

The event was inaugurated by principal Dr Gitali Kalita, who lit the ceremonial lamp and, in her address, stressed the dangers of ozone layer depletion.

She urged collective efforts to reduce the use of substances harmful to the environment.

Assistant professor of Economics Bijoy Kumar Baruah delivered a lecture on this year's theme, "From Science to Global Action," highlighting the causes and consequences of ozone depletion and global conventions such as Vienna, Montreal, Paris, and Kigali.

Assistant Professor of Political Science Mainul Hoque discussed the geopolitical dimensions of tackling challenges like climate change, global warming, and ozone depletion.

More than 300 students, faculty members, and staff participated in the event.

Arup Kumar Sarma, Head of the Department of Geography, anchored the programme, which concluded with a vote of thanks by Assistant Professor of Geography Brindaban Sarma.

'Swasth Nari Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan' observed in Karbi Anglong

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 18: As part of the nationwide "Swasth Nari Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan" (SNSPA), being observed from September 17 to October 2, a special health programme was organised on Wednesday at Mohindijua Sub-Health Centre (SHC) in Karbi Anglong district.

The event saw active community participation and offered a wide range of health services for women and children. A live telecast of the national launch of the Abhiyaan by the Prime Minister was also screened.

Specialist doctors conducted health check-ups, including screening for non-communicable diseases, tuberculosis, cancer, eye care, and antenatal care for pregnant women. Registration for digital health cards and key government schemes such as the Mother and Child Protection (MCP) Card, Sickle Cell Card, Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card, and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana was also facilitated. The programme was attended by MP Amarsing Tisso as chief guest, along with KAAC Executive Member for Health and Family Welfare Surjya Rongphar, KAAC Principal Secretary Mukul Kumar Saikia, IAS, District Commissioner Nirola Phangocho, and other dignitaries. NHM staff were also present. On the occasion, PMJAY cards and Nishay Mitra food baskets were distributed to beneficiaries. The dignitaries lauded the initiative, stressing that women's health forms the foundation of strong families and a developed nation.

Northeast Bamboo Conclave 2025 charts roadmap for sustainable bamboo economy

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: Policymakers, industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators from India and abroad converged in Guwahati on Thursday for the Northeast Bamboo Conclave 2025, setting a strategic agenda for positioning bamboo as a driver of sustainable development and economic growth in the region.

The event, organised by the North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBCDC) with support from the North Eastern Council (NEC), the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoNER), and the National Bamboo Mission (NBM), marked an important milestone in efforts to build a resilient bamboo economy.

Hosted at Radisson Blu, Guwahati, the conclave was organised in collaboration with the SELCO Foundation as Innovation Partner, FICCI as Industry Partner, and the Assam State Bamboo Mission as State Partner. Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) extended support as CSR Partner, while Nurture and Foster acted as Knowledge Partner.

The conclave coincided with World Bamboo Day 2025 and was themed Promoting Investments, CSR and Bio-Economy.

It featured an inaugural session, technical deliberations, and a high-level panel discussion charting the roadmap for a "Viksit Bamboo



Sector for a Viksit Northeast by 2047."

In his address, MC Omi Ningshen, IRS, Managing Director of NECBDC, said the conclave was "not just a discussion platform but a movement towards realising the immense potential of bamboo for Northeast India's green growth and livelihood generation."

He emphasised that while government policies and missions would provide momentum, active participation from the private sector and PSUs would be essential to unlock investments, introduce advanced technologies, and build scalable market linkages.

Integrating traditional knowledge with modern technology, he noted, would be key to making bamboo a cornerstone of India's bio-economy.

The inaugural session under-

NFR launches eco-friendly 'Swachhata Hi Seva 2025' campaign

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has rolled out its annual Swachhata Hi Seva campaign across all divisions and its headquarters from September 17, with a special emphasis on eco-friendly practices and community participation.

The fortnight-long campaign, which will continue till October 2, 2025, is being observed at railway stations, trains, workshops, residential colonies, offices, and other railway establishments under the theme Swachhotsav. Inaugurating the campaign at Malignoan, NFR general manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava administered the Swachhata Pledge to officers and staff, reaffirming the organisation's commitment to a cleaner and greener environment. Senior officials and employees across divisions also joined the pledge, setting the tone for a series of activities that will focus on cleanliness, sustainability, and public awareness.

As part of the initiative, NFR will undertake intensive cleanliness drives at station premises, railway tracks, office complexes, and colonies.

Awareness programmes are being designed to reach both passengers and local communities, while workshops for railway staff will focus on sustainable practices. Special efforts will be made to identify and eliminate unserviceable materials.

The campaign will also highlight the "3R principle — Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle" to promote a culture of environmental responsibility. Interactive sessions, awareness messages, and public pledges are being organised to ensure the campaign becomes a mass movement involving not only railway employees but also citizens and passengers. NFR officials stressed that sustainable cleanliness requires continuous and collective effort from every section of society. Adding an innovative touch to this year's campaign, NFR introduced compostable bags manufactured by IIT Guwahati for distributing bedrolls in all originating trains.

This eco-friendly measure, launched on the opening day, aims to cut down on single-use plastic within railway operations and sets a new benchmark in sustainable service delivery.

Voluntary blood donation camp held at Bokajan CHC



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 18: A voluntary blood donation camp was organised on Wednesday at Bokajan Community Health Centre (CHC) by the Assam State Blood Transfusion Council (ASBTC) in collaboration with the Bokajan CHC and the Health Department.

The camp saw active public participation, with 23 units of blood collected. Medical teams conducted health check-ups, provided counselling, and ensured strict adherence to safety protocols. Doctors highlighted the vital role of voluntary blood donation, noting that blood cannot be manufactured and is solely dependent on donors.

The programme also raised awareness about the benefits of blood donation, including improved community health, early detection of medical conditions, and motivating others to donate.

The Health and Family Welfare Department, Karbi Anglong, thanked all donors for their contribution and urged citizens to continue supporting such initiatives, reiterating that every drop of donated blood helps save a life.

Assam Cong accuses BJP of inciting communal disturbances by releasing videos, files complaint

GUWAHATI, Sept 18: The Assam Congress on Thursday filed a complaint with the police, alleging that the BJP uploaded AI-generated videos on social media to incite communal disturbances and promote enmity among religious groups.

The party also accused the BJP of targeting Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Gaurav Gogoi and the Muslim community by uploading the videos on social media.

The complaint has been filed at the Dispur Police Station by Assam Pradesh Congress Committee's Media department chairman Bedabrata Bora against the state BJP's social media cell for alleged criminal conspiracy, incitement to communal disturbances, promoting enmity among religious groups and violation of the model code of conduct, which is in force for the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections.

The complaint has been lodged against "the Assam BJP, represented by president Dilip Saikia, co-convenor of BJP's social media cell Shekharjyoti Baishya and other 'unknown' functionaries associated with the saffron party's social media campaigns in Assam and content strategy for the North East region", Bora told mediapersons after filing the complaint.

"The video titled 'Assam without BJP' on September 15 portrays an overwhelmingly Muslim-dominated Assam, with visuals of legalised beef sales in public spaces, renamed landmarks adorned with Islamic motifs, exaggerated statistics claiming 90 per cent Muslim population, Muslim individuals in positions, enforcing Sharia-like laws", the Congress leader claimed.

He alleged that the video that ends with the words 'choose your vote carefully', was made to woo voters for the upcoming polls for the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC).

Bora claimed that the video is captioned and narrated in a manner that "explicitly promotes fear and hatred against Muslims, tarnishes the image of Congress leaders, particularly Rahul Gandhi and Gaurav Gogoi".

"This is not an isolated incident but follows a similar video posted by the same social media handle on September 12... and the dissemination of such content is particularly dangerous in the current context of Assam's fragile communal fabric", the complainant alleged.

Bora urged the police to conduct a prompt investigation, including "forensic analysis of the video for fabrication, seizure of devices from the BJP social media department". He also urged the police to issue directives to the authorities of the social media platform to immediately take down the post under the IT Act, 2000 to prevent further dissemination and also inform the Assam State Election Commission of the alleged MCC violations.

The police said that they have received the complaint and will examine it before any action is taken.

The Assam BJP has been posting several videos on its 'X' handle since Monday, alleging that there is a threat from illegal immigrants in the state.

The first video has the tagline 'Assam without BJP' with AI images of "Muslims taking over Guwahati, the airport, stadium, tea estates and the Ahom-era amphitheatre Rangghar".

The video also has a caption - 'We can't let this dream of pajjan to be true' and an appeal to people to



'choose to vote carefully'.

The BJP has been referring to Gogoi as 'pajjan' ever since Chief Minister Himanta Biswa accused him of having alleged links with Pakistan's ISI.

Reacting to the video, Gogoi claimed, "The words, actions and images produced by the BJPIT cell do not have the strength to scratch the surface of Assamese society."

He said that the proud Assam deserves politicians who help the people of the state reach new heights.

"Assam has been nurtured by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankaradeva, Azan Bipr, Swargadeo Siukapha, Lachit Borphukan and Bhupen Hazarika. People with links to smuggling of cattle, coal, betel leaves, drugs will not dictate the Assamese mind," Gogoi, also the deputy leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, posted 'X'.

The Congress leader said his party wants to build "a society of pilots, engineers, doctors, entrepreneurs, bankers and business owners".

"We want to see a 'bor' (great) Assam where hard work trumps hate, decency matters over hubris, democracy crushes autocracy, and everyone is treated with respect," he said.

The Assam BJP, reacting to Gogoi's post, said, "Visionary pajjan wants to build a paradise where his own bloodline won't dare to step foot!"

"He screams about a Bor Axom (great Assam) day and night, but funnily enough, he doesn't want his own family anywhere near it! Wonder why? Maybe because even he knows that his so-called 'Bor Axom' is nothing but a promised land reserved for the Kanglus (sic). Step down, No one is buying it," the BJP alleged on 'X'.

Assam Information and Public Relations (IPR) Minister Pijush Hazarika claimed that the Assam BJP's videos clearly spoke about the threat of "illegal immigrants who are changing Assam's demography".

"But instantly these 'champions of secularism' screamed Islamophobia! Now tell me — why the 'mirchi' if the issue is about illegals?"

The chief minister, refusing to comment on the issue, claimed that these "so-called Amul babies (apparently referring to Gogoi), who have no knowledge of anything, who only know how to advance on the strength of their PR - what threat do they pose to us?"

He alleged that they (Gogoi and Congress) have "trivialised even a serious issue like going to Pakistan. What could be more shameful than this". (PTI)

OBITUARY



Ta-our superhero dad, Prafulla Chandra Sharma

Ta, our dad, was an epitome of kindness, calmness and gentleness brimming with life energy and consciousness. Although an IAS officer and ex-Chief Secretary of Assam, he exuded unbelievable humility and simplicity. Born into humble beginnings in Dergaon, he rose to success through his sheer brilliance. He possessed an uncanny appetite for learning whether it be for Chemistry, Finance or Sanskrit. That perhaps explains how he could wear multiple hats from being a Scientist to an Administrator. It is true that he had an exceptionally successful career as an administrator right from joining IAS in 1975 at the age of 25 to serving as the Chief Secretary of Assam.

Our dad was a dreamer, believer and doer. He was a visionary and was ahead of his times. Since our childhood, he taught us not to confine ourselves to the identity of gender. He told us that the world is ours and we could be anything we wanted to be only if we believed in it. That perhaps explains how we could pursue our relatively successful professional careers globally after pursuing engineering and MBA.

He did not believe in societal conditioning. He told us the importance of being spiritual but not religious. He loved to read and introduced us to his huge collection of books from J Krishnamurti to Stephen Hawking.

He was loved by all strata of society from the fisherman to the highest ranking officer. Although we knew our dad on the personal front, listening to stories from his colleagues about his care, commitment and empathetic leadership has brought solace to our grieving hearts.

We are grateful to the universe for having given us this ethereal experience of having Ta as our father in this lifetime. We love you Ta today and forever.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. That means we have 1,440 daily opportunities to make a positive impact. - Les Brown

Charlie Kirk's assassination

The assassination of Charlie Kirk at Utah Valley University has become far more than a criminal investigation—it is a prism refracting the fault lines of contemporary geopolitics. The 31-year-old founder of Turning Point USA, gunned down mid-speech by a bolt-action rifle, has posthumously exposed the chasm between America's domestic martyrdom culture and the world's calculated indifference to its ideological exports. The global reaction—or conspicuous lack thereof—reveals uncomfortable truths about how America's culture wars play on the international stage. While Washington wraps itself in the rhetoric of national tragedy, Europe offers a cold shoulder, Asia maintains studied silence, and Democrats rage against suggestions of complicity in a killing they privately view as predictable. There is a particular reason for India not reacting or for that matter the whole of Asia -- for one he was the Trump loyalist raised millions for his elections through crowd funding from the youth and secondly he was very anti India and his rhetoric and speeches were full of anti Indian demagogue where he said Indian immigrants were not welcome in the USA which suits Trump's anti immigrant agenda.

A small section of the internet now appears convinced that the killing of Charlie Kirk was linked to recent visa crackdowns and the ongoing rift in India-US ties. Others cited various anti-India posts made by the conservative activist during the final days of his life to underscore their point. The conservative leader had been well-known for his hardliner views on immigration, abortion, gun rights and race — often making deeply divisive statements on various issues. The Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) was enacted in 1938. FARA requires certain agents of foreign principals who are engaged in political activities or other activities specified under the statute to make periodic public disclosure of their relationship with the foreign principal, as well as activities, receipts and disbursements in support of those activities. A democrat was booked last year under the FARA act for being an agent of Egypt through his wife's lineage to that country.

MAGA supporters on social media suggested that the attack was a way to "shift the narrative" since the H-1B visa argument was heating up — with a significant number of these posts devolving rapidly into racist tropes. The increasingly bizarre and growing list of theories has also blamed both Democrats and Republicans with a variety of reasons outlined online. Kirk had vehemently opposed the granting of new US visas to Indian professionals and urged America to block the outsourcing of tech jobs to the other country. The September 5 post at the centre of conspiracy theories had gone a step further to accuse Indian social media accounts of being paid by the government to promote supportive content.

Ensuring Safety and Justice for Indians in America

By: Vinod Chandrashekar Dixit

The brutal murder of Chandramouli Nagamallaiah, a 50-year-old Indian motel manager, in Dallas, Texas, has sparked widespread outrage and demands for strict action against the perpetrator. Nagamallaiah was beheaded with a machete by his coworker, Yordanis Cobos-Martinez, a 37-year-old Cuban national, in a fit of rage over a broken washing machine at the Downtown Suites motel where they worked. The incident has sparked fear and anxiety among the Indian community in the US, highlighting concerns about their safety and security.

Cobos-Martinez has a history of violent crimes, including convictions for auto theft and indecency with a child. He was released from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody in January despite a removal order, citing no significant likelihood for removal in the foreseeable future.

The safety of Indians in America has been a pressing concern due to a rise in violent attacks, vehicular accidents, and hate crimes. Several incidents have highlighted the vulnerability of Indian students and professionals in the US. There have been instances where Indian students or nationals have been victims of crime in the United States. For example, Dasari Gopikrishna, a 32-year-old Indian national, was fatally shot during a robbery at a convenience store in Texas. The Indian consulate intervened to assist in repatriating his body to India. In another case, Nukarapu Sai Teja, an MBA student from Telangana, was murdered in Chicago during a robbery. Three Indian students lost their lives in a car accident in Alpharetta, Georgia, while another student, Belem Atchuthy, died in a motorcycle accident in New York. There have been reports of anti-Hindu hate offenses in the US, with the FBI documenting 25 such incidents in 2022, a significant increase from previous years.

Indian students and people settled in US often worry about their physical safety and feel unwelcome in the US, which can impact their daily lives and academic performance. Young Indian Americans face racial and ethnic discrimination, influencing their identity development and sense of belonging. Our Indian students struggle with accents, slang, and academic jargon, creating misunderstandings and affecting classroom participation. Adapting to new customs, academic systems, and social dynamics can be challenging, leading to mental health concerns and social isolation. Despite efforts to improve relations, Native Americans continue to face issues like land rights disputes, inadequate healthcare, and socioeconomic disparities. Hate crimes and violence against Native Americans remain a concern, with some incidents sparking widespread outrage and calls for action.

The safety of Indians settled in America is a complex issue, and it's not entirely accurate to say there's no control or effort from the American government. There is a need to increase awareness about Indian culture and customs among the general public. Proper assistance must be provided to Indian students and workers, such as orientation programs and emergency support services. Foster welcoming environment needs for Indian nationals, promoting diversity and inclusion. Systemic issues, such as jurisdictional complexities and resource constraints, can hinder the government's ability to effectively address safety concerns in Native American communities. No doubt, our Indian government has expressed concern over the safety of its citizens in the US and is working closely with local authorities to ensure their protection. Our Indian Embassy in the US has provided assistance to the families of victims and is advocating for stricter measures to prevent such incidents. Don't we think ensuring the safety of Indians settled in America requires a multifaceted approach that addresses historical injustices, promotes cultural understanding, and supports community-led initiatives.

PM Modi's transformative visit to Manipur paving the way for peace and progress

As the people of Manipur reflect on the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, there is a sense of both pride and optimism that permeates the state. This visit, far from being a mere political event or symbolic gesture, has heralded a new era for Manipur — one focused on peace, reconciliation, and long-term development. On the occasion of Prime Minister Modi's 75th birthday, the people of this beautiful state have reason to be hopeful about their future. The recognition of Manipur's rich cultural heritage and acknowledgment of its struggles has given the people a renewed sense of dignity, pride, and hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Manipur was more than just a political trip. It was a powerful statement that resonated deeply with the people, especially in the context of the ongoing issues faced by the state. One of the most poignant moments of the visit was the tribute paid by the Prime Minister to a Manipuri Border Security Force (BSF) jawan who sacrificed his life in Operation Sindoor. This act of respect and recognition highlighted the nation's gratitude for the sacrifices made by the people of Manipur in the service of the country. However, the significance of Modi's visit went beyond the commemoration of a fallen hero. It also marked a pivotal moment in the larger journey of peace and reconciliation that Manipur is currently undergoing.

For many in Manipur, the recognition of their cultural heritage by the Prime Minister carries far greater weight than mere infrastructure development. In a state that has often felt overlooked by the rest of the nation, the acknowledgment of its identity and historical legacy has brought immense pride to the people. Infrastructure, such as roads and buildings, can be rebuilt and repaired, but the preservation and acknowledgment of a culture that spans thousands of years are far more lasting and meaningful. This recognition by Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) reaffirms Manipur's rightful place in the grand narrative of Bharat's history. For the people of Manipur, this symbolic gesture goes a long way in healing old wounds, acknowledging past injustices, and paving the way for a stronger, more inclusive future.

The Prime Minister's visit to Manipur also carries deep implications for the ongoing peace process in the state. Having experienced several phases of unrest, Manipur is currently in a critical phase of its journey toward peace and progress. What began as an effort to contain violence (Phase 1) is now transitioning into a stage of reconciliation (Phase 2). The final stage — rehabilitation and long-term



progress (Phase 3) — remains the ultimate goal. Modi's presence in the state serves as a strong signal to the people that the Centre is fully committed to their welfare, supporting them through this challenging but hopeful path.

While some critics have dismissed the visit as a mere "stopover," this narrative fails to capture the larger context of Modi's outreach to the entire Northeast region. The Prime Minister's visit to Manipur was part of a broader strategy to connect with the people of Northeast India, a region often sidelined in the political discourse. Modi's visit was not just about Manipur; it also included visits to states like Mizoram, Assam, West Bengal, and Bihar, which speaks to the government's commitment to strengthening ties across the region. Reducing the Prime Minister's visit to a mere "pit stop" is not only dismissive but also a reflection of political motivations that seek to undermine genuine efforts toward peace and unity.

It is important to recognize that, while the current leadership is committed to resolving the issues in Manipur, the roots of the conflict run deep. The challenges that the state faces today were not born overnight, nor were they solely caused by the present government. The conflict in Manipur has its origins in decades of neglect and mismanagement by various governments. Blaming the present leadership for these long-standing issues is neither fair nor productive. What is needed now is a collective resolve to move forward and find solutions that address the root causes of the

conflict while fostering long-term peace and development.

The divisive rhetoric that has emerged in the wake of Modi's visit is troubling. Healthy public discourse is essential, but what we are witnessing on social media and other platforms is an increasing polarization driven by those more interested in advancing political agendas than in helping Manipur heal. Instead of uniting for the common good, many voices have become entrenched in opposition, making snide remarks and deepening divides. This growing noise of divisiveness only detracts from the core objective — reconciliation and peace.

In every conflict, there are always agenda-driven voices that seek to exploit the situation for their own gain. The "stopover" narrative that has been pushed by some detractors is a prime example of such divisive rhetoric. It is important to recognize that these voices are not motivated by a desire for peace but by political agendas that benefit from continued discord. At this sensitive juncture, the people of Manipur must take a step back and evaluate their own roles in the peace process. Rather than succumbing to the allure of negativity and division, Manipur must remain focused on finding common ground, healing past wounds, and moving forward as one united community.

If we were to borrow from set theory, one could categorize the people into three sets: those who wish to contribute to peace and progress, those who are neutral or on the fence, and those who actively spread negativity and division. The crucial question is:

which set do we want to belong to? The answer is simple — we must choose to be part of the first set, contributing positively to the process of reconciliation and progress. It is only through collective effort and unity that Manipur can overcome its challenges and build a brighter future for all.

The BJP, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, has consistently recognized Manipur's contributions to the nation. From its remarkable achievements in sports to its sacrifices during the freedom struggle, Manipur has always played a crucial role in Bharat's journey. It is the BJP that has advocated for inclusiveness, for recognizing Manipur's identity, and for bringing real development to a state that has for too long been left behind. The development initiatives under Modi's leadership, including infrastructure projects and social welfare schemes, aim to uplift the people of Manipur and provide them with the opportunities they have long been denied.

The Prime Minister's visit is not a one-time gesture, but rather the beginning of continued support for Manipur. It signals a new era of engagement between the people of Manipur and the Centre, one characterized by trust, cooperation, and shared goals. Modi's message is clear: the road to reconciliation, unity, and prosperity is a long one, but it is a journey that the Centre will walk with the people of Manipur every step of the way.

The future of Manipur lies in its ability to embrace reconciliation and forge a path toward unity. While challenges remain, the people of Manipur can take heart in the fact that they are no longer being ignored or sidelined. Prime Minister Modi's visit represents a critical moment in the state's history — a moment when the people of Manipur can finally feel that they are being seen, heard, and valued as an integral part of the nation. This visit, this recognition of their struggles and their identity, marks the beginning of a new chapter for Manipur — one where peace, progress, and prosperity are not just ideals but attainable goals.

In the days and years ahead, it will be up to the people of Manipur, with the support of the Centre, to make the most of this opportunity for healing and development. By remaining committed to the principles of unity and reconciliation, Manipur can emerge stronger, more resilient, and more united than ever before. The people of Manipur have already shown remarkable strength in the face of adversity; now, with the guidance and support of Prime Minister Modi, they can look to the future with renewed hope and determination. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

Nuclear Energy and India's Self-Reliance

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuvan

Nuclear energy has firmly established itself as a vital component of the modern world's energy system. For a rapidly developing nation like India, nuclear energy holds the potential to serve as a sustainable and long-term solution in the energy sector. The connection between nuclear energy and India's aspiration for self-reliance is profound. Through the prudent utilization of this energy, India can not only achieve self-sufficiency in the energy domain but also pave the way for significant advancements in economic, social, and environmental spheres. The process of nuclear energy production is comparatively less harmful to the environment in terms of carbon emissions, making it an effective alternative in the fight against climate change. For a country like India, where energy demand is increasing daily, nuclear energy can ensure energy security while fostering scientific and technological excellence. The benefits of this energy source extend beyond electricity generation, playing a crucial role in diverse fields such as agriculture, healthcare, industry, and research. In a populous nation like India, where balancing energy demands with environmental sustainability poses a significant challenge, nuclear energy can serve as a harmonious solution to address both aspects.

The concept of nuclear energy represents a revolutionary scientific discovery. This energy is generated through the fission or fusion of atomic nuclei. In the fission process, atoms of radioactive materials like uranium-235 or plutonium-239 are split, releasing enormous amounts of energy. This energy, converted into heat, transforms water into steam, which is then used to drive turbines for electricity generation. One of the most significant characteristics of nuclear energy is its exceptionally high energy density. The energy produced from one kilogram of uranium-235 is several times greater than that generated from coal, petroleum, or other conventional fuels. This high energy density makes nuclear energy an ideal means of maximizing output with limited resources. Moreover, the production of nuclear energy results in negligible carbon dioxide emissions, positioning it as an environmentally friendly option in combating climate change. For a country like India, where rising energy demands must be balanced with environmental sustainability, nuclear energy offers a viable solution. Its advantages are not limited to electricity generation. Through nuclear technology, agricultural productivity can be enhanced, medical diagnostics and treatments can be improved, and industrial production capacities can be expanded. By genetically modifying seeds, nuclear technology has enabled the development of high-yield crop varieties. Furthermore, a stable supply of nuclear energy can boost industrial productivity, thereby accelerating economic progress. In all these aspects, the application of nuclear energy is intricately linked to India's goal of self-reliance. Through its multifaceted applications, nuclear energy can ensure energy security while propelling India toward economic and social development.

The history of India's nuclear energy program is a saga of vision and perseverance. This journey began in the mid-20th century when scientist Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha envisioned a clear roadmap for India's nuclear energy future. In 1948, under his leadership, the Atomic Energy Commission of India was established, laying the foundation for the country's nuclear program. Bhabha's vision was that nuclear energy would not only meet India's energy needs but also position the nation among the world's leading countries in science and technology. This foresight led to the commissioning of India's first nuclear power plant in Tarapur in 1969, marking a historic milestone in the country's nuclear energy journey. From Tarapur, nuclear power plants were established in various locations, including Kalpakkam, Rawatbhata, Narora, Kaiga, and Kudankulam. A unique feature of India's nuclear program is its three-stage strategy. The first stage involves generating electricity through the fission of uranium-235. The second stage plans to use plutonium-239 in fast breeder reactors to produce energy. The third stage aims to harness India's abundant thorium reserves by converting thorium-232 into uranium-233 for energy production. Given that India possesses one of the world's largest thorium

reserves, this strategy represents a significant step toward energy self-reliance. Through this three-stage approach, India can reduce its dependence on imported nuclear fuel, paving the way for self-sufficiency. Bhabha's visionary plan has elevated India's nuclear program to the level of the world's leading programs. Furthermore, the relentless efforts and dedication of Indian scientists have played a pivotal role in the program's success. Through this initiative, India has demonstrated its capabilities not only in the energy sector but also in science and technology on the global stage.

An analysis of the current status of India's nuclear energy program reveals that the country currently operates 22 nuclear reactors with a total capacity of approximately 6,780 megawatts. This accounts for only 2-3% of India's total electricity production. While this share is relatively small, the significance of nuclear energy lies in its stability and long-term sustainability. The energy generated by nuclear power plants is reliable and less harmful to the environment, making it an ideal option for meeting climate change goals. The Indian government has set an ambitious target of increasing nuclear energy production capacity to 22,480 megawatts by 2032. To achieve this, new nuclear power plants are under construction in Kudankulam, Gorakhpur, Chutka, and Jaitapur in Maharashtra. These projects will enhance India's energy capabilities while ensuring electricity supply to various regions of the country. Two units of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant are already operational, with four more under construction. This project will play a critical role in meeting the energy demands of southern India. Additionally, India has accelerated research on thorium-based reactors. The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor in Kalpakkam is in the experimental phase, and its successful commercialization could usher in a new era in India's nuclear energy sector. By utilizing its domestic thorium reserves, India can reduce its reliance on imported fuel. However, this path is fraught with challenges. The high cost of constructing nuclear power plants, dependence on imported fuel, and public concerns about safety have hindered the progress of India's nuclear energy program. For instance, local protests during the construction of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant caused delays in the project. To overcome these challenges, the government must prioritize transparent policies and public engagement.

The relationship between nuclear energy and India's self-reliance is profound. In a country like India, where a significant portion of the population still lacks access to electricity, energy self-sufficiency is a key driver of economic and social development. Nuclear energy can play a pivotal role not only in electricity generation but also in agriculture, healthcare, industry, and research. In agriculture, nuclear technology has facilitated increased productivity through genetic modification of seeds. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has developed high-yield and disease-resistant varieties of rice, wheat, and other crops, contributing to food security and boosting farmers' productivity. In healthcare, nuclear energy enables the production of radioisotopes, revolutionizing cancer diagnosis and treatment. Radioisotopes like technetium-99m are used in medical imaging, enhancing diagnostic accuracy. In industry, nuclear energy ensures a stable electricity supply, boosting productivity and accelerating economic growth. These diverse applications of nuclear energy make a multifaceted contribution to India's self-reliance goals. Moreover, the low carbon emissions of nuclear energy can play a crucial role in achieving India's climate change targets. India aims to reduce carbon emissions by 45% by 2030, and the expansion of nuclear energy can significantly contribute to this goal. By balancing economic independence with environmental protection, nuclear energy offers a sustainable path forward.

The challenges India faces in its nuclear energy journey are complex. The construction of nuclear power plants requires substantial capital investment. For instance, the estimated cost of the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant is approximately ₹112,000 crore, posing a significant burden for a developing nation like India. Such projects often rely on foreign investment and loans, which can challenge India's economic independence. Depend-

ence on imported nuclear fuel remains a hurdle to self-reliance. While India has abundant thorium reserves, thorium-based reactor technology is still in the experimental stage, requiring further research, time, and investment for commercialization. Public concerns about the safety of nuclear power plants are a significant issue. Incidents like the 1986 Chernobyl disaster and the 2011 Fukushima accident have heightened these concerns. In India, protests against nuclear power plants in Kudankulam and Jaitapur reflect the complexity of this issue, driven by fears of potential accidents and inadequate information about radioactive waste management. Addressing these challenges requires open dialogue with the public, transparency, and education. Additionally, the development of advanced technologies for the safe management of radioactive waste and increased public awareness are essential. Despite these challenges, India's nuclear energy program continues to progress, and overcoming these obstacles will enable the country to achieve self-reliance in the energy sector.

The future of India's nuclear energy program is highly promising. With the expertise of Indian scientists and the effective utilization of domestic resources, self-reliance in this field is achievable. The 2008 Indo-US nuclear deal opened new avenues for international cooperation in India's nuclear program. Through this agreement, India has gained access to uranium imports from countries like Australia, Canada, France, and Russia, ensuring a steady fuel supply for its nuclear power plants and boosting production capacity. Furthermore, the Atomic Energy Commission of India and Indian scientists have made significant strides in thorium-based reactor research. India's indigenously designed Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor is considered one of the world's most efficient nuclear reactors, marking a significant step toward self-reliance. Additionally, Indian scientists are focusing on developing technologies for the safe management of radioactive waste. These efforts will establish India's nuclear energy program as a global leader.

The use of nuclear energy will have a positive impact on various sectors of India's economy. A reliable energy supply will enhance industrial productivity, accelerating economic growth. For energy-intensive industries like steel, cement, and textiles, a stable electricity supply is critical. Nuclear energy can reduce production costs, strengthening India's competitive position in global markets. Expanding electricity access to rural areas will improve the standard of living for the population. Currently, approximately 20% of India's rural population lacks access to electricity. Nuclear power plants can ensure electricity supply to these regions, facilitating advancements in education, healthcare, and small-scale industries. The growth of small industries in rural areas will strengthen local economies. Moreover, the low carbon emissions of nuclear energy will help India meet its climate change goals by reducing reliance on coal-based power plants and mitigating environmental pollution. India has set a target of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070, and nuclear energy can play a pivotal role in this endeavor. Additionally, a reliable energy supply will bolster India's economic independence and global influence.

In conclusion, nuclear energy is an indispensable component of India's vision for self-reliance. Through its effective utilization, India can achieve energy self-sufficiency while advancing economic, social, and environmental development. Nuclear energy can ensure energy security and accelerate progress in sectors like industry, agriculture, and healthcare. Despite challenges such as high construction costs, dependence on imported fuel, and public concerns about safety, India's scientific expertise, forward-thinking government policies, and international cooperation can overcome these hurdles. The successful commercialization of thorium-based technology and the development of indigenous nuclear reactors will enable India to achieve complete self-reliance in the energy sector. The potential of nuclear energy will position India as a powerful and self-reliant nation, capable of not only meeting its energy demands but also securing a significant role in the global energy landscape.

Celebrating NAVRATRI (Nine Nights) of Durga Puja festival

By: Diganta Barooah

Every woman who develops courage within herself is Durga. Every woman who develops transformation within herself is Kali. Every woman who develops devotion within herself is Parvati. Every woman who develops nurturing qualities within herself is Annapurna. Every woman is Shakti.

Navratri is one of the most important and significant festivals celebrated across India. It is a festival of 9 nights or the various forms of the DIVINE MOTHER. September and October are considered the most important months to celebrate Navratri due to climatic conditions and the position of solar energy. Hence, these two months are considered sacred for the worship of the Divine Mother Durga. The auspicious dates to celebrate this festival are indicated in the Lunar Calendar. The Divine Mother is worshipped everywhere and in almost every household. It is believed that The Mother Goddess of the Hindus – Durga, has manifested in various forms and also in a combination of Devi and Shakti. These NavaDurga Maa are believed to be the most sacred aspects of Goddess Durga.

Meaning of Navratri :

'Nava' means nine, and 'Ratri' means Nights. The literal meaning of 'Ratri' is 'the one who turns inward or rejuvenates'. In Sanskrit, 'Ra' means that which gives solace. The three types of thatprayer afflictions or problems or sufferings that come to us in life are as follows :

1. On the Physical level :

The body and environment; any pain or disease that we have to face in our life

2. On the Mental level :

In the mind; the thoughts that come and go

3. On the Causal level :

Past impressions known as 'Karma' in the consciousness. Hence, Navratri is when spirituality seekers go deep within to rest, become rejuvenated and refreshed, free from all difficulties, and start a new year afresh. It is also compared to the nine months that we spend in the womb of a mother. During the nine months that the child is in the womb, anything may happen, but it comes out of the womb new and afresh. The 'Devi Mahatmyam' scripture is chanted several times during these days. Poojas, Yagyas are performed, which talk about Devi fighting and destroying various demons. Devi represents Prana and Shakti, the power of consciousness and the Universal Energy.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संसृति। नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः॥

Yā Devī Sarvabhūteṣu Shaktīrūpeṇ Saṁsṛti Namastasyai Namastasyai Namastasyai Namō Namaḥ

"To that Goddess who dwells in all beings in the form of Power,

Salutations to her, again and again." To know the Goddess is to know your own inner power.

Across India and beyond, the nine nights of Navratri are celebrated with great devotion, song, dance, fasting, and spiritual awakening. Yet, many followers, especially the younger generation, often miss the deeper understanding of who these nine goddesses truly are, what they symbolize, and how their wisdom applies to our modern lives. Each goddess is not just an external deity to be worshipped but a living force within every person. For example :

* Goddess Shailputri – Symbol of Strength and Grounding
* Goddess Brahmacharini – Symbol of Devotion and Inner Discipline

* Goddess Chandraghanta – Symbol of Courage and Grace under Pressure

* Goddess Kushmanda – Symbol of Creative Power and Inner Radiance

* Goddess Skandamata – Symbol of Motherhood and Divine Nurturing

* Goddess Katyayani – Symbol of Justice and Righteous Anger

* Goddess Kalaratri – Symbol of Fearlessness and Transformation

* Goddess Mahagauri – Symbol of Purity and Forgiveness

* Goddess Siddhidatri – Symbol of Perfection and Divine Fulfillment

By understanding these forms not just as stories but as archetypes of energy, a person will start to relate them to his or her own emotional, mental, and spiritual states.

The origins of Navratri:

The origins of Navratri are deeply rooted in ancient Hindu mythology and tradition, making it difficult to pinpoint an exact historical starting point. However, there are several myths and legends associated with the inception of this festival :

1. Mythological Origins :

* Slaying of Mahishasura :

One of the most popular legends is the story of the demon Mahishasura, who was granted a boon that he could not be killed by any man or god. To save the world from his tyranny, the gods combined their powers to create Goddess Durga, who fought and eventually defeated Mahishasura after nine days of battle. This victory is celebrated as Navratri.

* Rama and Ravana :

Another legend ties Navratri to the Ramayana. Lord Rama worshipped Goddess Durga for nine days to gain her blessings before fighting Ravana. On the tenth day known as Dussehra, Rama defeated Ravana. This story emphasizes the triumph of good over evil.

2. Historical and Cultural Context :

* Ancient Civilizations :

The practice of worshiping female deities can be traced back to ancient civilizations in the Indian subcontinent, including the Indus



Valley Civilization, which dates back to around 3300–1300 BCE. Figurines and artifacts suggest the worship of a mother goddess, indicating early reverence for feminine divine power.

* Vedic Period :

During the Vedic period (1500–500 BCE), rituals and hymns dedicated to female deities were prevalent. The concept of Shakti, the divine feminine energy, became more defined and integrated into Hindu practices.

3. Regional Variations :

* In North India :

The Navratri celebrated here is closely linked with the worship of Goddess Durga in her nine forms and the triumph of Rama over Ravana.

* In West Bengal and Eastern India:

Known as Durga Puja, this variation focuses on the victory of Durga over Mahishasura and involves grand celebrations, particularly in Bengal.

* In Gujarat and Western India :

Navratri is synonymous with Garba and Dandiya Raas, traditional dances that honor the goddess and celebrate community and cultural heritage. While it is challenging to determine the precise historical moment when Navratri started, it is clear that the festival has ancient roots deeply embedded in Hindu mythology and cultural traditions. The stories of Mahishasura and Rama, along with archaeological and historical evidence, suggest that the worship of the divine feminine and the celebration of Navratri have been integral to Indian culture for millennia.

Durga's Teachings and Stories Relevance of Durga's Teachings and Stories in the Lives of

Modern Women :

In today's world, women continue to break barriers, achieve new heights, and challenge societal norms. Amidst these advancements, the teachings and stories of Durga Maa offer timeless lessons and inspiration that are profoundly relevant to the lives of modern women. Durga Maa, with her myriad forms and attributes, embodies the essence of feminine strength, resilience, and wisdom. Her stories are not just ancient myths but powerful narratives that resonate deeply with the experiences and aspirations of women today.

* Empowerment and Strength :

Durga Maa is often depicted as a warrior goddess, fearlessly battling and defeating powerful demons like Mahishasura. This imagery serves as a potent symbol of empowerment for modern women, reminding them of their inner strength and capability to overcome any challenge. In a world where women often face discrimination, inequality, and various forms of oppression, the story of Durga Maa stands as a beacon of hope and courage. It encourages women to stand up for themselves, to fight against injustice, and to believe in their power to make a difference.

* Balancing Multiple Roles

One of the most remarkable aspects of Durga Maa is her ability to embody multiple roles effortlessly—she is a warrior, a mother, a nurturer, and a protector. This multifaceted nature reflects the lives of many modern women who juggle various responsibilities, from professional careers to family obligations. Durga Maa's example teaches women the importance of balance and the strength that lies in versatility. It inspires them to

brace their diverse roles with grace and confidence, recognizing that they are capable of achieving excellence in every aspect of their lives.

* Compassion and Wisdom :

While Durga Maa is known for her ferocity in battle, she is also revered for her compassion and wisdom. This duality highlights the importance of nurturing qualities alongside strength. Modern women, in their quest for success and independence, can draw from Durga Maa's example to cultivate compassion, empathy, and wisdom. These qualities are essential not only for personal growth but also for building strong, supportive communities and fostering meaningful relationships.

* Self-Respect and Dignity :

Durga Maa commands respect and reverence wherever she goes. Her stories often emphasize the importance of self-respect and dignity. In today's society, where women frequently encounter situations that challenge their self-worth, Durga Maa's teachings remind them to uphold their dignity and never settle for less than they deserve. This message is particularly crucial in promoting self-confidence and assertiveness among women, encouraging them to demand and receive the respect they are entitled to.

* Spiritual Connection and Inner Peace:

In the hustle and bustle of modern life, maintaining a connection with one's spiritual side can provide immense strength and peace. Durga Maa's stories and the rituals of Navratras offer a pathway to spiritual enlightenment and inner tranquility. For modern women, engaging with these traditions can be a source of solace and a means

to recharge their spirits amidst daily stresses. It helps them reconnect with their inner selves and find balance in a fast-paced world.

* Role Models and Mentors :

The nine forms of Durga Maa, each with their unique attributes and stories, serve as diverse role models for women. From Shailputri's steadfastness to Mahagauri's purity and compassion, each avatar offers lessons that are applicable to various aspects of life. Modern women can look up to these divine forms as mentors, drawing inspiration and guidance from their stories to navigate their own journeys. In conclusion, the teachings and stories of Durga Maa are not relics of the past but dynamic, living principles that hold great relevance for the modern woman. They offer lessons in empowerment, resilience, balance, compassion, self-respect, and spiritual growth. By embracing these timeless narratives, modern women can find strength, inspiration, and a deeper connection to their cultural heritage, empowering them to lead lives of purpose and fulfillment.

Significance of Durga Maa :

Durga Maa, also known as Goddess Durga, holds immense significance in Hinduism. She is revered as a powerful deity who embodies the combined energies of all the gods and represents the divine feminine force. Here are the key aspects of her significance :

1. Symbol of Strength and Power

* **Warrior Goddess :** Durga is often depicted riding a lion or tiger, symbolizing her fearlessness and strength. She is portrayed with multiple arms, each carrying a weapon, signifying her

power to combat evil and protect the righteous.

* Victory Over Evil :

She is celebrated for her victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil.

2. Embodiment of Shakti

* **Divine Feminine Energy :** Durga represents Shakti, the divine feminine energy that is the source of all creation, preservation, and destruction in the universe.

* Dynamic Force :

She embodies the dynamic and active aspect of the divine, as opposed to the passive and contemplative nature represented by other deities.

3. Protector and Preserver :

* **Guardian of the Universe :** Durga is believed to protect the universe from evil forces and restore balance and harmony.

* Motherly Figure :

As a mother goddess, she is compassionate and nurturing, offering protection and guidance to her devotees.

4. Representation of Various Virtues :

* **Courage and Determination:** Durga inspires her devotees to be courageous and determined in the face of challenges.

* **Righteousness and Justice :** She upholds righteousness (dharma) and justice, teaching the importance of ethical and moral living.

5. Central Figure in Festivals :

* **Navratri :** The festival of Navratri, which spans nine nights, is dedicated to the worship of Durga in her various forms. Each day honors a different aspect of the goddess, celebrating her diverse attributes and stories.

* Durga Puja :

In West Bengal and other parts of India, Durga Puja is a major festival that involves elaborate rituals, processions, and cultural performances to honor the goddess.

6. Inspiration for Women :

* **Empowerment :** Durga serves as a symbol of empowerment for women, embodying strength, independence, and resilience.

* Role Model :

Her stories and attributes inspire women to embrace their inner power and assertiveness. The conclusion of Durga Puja is marked on the tenth day, Vijaydashami, with the Visarjan (immersion of Goddess Durga's idol in a river or water body) and the celebration of Bhojya (sharing sweets, exchanging greetings, and hugging) to symbolize the triumph of good over evil and to foster community bonds. This day culminates the vibrant, multi-day festival with a sense of closure and renewed hope. The festival is not only religious significance but also serves as a cultural event that brings people together, strengthening bonds of love and togetherness, and fostering a sense of hope and prosperity all over the world.

Modi's milestone: 75 years of leadership

By: Satyabrata Borah

Narendra Modi, the 14th Prime Minister of India, marked a significant personal milestone on September 17, 2025, as he turned 75. Born in 1950 in the modest town of Vadnagar in Gujarat, Modi's journey from a tea seller's son to one of the world's most influential leaders embodies resilience, ambition, and an unyielding commitment to public service. This birthday arrives amid a decade of transformative governance that has reshaped India's economy, society, and global standing, while also sparking intense debates on nationalism, inclusivity, and democratic norms. As Modi enters this new chapter, his life and legacy continue to inspire millions, even as they polarize opinions across the nation and beyond.

Modi's early years were defined by simplicity and hardship, forging the disciplined character that would later define his leadership. He was the third of six children born to Damodardas Mulchand Modi, a tea stall owner near the local railway station, and Heeraben Modi, a homemaker. The family resided in a small, single-story house measuring just 40 feet by 12 feet, where financial struggles were a constant companion. Young Narendra often helped his father by selling tea to passengers at the station, an experience that instilled in him a deep empathy for the working class and a firsthand understanding of economic vulnerability. School friends recall him as an industrious boy with a passion for debates and reading; he spent hours in the local library, devouring books on history, philosophy, and politics. Despite his average academic performance, Modi's curiosity and oratory skills set him apart. He completed his secondary education in Vadnagar and later pursued a Bachelor of Arts in political science through a distance-learning program at Delhi University, followed by a Master of Arts from Gujarat University in 1983. These qualifications, though modest, equipped him with the intellectual foundation for his political ascent.

At the age of eight, Modi joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing Hindu nationalist organization that profoundly shaped his worldview. The RSS's emphasis on discipline, patriotism, and cultural revival resonated with the young boy, who rose through

its ranks as a pracharak, or full-time volunteer, by the early 1970s. This period was marked by personal sacrifice; in a tradition of his Ghanchi caste, Modi was betrothed and married at 18 to Jashodaben Chimanal, but he soon left home to pursue his RSS commitments, effectively abandoning the marriage without divorce. The couple remained estranged for decades, with Jashodaben living quietly as a teacher until Modi acknowledged the marriage publicly during his 2014 election affidavit. Modi's RSS tenure also coincided with India's Emergency period (1975-1977), when he went underground to organize opposition against Indira Gandhi's regime, honing his skills in grassroots mobilization.

Transitioning to formal politics, Modi joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1985, leveraging his RSS networks to build the party's presence in Gujarat. By 1987, he was instrumental in organizing the Ekta Yatra, a high-profile march led by BJP leader L.K. Advani to promote national unity. His organizational prowess earned him promotion to BJP's Gujarat unit general secretary in 1988 and national secretary by 1995. Modi's behind-the-scenes role was pivotal in the BJP's 1998 national victory, but his big break came in 2001. Amid a devastating earthquake in Gujarat that exposed the inefficiencies of then-Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel, the BJP high command appointed Modi as replacement. Sworn in on October 7, 2001, he inherited a state reeling from disaster, corruption allegations, and economic stagnation.

As Gujarat's Chief Minister from 2001 to 2014, Modi transformed the state into an economic powerhouse, earning the moniker "Vikas Purush" or development man. He prioritized infrastructure, attracting investments through the annual Vibrant Gujarat Summit, which by 2013 had secured deals worth trillions of rupees. Gujarat's GDP growth averaged over 10 percent annually under his watch, outpacing the national average, with sectors like manufacturing, diamonds, and textiles flourishing. Initiatives like Jyotigram Yojana ensured 24-hour electricity to villages, while Sujalam Sufalam built irrigation networks to boost agriculture. Modi's governance model emphasized minimal government interference, privatization, and technology integration, including early adoption of e-gov-

ernance. He also promoted tourism and cultural heritage, turning sites like the Sabarmati Riverfront into symbols of progress.

However, Modi's Gujarat tenure was marred by profound controversies, most notably the 2002 riots. Following the Godhra train burning that killed 59 Hindu pilgrims, communal violence erupted, claiming over 1,000 lives, predominantly Muslims. Critics accused Modi of complicity or inaction, leading to international backlash; the U.S. denied him a visa from 2005 to 2014 under a law barring officials involved in religious freedom violations. A Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team cleared him in 2012, finding no evidence of wrongdoing, but the stigma persisted, fueling narratives of majoritarian bias. Despite this, Modi won three consecutive state elections in 2002, 2007, and 2012, consolidating BJP dominance in Gujarat and positioning himself as a national figure.

Modi's national ambitions culminated in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, where he led the BJP to a historic absolute majority, ending the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance's decade in power. Sworn in on May 26, 2014, as India's first Prime Minister born after independence, Modi promised "Aache Din" or good days, focusing on economic revival amid high inflation and corruption scandals. His first term saw bold reforms: the Goods and Services Tax (GST) unified India's fragmented tax system in 2017, boosting revenue and ease of business. Demonetization in 2016, though disruptive and criticized for hurting the informal economy, aimed to curb black money and digitize transactions, accelerating financial inclusion via the Jan Dhan Yojana, which opened over 500 million bank accounts for the poor. Schemes like Swachh Bharat (Clean India) built millions of toilets, reducing open defecation, while Make in India attracted foreign investment in manufacturing.

Foreign policy under Modi elevated India's global profile. He strengthened ties with the U.S., mending fences post the visa ban with visits to Washington and initiatives like the Quad alliance to counter China. Relations with Middle Eastern nations, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, deepened through energy deals and cultural diplomacy, earning him awards like the

UAE's Order of Zayed. Modi's "Neighborhood First" policy fostered SAARC cooperation, though tensions with Pakistan and China persisted, highlighted by the 2019 Balakot airstrikes after a terror attack. At home, the 2019 abrogation of Article 370 stripped Jammu and Kashmir of a special status, integrating it fully into India, a move hailed by supporters as correcting historical anomalies but decried by critics as undermining federalism.

Re-elected in 2019 with an even larger majority, Modi's second term tackled the COVID-19 pandemic decisively. India administered over 2 billion vaccine doses, exporting to 100 countries under Vaccine Maitri, saving an estimated 4.2 million lives per a Lancet study. Economic recovery followed with Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India), injecting trillions in stimulus and positioning India as the fifth-largest economy by 2022. Infrastructure boomed: over 100,000 kilometers of highways built, high-speed rail projects launched, and renewable energy capacity tripled to 180 gigawatts, aligning with Modi's 2070 net-zero pledge at COP26. Social welfare expanded; PM-KISAN provided direct income support to 120 million farmers, while Ayushman Bharat offered health insurance to 500 million poor citizens. The ban on triple talaq empowered Muslim women, and the Ram Temple inauguration in Ayodhya in 2024 fulfilled a long-standing BJP promise, symbolizing cultural resurgence.

Yet, Modi's era has not been without strife. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019, fast-tracking citizenship for non-Muslim refugees from neighboring countries, sparked nationwide protests over perceived discrimination against Muslims. Farm laws in 2020, intended to liberalize agriculture, led to year-long farmer agitations, forcing their repeal in 2021. Allegations of democratic backsliding grew, with media censorship, arrests of activists under stringent laws like UAPA, and a perceived erosion of minority rights. The 2024 elections saw the BJP lose its majority, relying on NDA allies for Modi's third term sworn in June 2024, signaling voter pushback on unemployment and inflation. By 2025, India navigated a brief India-Pakistan conflict post a Kashmir terror attack, resulting in a ceasefire under Modi's oversight, underscoring ongoing security challenges.



On a personal level, Modi's life remains austere and disciplined, reflecting his RSS roots. He sleeps just four to five hours nightly, starts days with yoga and meditation, and follows a vegetarian diet heavy on fruits, khichdi, and herbal teas. Fitness is paramount; he practices pranayama and walks briskly, crediting these for sustaining his rigorous schedule. Hobbies include photography and writing; he authored books like "Jyotipunj" on inspirational leaders. Modi rarely discusses his family, maintaining distance from siblings while honoring his late mother Heeraben, who passed away in 2022. His estranged marriage underscores a life devoted to nation-building over personal ties.

At 75, Modi's legacy is a tapestry of progress and polarization. Supporters laud him for lifting 250 million out of multidimensional poverty, per NITI Aayog, and propelling India toward a \$5 trillion economy by 2027. Critics decried a shift toward Hindu majoritarianism, with reports of rising communal incidents and press freedom declines. Globally, Modi is a towering figure, ranked among the world's most powerful leaders, yet his personalized diplomacy highlights vulnerabilities. As birthday greetings flood in from leaders like Netanyahu and Tobgay, and the BJP's Sewa Pakhwada launches welfare drives, Modi vows continued service. Whether steering India through geopolitical perils or domestic reforms, his next years will test if the "Vikas Purush" can bridge divides while sustaining growth. In a nation of 1.4 billion, Modi's story remains India's story: one of aspiration, achievement, and unresolved tensions.

Global community must ensure LeT, JeM, no longer exploit Afghan territory for terror activities: India

India is closely monitoring the security situation in Afghanistan

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 18: India has called on the international community to ensure UN-designated terror entities, including Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, as well as their facilitators, no longer exploit Afghan territory for terrorist activities.

"India is closely monitoring the security situation in Afghanistan," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathani Harish said on Wednesday.

"The international community must coordinate efforts towards ensuring that entities and individuals designated by the UN Security Council, ISIL and Al Qaeda and their affiliates, including Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, along with those who facilitate their operations, no longer exploit the Afghan territory for terrorist activities," he said, in an apparent reference to Pakistan.

Harish, delivering a statement at the UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan, said that India and Afghanistan share a civilisational relationship and Delhi has a "paramount interest" in ensuring peace and stability in the war-torn country.

"We believe in the utmost im-



portance of international and regional consensus and cooperation on key issues concerning Afghanistan and actively engage with all relevant parties to promote peace, stability and development in the country. Our participation in UN meetings in Doha and other regional forums reflects our efforts," he said.

Harish told the Council that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has spoken twice with the Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Amir Khan Muttaqi. India also welcomed the strong condemnation by the Afghan side of the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist

attack. India further stressed that any coherent policy to address a post-conflict situation must combine incentivising positive behaviour and disincentivising harmful actions.

"Focusing only on punitive measures is unlikely to meet desired results. The United Nations and the international community has adopted more nuanced approaches in other post-conflict contexts. Afghanistan needs a fresh approach with hitherto unused policy instruments to support its people who are in such dire need," Harish said.

He stressed that a "business as

usual" approach is only expected to maintain the status quo, which is not good for Afghanistan and unlikely to meet international community expectations for Afghanistan's people.

"After more than four years of living under a sanctioned regime, the Afghan people have not seen much scope for enhanced development assistance and cooperation," he said.

As the country recovers from last month's devastating earthquake, Harish said it is time for compassion and lending a helping hand to millions of Afghans suffering under the yoke of poverty, disease and hunger.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, India was among the first countries to provide humanitarian assistance, immediately delivering 1,000 family tents and 15 tonnes of food supplies to the affected provinces of Afghanistan.

An additional 21 tonnes of relief materials, including essential medicines, hygiene kits, blankets and generators, were dispatched. More relief supplies are underway and will be delivered in the coming days, Harish said.

He added that this humanitarian assistance dovetails with India's support since August 2021, when

the Taliban took over Kabul. At that time, India supplied around 50,000 tonnes of wheat, over 330 tonnes of medicines and vaccines, 40,000 litres of pesticides and other essential social support items for millions of Afghans in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

In partnership with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, India has provided 84 MTs of assistance and medicines and 32 MTs of social support items for drug rehabilitation programmes, particularly those focused on women.

Reiterating that India's commitment to meeting the developmental needs of the Afghan people is "non-negotiable," Harish said New Delhi's immediate priorities in Afghanistan include the provision of humanitarian assistance and the implementation of capacity-building initiatives for the Afghan people.

India's commitment to Afghanistan's reconstruction is demonstrated through more than 500 development partnership projects across all provinces, he said.

He said India will continue to engage with all relevant stakeholders and broadly support the international community's efforts towards a stable, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. (PTI)

US-UK trade, investment in focus for Trump-Starmer talks at Chequers

LONDON, Sept 18: King Charles III bid farewell to Donald Trump at the conclusion of the royal pomp and pageantry aspect of the US President's State Visit on Thursday morning, when his Marine One helicopter flew him to Chequers for bilateral talks with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Trump was greeted with a guard of honour at Starmer's country residence in Buckinghamshire before their dialogue, which is expected to focus on bilateral investment ties as they "refine" the trade deal struck between both sides earlier this year.

The Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas conflicts and other strategic issues are also expected to be on the agenda of the world leaders.

"The bond of kinship and identity between America and the United Kingdom is priceless and eternal. It's irreplaceable and unbreakable," Trump said in his address at the lavish State Banquet laid out at Windsor Castle on Wednesday evening.

"Seen from American eyes, the word special does not begin to do it justice," he said, referencing the US-UK "special relationship".

The King hosted the US President at his castle, which has been home to British monarchs for almost 1,000 years, for a historic second State Visit — the first hosted by his late mother Queen Elizabeth II six years ago.

"This unique and important occasion reflects the enduring bond between our two great nations. Anchored by the deep friendship between our people, this relationship which, with good reason, we and our predecessors have long called special, has made us safer and stronger through the generations," said Charles, in his address.

The King also had Trump nodding along on the subject of climate action: "In striving for a better world, we also have a precious opportunity to safeguard and to restore the wonders and beauty of nature for the generations who follow us.

"We share the ambition, and determination, to preserve our majestic lands and waters; above all, to ensure that we have clean water,

clean air and clean food."

At the business end of the State Visit, Downing Street announced that the UK has secured a "historic" GBP 150 billion of inward investment from US companies, expected to create more than 7,600 jobs and accelerate growth in sectors of the future.

"When we back British brilliance, champion our world-class industries, and forge deeper global alliances — especially with friends like the US — we help shape the future for generations to come and make people across the country better off," Starmer said in a statement ahead of his talks.

"These investments are a testament to Britain's economic strength and a bold signal that our country is open, ambitious, and ready to lead. Jobs, growth and opportunity is what I promised for working people, and it's exactly what this State Visit is delivering," he said.

The US inward investment package covers a range of sectors, from aerospace and defence to tech and Research and Development. At the outward end, UK companies such as pharmaceutical giant GSK and energy major BP also announced significant commitments to invest in the US market.

Beyond the pomp and ceremony of carriage processions and gala banquets, hundreds also took to the streets for a protest organised by Stop Trump Coalition — a group of around 50 unions and charities.

The Metropolitan Police estimated that around 5,000 protesters had marched in London on Wednesday, waving placards that read "no to racism, no to Trump" and "stop arming Israel", with some also carrying orange coloured Trump baby blimps or balloons. Meanwhile, four men arrested for projecting images of Trump and convicted American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein onto the Windsor Castle walls on Tuesday night have been released on conditional bail. Thames Valley Police said they continue to be investigated for a number of possible offences, including malicious communications and public nuisance. (PTI)

Taliban internet ban spreads across Afghanistan as more provinces are shut down



JALALABAD, Sept 18: A Taliban crackdown to "prevent immorality" is spreading across Afghanistan, with more provinces losing access to fibre-optic internet after the country's leader imposed a complete ban on the technology. It's the first time a ban of this kind has been imposed since the Taliban seized power in August 2021, and leaves government offices, the private sector, public institutions, and homes without Wi-Fi internet. Mobile internet remains functional, however. Officials say alternatives are being found "for necessities." The north-

ern Balkh province confirmed a Wi-Fi shutdown on Tuesday, with reports of severe disruption in other parts of the country. On Thursday, officials in the east and north said internet access was cut off in the provinces of Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Nangarhar, and Takhar. Siddiquallah Quraishi, from the Nangarhar Culture Directorate, confirmed the shutdown to The Associated Press. The governor's office in Kunduz shared a message in an official WhatsApp group. The Afghanistan Media Support Organisation condemned the ban and expressed its concern. "This action, carried out on the orders of the Taliban's leader, not only disrupts millions of citizens' access to free information and essential services but also poses a grave threat to freedom of expression and the work of the media," it said. (AP)

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia ink defence pact for joint action against 'aggression'

ISLAMABAD, Sept 18: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a "strategic mutual defence" agreement, which declares that any attack on either country will be considered "an aggression against both".

The agreement was signed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Wednesday during the Pakistani leader's day-long visit to the Gulf Kingdom, according to a joint statement.

The deal comes days after an Israeli attack on the Hamas leadership in Qatar, a key US ally in the Gulf region.

The Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement states that "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both," according to the joint statement.

"This agreement, which reflects the shared commitment of both nations to enhance their security and to achieving security and peace in the region and the world, aims to develop aspects of defence cooperation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence against any aggression," it added.

Commenting on the development, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal in New Delhi on Thursday said India will study the implications of the move for its national security as well as for regional and global stability.

In a carefully crafted response to a media query on the issue, Jaiswal said New Delhi remains committed to protecting India's national interests and ensuring "compre-

hensive national security in all domains".

The sealing of the pact came over four months after a four-day military conflict between India and Pakistan.

According to the Pakistan-Saudi joint statement, the pact builds on the historic partnership extending for nearly eight decades between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and is based on the bonds of brotherhood and Islamic solidarity, as well as shared strategic interests and close defence cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides also reviewed the historic and strategic relations between both countries and several topics of common interest.

In a post on social media, Sharif on Thursday said their talks "covered a wide range of issues, reviewing regional challenges and enhancing bilateral cooperation".

Sharif also said that he greatly values the Saudi Crown Prince's "consistent support and his keen interest in expanding Saudi investments, trade and business ties between our two countries".

Ahead of the prime minister's visit to the oil-rich kingdom, the Foreign Office had said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy a historic relationship, rooted in shared faith, values and mutual trust, and the visit will provide an important opportunity to the two leaders to consolidate this unique partnership, while exploring new avenues of collaboration, for the benefit of the peoples of the two countries. This was Sharif's third visit to the Gulf region within a week. (PTI)

ABC suspends Jimmy Kimmel's late-night show indefinitely over his remarks about Charlie Kirk's death

NEW YORK, Sept 18: ABC suspended Jimmy Kimmel's late-night show indefinitely beginning Wednesday after comments that he made about Charlie Kirk's killing led a group of ABC-affiliated stations to say it would not air the show.

Kimmel, the veteran late-night comic, made several comments about the reaction to Kirk's assassination on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" Monday and Tuesday nights, including that "many in MAGA land are working very hard to capitalise on the murder of Charlie Kirk."

ABC, which has aired Kimmel's late-night show since 2003, moved swiftly after Nexstar Communications Group said it would pull the show starting Wednesday. Kimmel's comments about Kirk's death "are offensive and insensitive at a critical time in our national political discourse," said Andrew Alford, president of Nexstar's broadcasting division. Nexstar operates 23 ABC affiliates.

There was no immediate comment from Kimmel, whose contract is up in May 2026. ABC's statement did not cite a reason for why his show was preempted.

President Donald Trump celebrated ABC's move on the social media site Truth Social, writing: "Congratulations to ABC for finally having the courage to do what had to be done."

He also targeted two other late-night hosts, Jimmy Fallon and Seth Meyers, and said they should be cancelled too, calling them "two total losers."

In July, after CBS cancelled

"The Late Show With Stephen Colbert," Trump wrote on his social media platform: "I absolutely love that Colbert got fired. His talent was even less than his ratings. I hear Jimmy Kimmel is next. Has even less talent than Colbert!" Like Colbert, Kimmel has been consistently been critical of Trump and many of his policies.

In his monologue on Monday, Kimmel said that "we hit some new lows over the weekend with the MAGA gang desperately trying to characterise this kid who murdered Charlie Kirk as anything other than one of them and doing everything they can to score political points from it."

Authorities say Tyler Robinson, 22, who is charged with killing Kirk, grew up in a conservative household in southern Utah but was emmeshed in "leftist ideology." His parents told investigators he had turned politically left and pro-LGBTQ rights in the last year.

Utah records show he was registered as a voter, but not affiliated with either political party. His voter status is inactive, meaning he did not vote in two regular general elections. He told his transgender partner that he targeted Kirk because he "had enough of his hatred."

An audience was lined up outside the theater where "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" tapes when they were told Wednesday's show was cancelled.

"We were just about to walk in — interestingly enough, they waited to pull the plug on this right as the studio audience was about to walk in," Tommy Williams, a

would-be audience member from Jacksonville, Florida, told The Associated Press outside the theater. "They didn't tell us what had happened. They just said that the show was cancelled."

Williams said he was worried someone had been injured — until he saw that ABC had announced nearly at the same time online that the preemption was indefinite. Williams hadn't been aware of Kimmel's comments on Kirk, but sought them out after the announcement.

"They didn't really seem to justify the means. It seemed to be a bit extreme. And it wasn't like insulting to, it really had nothing to do with Charlie Kirk at all. He didn't even mention anything ill about Charlie Kirk — it was about the shooter," Williams said.

Kimmel said that Trump's response to Kirk's death "is not how an adult grieves the murder of someone he called a friend. This is how a 4-year-old mourns a goldfish, OK?" He also said that FBI chief Kash Patel has handled the investigation into the killing "like a kid who didn't read the book, BSing his way through an oral report." He returned to the topic on Tuesday night, mocking Vice President JD Vance's performance as guest host for Kirk's podcast. He said Trump was "fanning the flames" by attacking people on the left. "Which is it, are they a bunch of sissy pickleball players because they're too scared to be hit by tennis balls, or a well-organized deadly team of commandos, because they can't be both of those things." (AP)

China's defence minister criticises regional groupings as 'small circles for hegemony'



BEIJING, Sept 18: China's Defence Minister Dong Jun on Thursday described the formation of regional alliances as "small circles for hegemony" as he vowed that the Chinese military will not tolerate any foreign interference to integrate Taiwan with the mainland.

Speaking at the 12th Beijing Xi'an Forum, a security dialogue modelled on Singapore's Shangri-La dialogue to discuss global security issues, Dong hit out at the formation of the regional groupings, in a veiled attack on Quad and AUKUS.

China has been consistently attacking Quad, the quadrilateral alliance consisting of the US, India, Japan and Australia, and trilateral AUKUS, comprising Australia, the UK and the US, saying that the groupings were aimed at containing its rise.

The Asia-Pacific regional blocs and military alliances are "small circles for hegemony," Dong said, projecting China's "non-alignment

policy" as a model for inclusive, cooperative security partnerships, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

On Taiwan, which China claims as part of its mainland, Dong said, "Taiwan's return is an integral part of the post-war order."

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) would "never allow any separatist plot to succeed" or tolerate foreign military interference, he said.

He also criticised the outside powers interfering in the South China Sea dispute in the name of freedom of navigation.

While pledging to accelerate talks on a binding Code of Conduct with ASEAN countries on the South China Sea dispute, he criticised "extra-regional powers" for using "freedom of navigation" to provoke, and said safeguarding China's maritime rights was a defence of the post-war order and international law.

China claims most of the South China Sea. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims.

Playing down concerns over Beijing's growing military capabilities, Dong framed China's military power as a stabilising "ballast" to deter war and support shared development, positioning the PLA as

a force for "peace, stability and progress".

He said the Chinese military is willing to work with all parties to uphold security with concrete actions, enhance military mutual trust, step up multilateral coordination, and promote high-quality and efficient cooperation while improving related mechanisms.

Noting that this year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, Dong emphasised the need to uphold a correct view on World War II, safeguard historical justice, and foster the widest possible consensus. The Chinese military stands ready to work with all parties to defend sovereign equality, uphold the post-war international order, bolster multilateralism, protect common interests, and jointly advance reforms to improve the global governance system, he said.

Under the theme "Upholding International Order and Promoting Peaceful Development," the forum pools together more than 1,800 official representatives, scholars and observers from over 100 countries, regions and international organisations. It runs from Sept. 17 to 19, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. (PTI)

'This is an important first step to securing our borders' Indian national first to be deported from UK under new illegal migration scheme

LONDON, Sept 18: An Indian national who reportedly arrived in the UK illegally on a small boat across the English Channel became the first to be deported to France under a new treaty on Thursday.

The unnamed man who is said to have arrived in early August has been flown out to Paris on a commercial flight from Heathrow Airport under the so-called "one-in, one-out" deal struck recently as part of a UK-France returns treaty.

UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood dubbed it an "important first step" in the government's attempt to clamp down on soaring illegal migration perpetuated by people smugglers across the Channel.

"This is an important first step to securing our borders. It sends a message to people crossing in small boats: if you enter the UK illegally, we will seek to remove you," said Mahmood.

"I will continue to challenge any last-minute, vexatious attempts to frustrate a removal in the courts. The UK will always play its part in helping those genuinely fleeing persecution, but this must be done through safe, legal, and managed routes — not dangerous crossings," she said.



Home Office sources confirmed that the deported man was an Indian national, who is expected to be offered a paid-for voluntary return to his home country once back in France. He would not be able to apply for asylum and could go on to face enforced deportation if he did not take up the voluntary scheme.

The development came after official Home Office figures released in August claimed that Indian nationals in detention as part of the

tations are planned on flights in the coming days, the first arrivals from France through the new asylum route under the reciprocal scheme are expected in the UK in the coming days, the Home Office said.

It said the new scheme enables the UK authorities to detain and remove people who enter illegally via small boats, blocking their access to the country's asylum system in an effort to reduce the burden on hotel accommodation.

In return, the UK will accept an equal number of migrants through a newly established safe and legal route, subject to what the Home Office termed as "rigorous documentation, eligibility, and security checks".

"The Home Secretary has made clear that the Home Office will robustly defend legal challenges to removal. Today we will lodge an appeal to the Court of Appeal to limit the time the person has to provide evidence for reconsideration," the Home Office said.

It claims over 35,000 individuals with no legal right to remain in the UK have been returned in the past year, with returns of foreign criminals and asylum-related returns rising by 14 per cent and 28 per cent respectively. (PTI)

Arunachal conducts mega statewide disaster mock drill

Mock exercise conducted under guidance of the National Disaster Management Authority



ITANAGAR, Sept 18: Arunachal Pradesh Principal Secretary (Home) Kaling Tayeng on Thursday emphasised the importance of regularly updating the roles and responsibilities of Incident Response Team (IRT) members to ensure effective disaster management.

His remarks came during the state's annual monsoon preparedness meeting, which coincided with a state-level mega mock exercise on disaster preparedness conducted across districts.

Tayeng, who was present at the exercise conducted here, urged the district Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) to review and update their respective dis-

trict disaster management plans (DDMPs) to enhance response capabilities.

He also highlighted the critical role of communication systems during emergencies, directing the telecom department, in coordination with the department of disaster management, to identify and secure critical telecom assets across districts and ensure uninterrupted power supply to vital communication infrastructure.

The mock exercise was conducted under the guidance of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and organised by the Arunachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Au-

thority (APSDMA), an official release said.

NDMA lead consultant Maj Gen (Retd) Sudhir Bahl coordinated the drill, which was held under the supervision of state disaster management secretary Dani Salu.

The simulation assumed a powerful 7.7 magnitude earthquake with its epicentre at 27.280°N and 93.600°E, about 40.8 km northeast of Itanagar Capital Region, 51 km southeast of Ziro, and 103 km east of Seppa, at a focal depth of 26 km.

In the morning, a siren signalled the start of the drill, activating the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) and all district emergency

operation centres (DEOCs) to operate round-the-clock.

The Incident Response System (IRS) was also activated, and functional healthcare facilities were placed on high alert to prepare for mass casualty management.

Public advisories urged citizens to remain calm and stay in safe locations, with emergency helpline numbers widely disseminated.

Simultaneously, SDMA reviewed the availability of food and essential supplies with the Food and Civil Supplies department, while preparedness levels of other stakeholder departments were assessed.

Ahead of the field exercise, a table-top session was conducted on Wednesday, where roles of the incident response teams were clearly defined.

Maj Gen Bahl highlighted existing gaps and suggested actionable solutions to strengthen readiness.

Following the mega mock, a debriefing session was held where observations, strengths, and areas for improvement were discussed.

The secretary expressed appreciation for the active participation of all stakeholders and reaffirmed the state government's commitment to building a resilient disaster management system in the state.

The exercise witnessed participation from all DDMAs, personnel from the Indian Army, CISF, ITBP, BRO, NDRF, SDRF, NCC, and other key stakeholders. (PTI)

APWWS seeks action after schoolgirls protest lack of teachers



ITANAGAR, Sept 18: The Arunachal Pradesh Women's Welfare Society (APWWS) on Thursday voiced concern over the protest staged by schoolgirls of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in Pakke Kessang district, where students demonstrated against the prolonged absence of two subject teachers that has disrupted their studies.

At least 90 students from the school recently marched around 65 km to highlight the alleged acute shortage of teachers in their institute.

The students, in blue school uniform, embarked on a foot march from Nyangko village on September 14, walked the entire night and reached the district headquarters,

Lemmi, the next morning.

Led by students of classes 11 and 12, the protestors demanded immediate posting of teachers in geography and political science.

Calling the situation a serious setback to the girls' education, the APWWS has urged the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (AP-SCPCR) to constitute an independent fact-finding committee, a statement said here on Thursday.

APWWS said the rights panel should investigate the ground realities that triggered the protest and recommend measures to address the students' grievances.

The society also cautioned the state education department against

hasty punitive measures such as suspending the headmistress and warden, warning that such steps could create fear and tension in the school.

Instead, it pressed for an empathetic and informed approach that safeguards the emotional and academic well-being of the students.

The APWWS further appealed to the department to give priority to filling vacancies, ensuring proper staffing, and establishing transparent grievance redressal mechanisms.

According to the society, these steps are vital to uphold students' rights and welfare and to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. (PTI)

'Denam A:nam Pasighat Abhiyan' launched to mark Swachh Utsav

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, Sept 18: Pasighat marked Swachhata Hi Seva Diwas on Wednesday with the launch of a comprehensive cleanliness drive under the banner of 'Denam A:nam Pasighat Abhiyan' (Swachh Pasighat Abhiyan) at Gandhi Chowk in the town's main market area.

The campaign was formally inaugurated by Pasighat MLA Tapi Darang, East Siang deputy commissioner Sonalika Jiwani, and chief councillor of Pasighat Municipal Council (PMC) Okiam Moyong Borang, in the presence of officials, local organisations, and community members.

The initiative, spearheaded by the PMC in collaboration with the East Siang district administration under the deputy commissioner's leadership, seeks to transform Pasighat into a Zero Waste Municipal City.

Covering all eight wards under PMC, the campaign aims to achieve a green and clean Pasighat through a mix of citizen participation, sustained awareness programmes, and community responsibility in waste management.

Adding a youthful dimension to the programme, YouTuber, actor, and social media influencer James Libang was roped in as the Swachhata Ambassador for East Siang district under the 'Denam A:nam Pasighat' campaign.

His participation was seen as a step towards mobilising young people and amplifying the message of cleanliness through digital platforms.

Addressing the gathering, PMC Municipal Executive Officer Jayanti Pertin highlighted the key features of the campaign.

She said the mission would not only focus on routine cleaning but also emphasise waste segregation at the source, awareness of dry and wet waste management, door-to-door garbage collection, and discouraging public littering.

The programme also saw the flagging off of a Swachhata Vahan, designed to collect and recycle waste, as part of the Smart Waste Challenge implemented by local NGO Green Squad. Participants, including members of NGOs, self-help groups, government departments, traders, and residents, took a Swachhata Pledge reaffirming their commitment to a clean and green Pasighat.

According to officials, the campaign will adopt a holistic approach to waste management by targeting specific areas for cleaning and conversion into green zones, promoting alternatives to single-use plastic, and ensuring active citizen involvement.

"The aim is not only to maintain visible cleanliness but also to inculcate responsible waste practices among the people of Pasighat," the organisers said.

With the combined efforts of civic authorities, the district administration, and community participation, the 'Denam A:nam Pasighat Abhiyan' is expected to serve as a model cleanliness campaign in Arunachal Pradesh under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM-Urban) framework.

Swasth Nari Sasakth Parivar Abhiyan launched at Pasighat



HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, Sept 18: Pasighat joined the rest of the country on Wednesday in rolling out the Swasth Nari Sasakth Parivar Abhiyan, a nationwide campaign aimed at empowering women through health awareness and strengthening families through better healthcare practices.

The district-level programme was formally launched at Bakin Pertin General Hospital (BPGH), Pasighat, with a ceremonial lamp lighting that marked the beginning of the initiative.

The campaign was inaugurated by MLA Tapi Darang (38th East Pasighat Constituency) in the presence of Dr Yagling Perme, District Medical Officer (DMO), Pasighat,

and Dr Talung Tali, Joint Director of Health Services, BPGH Pasighat, alongside doctors, nurses, and medical staff.

The event drew wide participation from community leaders and public representatives.

Chief councillor of Pasighat Municipal Council, Okiam Moyong Borang, Miti Megu Perme, president of Adi Bane Ane Kebang, and Olik Tapok Taloh, ZPM Upper Legong-Banggo, were among the prominent attendees.

Members of the BJP Mahila Morcha, East Siang District Wing, as well as large numbers of citizens, also joined the programme, reflecting strong community involvement.

Speaking at the launch, officials

emphasised that the Swasth Nari Sasakth Parivar Abhiyan is designed to promote the well-being of women as a cornerstone for healthier families and stronger communities.

Medical experts underscored the importance of regular health check-ups, nutrition awareness, and preventive healthcare measures, particularly for women, who play a vital role in family and societal development.

The campaign will include a series of activities such as health screenings, awareness camps, and outreach programmes to educate women about reproductive health, maternal care, and lifestyle-related diseases. By involving civic leaders, women's organisations, and healthcare providers, the mission aims to ensure that the benefits of the campaign reach every section of society.

With its official launch at Pasighat, authorities expressed confidence that the programme will help address gaps in women's health awareness and contribute to building a healthier and more empowered society in East Siang district.

Namsai District Hospital initiates probe into nurse misconduct incident

HT Bureau

NAMSAI, Sept 18: The Namsai District Hospital has initiated an inquiry into an incident of alleged misconduct by a nurse towards a patient's family members, after reports surfaced of unprofessional behaviour inside the hospital ward.

According to accounts, the incident occurred when the husband and sister of a patient visited her in the ward. The nurse on duty allegedly scolded and shouted at them repeatedly, causing a disturbance.

While hospital protocols mandate limiting visitors to ensure patient care, witnesses said the manner of handling the situation was harsh and unnecessary.

Matters escalated further when the patient's husband, who had reportedly remained calm and compliant, was rudely asked to leave after he returned briefly to ask his wife an important question. The hospital administration has acknowledged the seriousness of the matter. In a statement, officials said that while the public has extended strong support to healthcare professionals in the wake of the recent incident at Itanagar, misconduct by staff cannot be condoned under any circumstances.

"Every individual, regardless of their role, deserves to be treated with respect and dignity," the statement read. Hospital authorities confirmed that an internal investigation is underway and assured that appropriate action will be taken against the staff member concerned if the allegations are proven. The administration further stated that measures are being introduced to prevent such incidents in the future, including staff retraining on professional conduct and patient-family communication protocols.

Officials reiterated the hospital's commitment to maintaining a respectful, compassionate, and patient-friendly environment, stressing that healthcare delivery must go hand-in-hand with dignity and empathy for patients and their families.

KGBV headmistress, warden placed under suspension by Education dept

ITANAGAR, Sept 18: The Education department has placed the headmistress and hostel warden of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) Nangnyo, under suspension with immediate effect till further order.

Education commissioner Amjad Tak, in an order, placed headmistress Nyayir Riba and warden Tummi Chisi under suspension.

On September 14, around 90 girl students from the school, without obtaining prior consent from the competent authority, marched towards Pakke Kessang district HQs, Lemmi, covering a distance of 65 kilometres, to highlight the acute shortage of teachers in the school.

The students reached Lemmi on September 15 morning.

Later that day, the deputy director of school education arranged two vehicles to transport the students back to the hostel. (PTI)

COAS seeks faster land acquisition, more youth enlistment

ITANAGAR, Sept 18: Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi on Thursday stressed the need for expediting land acquisition in Arunachal Pradesh to ensure the timely execution of essential defence infrastructure projects.

Gen Dwivedi, who called on state Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik (Retd) at Raj Bhavan here, during his meeting, also called for the establishment of Zilla Sainik Boards in the state to provide vital support to ex-servicemen and their families.

The COAS expressed concern over the relatively low participation of Arunachali youth in the armed forces.

He urged for more awareness and guidance to encourage young people from the state to pursue careers in defence services, a Raj Bhavan statement said.

Responding to the COAS's concerns, Parnaik emphasised a collaborative, people-centric approach to implementing the Vibrant Village Programme. He said the success of the initiative hinges on the joint efforts of the government, local communities, and security forces.

The governor lauded the Army's engagement with border residents, observing that its strong presence and community connect can transform remote villages into centres of growth, opportunity, and national pride. (PTI)

APLA@50 Outreach Connect reaches Ziro

Outreach engages over 700 students in landmark golden jubilee programme

HT Correspondent
ZIRO, Sept 18: The golden jubilee celebrations of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly (APLA) reached a new milestone as the APLA@50 Outreach Connect Programme advanced into its second phase with an event hosted at Saint Clare College (Autonomous), Ziro.

The fifth edition of this first-of-its-kind initiative witnessed an overwhelming participation of more than 700 students from Saint Clare College and Neelam Taram Government College, Yachuli, underlining the Assembly's resolve to strengthen its bond with the youth of the state.

Designed to make students active stakeholders in the democratic journey of Arunachal Pradesh, the programme combined intellectual engagement with awareness of the Assembly's 50-year legacy.

The event opened with a debate on the motion "Adopting a Uniform Civil Code ensures equal rights for all and strengthens national unity," which saw spirited arguments from both sides.

Students displayed remarkable clarity, logical reasoning, and civic awareness, impressing the audience and dignitaries alike with their preparation and ability to marshal facts.

The second session of the programme shifted focus towards sensitising partici-



pants about the Assembly's golden jubilee journey.

Dr Saurav Mitra, assistant professor, Centre for Distance and Online Education, Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), explained that the outreach initiative seeks to instil a sense of belonging among the youth, reminding them that they are not passive bystanders but active contributors to the functioning and future of the legislature.

The event began with a welcome address by Allwyn Mendoz, principal of Saint Clare College, who greeted the dig-

nitaries and said the presence of eminent personalities had elevated the significance of the programme.

A ceremonial felicitation of guests followed.

Dr N T Rikam, Registrar of RGU, lauded the college for mobilising such a large gathering of students and described it as a benchmark for youth engagement.

He urged young learners to focus on new avenues of development, pointing out that innovation and progress were essential for Arunachal Pradesh to realise its full potential.

In her keynote address, Dr Topi Basar, associate professor, Department of Law, RGU, spoke on the constitutional dimensions of Fundamental Rights and the moral obligations tied to Fundamental Duties.

Stressing that no right is absolute, she urged students to keep truth at the centre of their civic life.

Citing her own practice, she said, "I read the Constitution every day, and you should do the same," reminding students that true citizenship lies in giving back to society.

The occasion was further enriched by the words of two legislators.

MLA Toko Tatung (16th Yachuli Constituency) called upon the youth to safeguard democracy and preserve Arunachal's cultural and agricultural traditions, which he said continued to prove their enduring relevance.

Stressing that the Constitution begins with "We the People," he reminded students that citizens are the greatest asset of any state.

MLA Hage Appa (17th Ziro-Hapoli Constituency) urged students to recognise themselves as future leaders whose ability to balance rights and duties would shape the state's democratic development.

He traced the journey of the Assembly from its inception in 1975 to its present golden jubilee year, calling it an inspiring story of growth and resilience.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Bijum Yomcha, under secretary, APLA, who expressed gratitude to dignitaries, organisers, and students for their enthusiastic participation.

Debate winners were felicitated with trophies, adding a celebratory note to the day.

The APLA@50 Outreach Connect Programme will continue with its upcoming editions at Government Model College, Basar, on September 19, 2025.

Rahul stands for 'infiltrators first' politics, seeks to stoke chaos: BJP

'It is the Congress which misused the EC'

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: The BJP on Thursday claimed that Rahul Gandhi's repeated allegations against constitutional institutions such as the Election Commission showed his lack of faith in democracy, and accused him of trying to stoke chaos and create in India the kind of unrest seen in Nepal and Bangladesh.

Former Union minister Anurag Thakur said "infiltrators first politics" is the sole agenda of Gandhi, alleging that the Congress leader may be speaking of the interests of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) but his bid to shield illegal voters by opposing the Election Commission's (EC's) review of electoral rolls will harm the interest of these communities.

The BJP's counterattack on Gandhi followed another presentation by him to the media, in which he sought to substantiate his allegation of "vote chori" against the poll watchdog.

Gandhi accused Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of protecting "vote chors" and people who have destroyed democracy, and cited data from Aland, an assembly seat in Karnataka, to claim that votes of Congress supporters were being systematically deleted ahead of elections.

The EC rejected the charge, "Allegations made by Rahul Gandhi are incorrect and baseless. No



deletion of any vote can be done online by any member of the public, as misconceived by Gandhi."

With the EC acknowledging that "certain unsuccessful attempts" were made for the deletion of electors in Aland in 2023, Thakur said an FIR was filed by the poll authority itself to investigate the matter.

The EC has shared the mobile number and IP details with the CID of the Congress-ruled Karnataka, he added, slamming the police for lack of action in the probe.

Thakur, a five-term Lok Sabha MP of the BJP and former Union minister, asserted that Gandhi was shying away from filing an affidavit, as asked by the EC, or from moving the court as his claims were not substantiated. The Congress leader had to eat humble pie

on previous occasions when he moved courts against the government, alleging corruption in the Rafale deal, he added.

It is due to this fear that Gandhi is not moving the court on this issue, he claimed.

Defending the EC and hitting back at the Congress, he cited the association with the opposition party of past chief election commissioners (CECs) like M S Gill, who became a minister in the UPA government, and T N Seshan, who fought Lok Sabha polls on its ticket.

He recalled how the then UPA government went on to appoint Navin Chawla as CEC in 2009 despite a damning letter against his elevation from the outgoing CEC N Gopalaswami. Chawla was accused of leaking classified and sensitive information, he noted.

when they had alleged that we were out to scrap reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs."

"Have the quotas for SCs, STs and OBCs been tinkered with? I can assure you that as long as there is even one BJP member in Parliament, reservations cannot be scrapped," said Shah.

The remarks may be seen in the backdrop of attempts by the BJP, traditionally seen as "a party of the upper castes", to reach out to the numerically powerful deprived castes.

Shah began his more-than-20-minute-long speech by recalling a conversation he had with a journalist earlier in the day over the telephone.

"I was asked why I was holding a workers' conclave instead of a rally where the common people could come? I replied that this is because, unlike the other parties, which depend on leaders for winning elections, ours is a workers-driven organisation," he said.

Shah said it is only in the BJP that a grassroots worker can aspire to rise to the top.

"I had myself started off as a booth-level worker and went on to become the national president," he said. The workers present at the conclave were drawn from 10 districts of the Magadh-Shahabad region. Shah noted with concern that the NDA's performance in the last assembly polls was "not up to the mark" and exhorted the party workers to ensure "an 80 per cent strike rate for ourselves as well as our alliance partners".

Calling upon the party workers to ensure the victory of the NDA, led in the state by Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar, Shah also underscored that Bihar had reaped "the maximum benefits" of schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, like the Ayushman Bharat Yojana and the Jan Dhan bank accounts. (PTI)

It is the Congress which misused the EC. When it (EC) is working in an impartial manner now, Rahul Gandhi is repeatedly trying to weaken the Indian democracy and mislead people. He seeks to create the kind of situation in the country which we have seen in Bangladesh and Nepal," he added.

After Gandhi said it was not his job to protect democracy but he had stepped in as institutions tasked with the responsibility were not doing so, Thakur said the Congress leader had dropped a hydrogen bomb on himself and asked if he was working to destroy democracy.

The Congress leader has been repeatedly questioning poll results by attacking EVMs sometimes or targeting the EC as his frustration has been rising over the Congress' repeated defeats in elections on his watch, he said, adding that the politics of allegations has become an ornament for him.

In Aland, Thakur noted, it was the Congress candidate who won, and asked if it was a result of "vote chori".

In this context, he also mentioned a recent Karnataka High Court's decision to set aside the election of Congress legislator K Y Nanjengowda from Malur constituency and order a recount of votes polled in the 2023 assembly elections. (PTI)

One person has been killed, 11 people are feared trapped under debris and 20 have been injured as landslides and flooding triggered by heavy rain flattened more than 30 houses in four villages of Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Thursday.

One body was recovered from the debris, while three people -- two women and a child -- were rescued alive in Kuntari Lagaphali village, the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) in Dehradun said.

The deceased was identified as Narendra Singh (42), it said.

Eleven people -- seven from Kuntari Lagaphali and two each from Kuntari Lagasarpani and Dhurma -- are missing, the SEOC said.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami had told reporters earlier in Dehradun that 14 people were missing following the landslides.

All four affected villages come under the Nandanagar area, about 260 km from Dehradun and 50 km from the Chamoli district headquarters at Gopeshwar. Nandanagar is already reeling from land subsidence.

The disaster struck Kuntari Lagaphali, Kuntari Lagasarpani, Sera and Dhurma, Dhami told reporters after reviewing the situation.

"Thirty-three houses, several shops and cowsheds were destroyed by the debris in four villages -- Kuntari Lagaphali, Kuntari Lagasarpani, Sera and Dhurma -- fol-

One killed, 11 missing, three rescued after landslides, flooding hit Chamoli villages

GOPESHWAR (UKD), Sept 18:

One person has been killed, 11 people are feared trapped under debris and 20 have been injured as landslides and flooding triggered by heavy rain flattened more than 30 houses in four villages of Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Thursday.

One body was recovered from the debris, while three people -- two women and a child -- were rescued alive in Kuntari Lagaphali village, the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) in Dehradun said.

The deceased was identified as Narendra Singh (42), it said.

Eleven people -- seven from Kuntari Lagaphali and two each from Kuntari Lagasarpani and Dhurma -- are missing, the SEOC said.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami had told reporters earlier in Dehradun that 14 people were missing following the landslides.

All four affected villages come under the Nandanagar area, about 260 km from Dehradun and 50 km from the Chamoli district headquarters at Gopeshwar. Nandanagar is already reeling from land subsidence.

The disaster struck Kuntari Lagaphali, Kuntari Lagasarpani, Sera and Dhurma, Dhami told reporters after reviewing the situation.

"Thirty-three houses, several shops and cowsheds were destroyed by the debris in four villages -- Kuntari Lagaphali, Kuntari Lagasarpani, Sera and Dhurma -- fol-



lowing heavy rain. Fourteen people are missing and around 20 have been injured," he said.

More than 200 people have been affected in the rain-related incidents, he added.

Around 150 to 200 villagers in Kuntari Lagaphali have been moved to safe places, the SEOC said, adding that search-and-rescue operations are being conducted by the NDRF, SDRF, ITBP, police and fire brigade personnel in the villages under the supervision of the district magistrate and superintendent of police.

Those seriously injured, including a child who sustained head injuries, are being airlifted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rishikesh, Dhami said.

The chief minister took stock of the situation in Nandanagar by speaking to Chamoli District Magistrate (DM) Sandeep Tiwari via video-conferencing and asked him to accelerate the relief-and-rescue operations in the affected areas.

He directed officials to ensure immediate restoration of roads, drinking water supply, electricity and network connectivity in the areas affected by rain. Adequate arrangements should be made for shelter, food, clean drinking water and other essential amenities for the disaster-hit people, Dhami said.

Doctors and medicines should be made available in the affected areas to ensure prompt medical assistance, he said.

In the Moksha valley area, heavy rain triggered flooding in the Moksha river, causing erosion in it from Dhurma to Sera, damaging dozens of buildings, including at least six houses, according to officials.

Tiwari said at least eight people, including four members of a family, are missing in Kuntari Lagaphali, where the landslide hit about half-a-dozen houses. At least two persons are missing in Dhurma, where the raging waters of the Moksha river have damaged multiple buildings, the DM said. (PTI)

Tell Bihar voters that infiltration to be rampant if INDIA bloc comes to power: Shah to BJP workers

DEHRI-ON-SONE (BIHAR), Sept 18: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday asked BJP workers in Bihar to counter the INDIA bloc's "false narrative" of vote theft by cautioning the people that rampant "infiltration is likely" if the opposition coalition comes to power.

The former BJP president tore into the Congress, RJD, and the Left combine while addressing a saffron party workers' conclave here, about 50 km from the state capital, weeks ahead of the assembly elections.

Shah asked the cadre to aim at "not just a simple victory but a massive two-thirds majority" in the upcoming polls to the 243-strong Bihar assembly.

Referring to the "Voter Adhikar Yatra" of Rahul Gandhi, which concluded last month, Shah alleged, "You (BJP workers) know what was its aim? It was to protect infiltrators from Bangladesh."

"Should the infiltrators have the right to vote in our country? Should they have access to all the benefits that the citizens enjoy?," asked the home minister, evoking roars of a resounding "no" from the attendees.

Shah alleged, "Rahul baba and company want the infiltrators, who are their vote bank, to be given jobs meant for our youths, pucca houses and free medical treatment we provide our citizens with."

"You (BJP workers) must fan out across the state, visit every house, and tell the people that if they (INDIA bloc parties) come to power, even by fluke, every district in Bihar will be teeming with infiltrators," said Shah, widely regarded as the BJP's principal strategist.

He also termed as a "false narrative" Gandhi's allegation of vote theft, pointing out that "they (opposition parties) had taken recourse to similar tactics earlier

when they had alleged that we were out to scrap reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs."

"Have the quotas for SCs, STs and OBCs been tinkered with? I can assure you that as long as there is even one BJP member in Parliament, reservations cannot be scrapped," said Shah.

The remarks may be seen in the backdrop of attempts by the BJP, traditionally seen as "a party of the upper castes", to reach out to the numerically powerful deprived castes.

Shah began his more-than-20-minute-long speech by recalling a conversation he had with a journalist earlier in the day over the telephone.

"I was asked why I was holding a workers' conclave instead of a rally where the common people could come? I replied that this is because, unlike the other parties, which depend on leaders for winning elections, ours is a workers-driven organisation," he said.

Shah said it is only in the BJP that a grassroots worker can aspire to rise to the top.

"I had myself started off as a booth-level worker and went on to become the national president," he said. The workers present at the conclave were drawn from 10 districts of the Magadh-Shahabad region. Shah noted with concern that the NDA's performance in the last assembly polls was "not up to the mark" and exhorted the party workers to ensure "an 80 per cent strike rate for ourselves as well as our alliance partners".

Calling upon the party workers to ensure the victory of the NDA, led in the state by Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar, Shah also underscored that Bihar had reaped "the maximum benefits" of schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, like the Ayushman Bharat Yojana and the Jan Dhan bank accounts. (PTI)

CEC Kumar protecting 'vote chors', destroyers of democracy: Rahul

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: After his "vote theft"

charges, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday accused Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of protecting those who indulged in "vote chori" and "destroyed democracy" while citing data from a Karnataka assembly constituency to claim that votes of Congress voters were being systematically deleted in a targeted manner.

The Election Commission, however, dubbed the charges as "incorrect and baseless" and asserted that no deletion of votes can happen without giving an opportunity of being heard to the affected person.

The BJP said Gandhi's repeated charges against constitutional institutions showed his and the Congress' lack of faith in Indian democracy.

Mounting another frontal attack against the Election Commission, Gandhi said the poll panel must stop protecting "vote chors" and provide within a week information sought by the Karnataka CID in an investigation into voter deletions.

If not, it will be known for sure that it is complicit in the "murder of the Constitution", Gandhi alleged at a press conference at the Congress' Indira Bhawan headquarters here.

He also alleged that constitutional institutions are not doing their job properly and said the institutions within the country including the legal framework should step in.

Gandhi also made it clear at the outset that the revelations were not the "hydrogen bomb" that he had promised and he will soon reveal those details.

"I am going to make a serious claim about Gyanesh Kumar. I am not saying this lightly, I am the leader of the opposition. The CEC is protecting 'vote chors' and the people who have destroyed Indian democracy," Gandhi alleged.

"I am just creating the foundation. This has been going on for 10-15 years. India's democracy has been hijacked. Democracy can only be saved by the people of India. Rahul Gandhi can show the truth. The day the people realise that their democracy and Constitution have been stolen, the job will be done," he said.

The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha cited details of alleged attempts to delete 6,018 votes in Karnataka's Aland constituency in the run up to 2023 assembly polls. He also gave the example of Maharashtra's Rajura constituency where he claimed 6,850 voters were added in a "fraudulent" manner using automated software.



"Same system is doing this. It is doing it in Karnataka, Maharashtra, it has done it in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and we have proof of it," the Congress leader alleged.

"Our demand is Gyanesh Kumar, do your job, you have taken an oath, you are India's chief election commissioner, you must give evidence to the Karnataka CID," Gandhi said asking the EC to provide the details within a week.

Talking about the Aland example, Gandhi said there were targeted deletions in strong Congress booths.

"The top 10 booths with maximum deletions were Congress strongholds. Congress won eight out of the 10 booths in 2018. This was not a coincidence; this was a planned operation," he alleged.

He said his revelations today are another milestone in demonstrating to the youth of the country how elections in the country are being "rigged".

Someone has been systematically targeting millions of voters for deletion across India, Gandhi claimed, adding that some group of people have been systematically targeting millions of voters especially minorities and Dalits for deletion.

"I am the leader of the opposition and I will not say anything which is not backed by 100 per cent proof...I am someone who loves my country, I love my Constitution, I love the democratic process and I am protecting that process." He said in the Aland segment, someone tried to delete 6,018 votes and got caught "by coincidence", alleging that names of Congress voters were being deleted systematically.

"The booth-level officer noticed that her uncle's vote got deleted and found her neighbour had deleted the vote of her uncle. She asked her neighbour who said he had no idea.

It was found that some other force hijacked the process and deleted the vote -- and as luck would have it got caught," Gandhi said.

He claimed that 6,018 applications were filed impersonating voters and this filing was done automatically using mobile numbers from outside Karnataka.

Gandhi also called on stage a voter whose vote was sought to be deleted and the person whose name was used to get the deletion done, with both denying any knowledge of it.

According to the Congress leader, the deletions were being done using software and not through individuals, as the process of filling the form was done within seconds and was done in the wee hours of the day.

Noting that there is an ongoing investigation in Karnataka, Gandhi said the CID has sent 18 letters in 18 months to the Election Commission and asked for some simple facts such as the destination IP from where these applications were filed and OTP trails.

They are not giving it because it will lead us to where this operation is being conducted, Gandhi claimed, while accusing Gyanesh Kumar of protecting those who are indulging in such acts.

"EC knows who is doing this. I want every youngster in India to know this. They are doing this to your future. When they are not giving this information, they are defending the murderers of democracy," Gandhi said.

The Congress leader said it will take two-three months for the research and presentations on alleged "vote chori" that his party has been carrying out.

"When we are done with these presentations, you will have no doubt in your mind that state after state (elections) and Lok Sabha after Lok Sabha are being stolen. My job is to lay bare the truth and show it to the people of the country," Gandhi said.

"This Constitution is the protector of the people and I am protecting this. The job of protecting it is of the institutions, but they are not doing it," he said. Gandhi also claimed that the party is also getting information and help from inside the Election Commission. "This will not stop. The people of India will not accept this. When youngsters get to know that the 'vote chori' is being done, their strength will also join in," he added. Asked who is the mastermind, Gandhi said he will also lay that before the people and his "hydrogen bomb" of revelations will put everything out in black and white. (PTI)

Nitish springs surprise, drives to Patna hotel to meet Shah

PATNA, Sept 18: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday sprung a surprise when he drove down to a Patna hotel to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is in the state for fine-tuning the BJP's strategy for the upcoming assembly polls.

Photographs of the JD(U) supremo offering a bouquet of flowers to Shah, a former BJP president, were shared by the two leaders on their respective X handles.

Sources in both parties refused to say anything on record, though, speaking on condition of anonymity, they said it was "a courtesy call".

They, however, noted with satisfaction that the gesture from 75-year-old Kumar would put paid to speculations, in a section of the media, over his "refusal" to meet Union minister and BJP chief Jagat Prakash Nadda, who was in the city last week.

Elections are likely to be announced in the state in a few weeks from now, and Kumar, the longest-serving CM of the state, is aiming at a fifth consecutive term in office.

Kumar's meeting with Shah, arguably the second most powerful man in the BJP and still considered the party's principal strategist, came barely three days after the JD(U) president had assured Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at a rally in Purnea district, that he was back in the NDA for good, blaming his past dalliances with the Congress-RJD combine on advice of JD(U) colleagues. Meanwhile, shortly after the tete-a-tete with the alliance partner, Shah left for Dehri-on-Sone to hold talks with party workers and leaders of 10 districts of the Magadh-Shahabad region, where the performance of the NDA was below par in the 2020 assembly polls and Lok Sabha elections last year. (PTI)

PM to lay foundation stone for nuclear power project



JAIPUR, Sept 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for a nuclear power project in Rajasthan's Banswara on September 25.

He will also address a public rally in Banswara. BJP state president Madan Rathore visited Banswara Thursday to review the preparations of the meeting.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Banswara

on September 25 to lay the foundation stone for a major atomic energy project. The proposed project is expected to involve an investment of Rs 45,000 crore and will mark a significant milestone for Rajasthan in the field of energy development," he told reporters in Banswara.

"This is a major achievement for the state. Preparations are underway and party leaders and workers are involved in the preparations," Rathore said.

He said Governor Haribhau Bagade, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and other leaders will be attending the programme.

Rathore said the atomic energy project will contribute to India's growing self-reliance in the energy sector.

"This project aligns with Prime Minister Modi's vision of an aatmanirbhar Bharat, where the country stands on its own feet in sectors such as electricity, water, and education," he said.

Targeting Congress, Rathore said that the forces trying to divide society for political gains should be discouraged.

"Any attempt to create divisions in society must be rejected and condemned," he said. (PTI)

CJI's remarks led to various critical social media posts 'I respect all religions': CJI on critical social media posts

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: Chief Justice of India B R Gavai on Thursday affirmed his respect for "all religions" in the wake of the online criticism his comments garnered in a matter over the reconstruction of a Lord Vishnu idol.

"Someone told me the other day that the comments I made have been portrayed in social media...I respect all religions," he said.

A bench comprising the CJI and Justice K Vinod Chandran on May 16 dismissed the plea seeking directions to reconstruct and reinstall a seven-foot idol of Lord Vishnu at the Javari Temple, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Khajuraho temple complex in Madhya Pradesh.

Termining the plea as a "publicity interest litigation", the CJI said, "This is purely publicity interest litigation... Go and ask the deity himself to do something. If you are



saying that you are a strong devotee of Lord Vishnu, then you pray and do some meditation."

The CJI had added, "In the meantime, if you are not averse to Shaivism, you can go and worship there... there is a very big linga of Shiva, one of the biggest in Khajuraho."

The bench had refused to entertain the plea filed by one Rakesh Dalal, who sought the replacement and consecration of the damaged idol at the Javari Temple in Chhatrapur district.

The CJI's remarks led to various critical social media posts.

When the CJI mentioned how he was misquoted regarding Lord Vishnu idol in Khajuraho, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said he has known the CJI since last 10 years and Justice Gavai visits all religious places with equal reverence and would not even think of insulting any deity.

"I have known the CJI for the last 10 years," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said.

"We used to learn Newton's law - for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction'. Now with the advent of social media, we have a new rule 'for every action, there is wrong and disproportionate social media over reaction'," Mehta added.

The law officer called the situation unfortunate for the CJI's observations were made viral on

"totally incorrect information". Besides, Mehta said "something" taken "completely out of context" was being attributed to the CJI.

Justice Vinod Chandran, on the bench with CJI, referred to the ill effects of uninformed social media posts illustrating it with his recusal in one of the matters due to the lawyer appearing in it.

Social media, the judge said, was in fact anti social media.

Senior advocate Sanjay Nul, who appeared for the petitioner in Khajuraho matter, also expressed serious concerns over the wrong social media posts, clarifying the CJI never said what was wrongly attributed to him.

"We suffer everyday, it's an unruly horse no way to tame it," senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who was present in the courtroom, weighed in. (PTI)

Govt move to revert 33 teachers aims to ease crisis in eastern schools, ENSF puts stir on hold after talks

Nagaland govt decides on reversion of teachers posted out of eastern districts

KOHIMA, Sept 18: The Nagaland government has decided to reversion of 33 teachers posted out of the eastern districts during the rationalisation exercise, official sources said on Thursday.

The decision on the reversion of teachers was taken at an emergency meeting chaired by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by legislators from the Eastern Nagaland areas, including ministers C L John and P Paiwang Konyak and Advisor Wanggang Konyak, Advisor for School Education & SCERT Dr Kekrielhoulie Yhome, Chief Secretary Sentyanger Imchen, Home Commissioner Abhijit Sinha and senior officials from the School Education Department.



The Eastern Nagaland Students Federation (ENSF) on Monday launched an agitation directing the closure of government schools and offices in the districts of Mon, Tuensang, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak, and Shamator, citing that the teacher rationalisation policy led to critical shortages of teachers in the region.

The protest has significantly disrupted the education of thousands of students, prompting immediate government intervention.

The Federation said the rationalisation has resulted in a number of schools in the region being left without subject teachers, as many were transferred out without relievers against sanctioned posts.

During the meeting with the chief minister on Wednesday, the School Education Department

reported that the eastern districts currently consist of 606 government schools, 45,174 students, and 4,733 teachers, with a pupil-teacher ratio of 10:1 as per UDISE 2024-25, sources said.

The department explained that the rationalisation policy, approved by the Cabinet in August 2025, was intended to optimise teacher deployment but had unintentionally aggravated the staff deficit in the eastern region.

After thorough deliberations, the government decided reversion of 33 teachers who were posted out of the eastern districts during the rationalisation exercise, reinstating them to their original postings to immediately address the staff shortfall.

It was also decided to identify and transfer of Hindi, Maths, Science, and other requisite subject teachers currently serving in other districts back to their indigenous eastern districts to ensure key subject areas are staffed.

The government decided that newly recruited Maths and Science teachers would be directly posted to schools in the six eastern districts where acute shortages were identified, sources said.

On a need basis, vacant posts would be converted into Hindi, Maths, or Science teaching positions, with new recruitment carried out through open advertisement to attract qualified candidates.

As a temporary stopgap measure, the department has been asked to explore the community engagement of teachers until permanent solutions are in place.

It was also decided to consult with elected representatives and district administration to facilitate a more locally sensitive and effective rationalisation of teachers, sources said. The department, following the decisions taken by the government, requested the ENSF to keep the agitation on hold and come forward for discussion to resolve the issues on September 20.

Accepting the invitation of the government, the ENSF, which had proposed to intensify the protest from Thursday, has kept the ongoing agitation on hold with immediate effect until further order. (PTI)

'Meth' tablets worth ₹102.65 cr seized in Mizoram

AIZAWL, Sept 18: Banned methamphetamine tablets worth ₹102.65 crore were seized in a village near the India-Myanmar border in Mizoram's Champhai district, Assam Rifles said in a statement on Thursday.

Methamphetamine tablets, also called 'crazy drug', are banned in India as these are considered an addictive stimulant drug.

Acting on a tip-off, the Assam Rifles troops launched an operation on Wednesday, and on being challenged, a suspected individual carrying a consignment in Zote village fled the spot, leaving the contraband there, said the statement issued by the paramilitary force.

"Around 34,218 kg of methamphetamine tablets, valued at ₹102.65 crore, were recovered," it said. The seized contraband was later handed over to the state excise and narcotics department for legal proceedings, the Assam Rifles said. Methamphetamine at first causes a rush of good feelings, but then users feel edgy, overly excited, angry, or afraid. The use of 'meth' tablets can lead to addiction. The Assam Rifles claimed that the successful operation underscores the paramilitary force's resolve to combat narco-networks along the India-Myanmar border, while safeguarding the youth of the country from the scourge of drugs. (PTI)

Nagaland grants remission to 41 prisoners

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Sept 18: The Nagaland government has granted remission of sentences of 41 prisoners who have been convicted by the courts (other than court martial) having criminal jurisdiction in Nagaland and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment in various jails of the state.

The state home department on Thursday said in celebration of the 79th Independence Day, and consequent to the proposal submitted

by director general (prisons), the Governor of Nagaland, in exercise of the power conferred by Article 161 of the Constitution, has granted remission of sentences of these prisoners. The remission took effect from September 12.

However, the remission will not apply to those prisoners who were convicted under laws falling under the executive powers of the central government.

The 41 prisoners who got remission are 17 from central jail Dimapur, two from district jail Dimapur, eight from district jail Mon, three from district jail Wokha, four from district jail Tuensang, three from district jail Phek and two from district jail Longleng.

The scale of remission of sentence is 30 days for prisoners sentenced to 10 years and above, 20 days for prisoners sentenced to five years to 10 years, 10 days for prisoners sentenced to one year to five years and five days for prisoners sentenced up to one year.

Tripura introduces Wolffia-based organic fish feed to boost aquaculture

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Sept 18: Tripura has taken a significant step toward lowering aquaculture costs by developing an organic fish feed made from Wolffia globosa—the world's smallest aquatic plant.

The initiative is a joint effort of the College of Fisheries, Lembucherra, and the Directorate of Biotechnology, with financial backing from the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.

Science and technology minister Animesh Debbarma unveiled the project during a workshop on biotechnology-based fish feed, highlighting its potential to transform fish farming in the state.

According to the minister, trials have shown that Wolffia-based feed not only reduces dependence on expensive vil-



mercial feed but also promotes faster growth in species like Katla and Rui.

"Conventional feed costs nearly Rs 100 per kilogram, while Wolffia can be grown naturally in pond liners and harvested within a week. Researchers have confirmed its superior protein and nutritional content compared to market feeds," he said.

The Directorate of Biotechnology has been tasked with conducting vil-

lage-level training and demonstrations to popularise Wolffia cultivation.

The College of Fisheries has also confirmed that the plant's bioactive compounds could have wider applications in nutraceuticals and functional foods.

Officials noted that Wolffia can be cultivated in small ponds and tanks with minimal inputs, making it an accessible and sustainable option for marginal fish farmers.

Beyond reducing costs, the initiative is expected to encourage farmers to produce their own feed and explore new livelihood opportunities.

"This project has the potential to provide a long-term solution to fish feed shortages while strengthening the economic resilience of Tripura's fish farming community," minister Debbarma added.

Human Rights body seeks report from DGP on alleged wrongful arrest

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Sept 18: The Tripura Human Rights Commission (THRC) has taken cognizance of a complaint alleging wrongful arrest in Dhalai district and directed the Director General of Police (DGP) to submit a detailed enquiry report by October 16. In his order, THRC Chairperson Justice Arindam Lodh noted that the complaint was filed by one Babul Das of Bhowlabasti, Ambassa, against the Officer-in-Charge of Ambassa Police Station and an unidentified Sub-Inspector.

According to the complaint, Das was arrested on the basis of a warrant issued by the Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, North Tripura, in connection with PRC (WP) 54 of 2024 at Dharmanagar Police Station. The warrant, however, was issued in the name of one Barun Das. Police allegedly carried out the arrest by recording the complainant's name as "Babul Das alias Barun Das."

On the occasion, a weeklong training programme for 26 artisans was also launched to enhance their skills in bamboo design, manufacturing, and value addition.

Certificates and machinery were distributed to the trainees, and the Bamboo Entrepreneur Award was presented to Bukhaio Khiamningang.

A special publication titled "Facilitating Ease of Doing Business in the Bamboo Sector in Northeast India: Removal of Compliance Burdens" was also released in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry during the programme. The event featured a bamboo theme song by Musik-A School.

Meghalaya constitutes new Cabinet

SHILLONG, Sept 18: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Wednesday allotted portfolios to the eight newly inducted ministers while retaining key departments including cabinet affairs and finance for himself.

The eight new ministers include four from the National People's Party (NPP) Wailadmiki Shylla (Jowai), Timothy D Shira (Resubelpara), Brening A Sangma (Dalu), and Sosthenes Sohtun (Jirang); two from the United Democratic Party (UDP) Metbah Lyngdoh (Mairang) and Lakhmen Rymbui (Amlarem); and one each from the BJP Sanbor Shullai (South Shillong), and the HSPDP Methodius Dkhar (Mawshynru). They were sworn in by Governor C.H. Vijayashankar on September 16.

The two deputy chief ministers Prestone Tynsong and Sniawbhanglang Dhar have retained their existing portfolios.

Tynsong will continue to hold home (police), public works department (roads and buildings), district council affairs (DCA), and parliamentary affairs.

Dhar retains urban affairs, transport, commerce and industries,



and prisons and correctional services.

Cabinet minister Marcuse N Marak, who was retained, has been given soil and water conservation as an additional portfolio.

He will continue to hold public health engineering (PHE) and housing.

The new ministers received key portfolios:

Metbah Lyngdoh: power, water resources, taxation, and textiles, Lakhmen Rymbui: education, revenue and disaster management, information and public relations, and law, Timothy D Shira: tourism, agriculture, and fisheries,

Brening A Sangma: border area development, excise, and home (civil defence and home guards), Sosthenes Sohtun: community and rural development (C&RD), secretariat administration (SAD), and general administration (GAD), Wailadmiki Shylla: health and family welfare, sports and youth affairs, and home (passport), Sanbor Shullai: animal husbandry and veterinary, arts and culture, printing and stationery, and legal metrology, Methodius Dkhar: food civil supplies and consumer affairs, labour employment and skill, registration and stamps, and cooperation. (NNN)

Tripura CM reviews preparations for PM's visit on September 22

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Sept 18: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Thursday reviewed the preparations at Mata Tripura Sundari Temple in Udaipur and the OTPC Helipad Ground in Palatana ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to the state on September 22. The Prime Minister will inaugurate the newly developed premises of the Mata Tripura Sundari Temple, which has been upgraded under the Centre's PRASAD scheme. Saha personally inspected the beautification works at the temple and suggested further improvements to ensure a smooth and well-organized event. During the inspection, the chief minister directed officials to complete all arrangements with special emphasis on cleanliness, decoration, and visitor management. The temple town is being extensively decorated to welcome the Prime Minister. Saha also visited Palatana Helipad Ground, where he instructed officials to ensure flawless management of the programme. The chief minister was accompanied by BJP state president and MP Rajib Bhattacharjee, finance minister Pranajit Singha Roy, MLAs Abhishek Debroy and Jitendra Majumder, chief secretary J K Sinha, DGP Anurag, health secretary Kiran Gite, PWD Secretary Brijesh Pandey, CM's secretary P K Chakraborty, tourism secretary Uttam Kumar Chakma, along with the Gomati District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police, and other senior officials.

NAME CORRECTION

I, SATYA NANDA BORA, son of Late-Rangai Bora, House No. 10, Pub Bora-gaon, Ghy-11, have corrected my name from SATYANONDO BORAH to SATYA NANDA BORA and also my Father name from Late Rangai Borah to Late Rangai Bora, by an affidavit, VIDE SI No. 1036, Guwahati Notary dated. 15/09/2025. From today onwards, I shall be known as SATYA NANDA BORA for all purposes.

CONSTRUCTION OF 8 UNITS TYPE-II DOUBLE STOREY QUARTERS
E-Tender Notice No.: 82/W-2/APDJ Dated: 16-09-2025.
E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:
Tender No. 31-AP-II-2025. Name of work: Construction of 8 units type-II Double Storey staff quarters at Kalchini under the jurisdiction of SSE/W/Hasirama. **Tender Value:** ₹2,11,44,725.81/- **Earnest Money:** ₹2,55,700/- **Date & Time of closing of tender:** 15:00 hrs. of 10-10-2025 **& opening at 15:30 hrs. of 10-10-2025.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in
DRM (W), Alipurduar Jn. NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

AUGMENTATION OF AIR VENTILATION SYSTEM
Tender Notice No.: Dy.CEE/PS/MLG/HQ/58/25-26, **Dated:** 10-09-2025. **E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. Tender No.:** DYCEE-PS-MLG-HQ-58-25-26. **Name of Work:** At Maligaon (NFRSA): Augmentation of air ventilation system with provision of fresh air intake & emergency fire exhaust system indoor stadium. **Advertisement Value :** ₹ 1,05,99,654/- **Earnest Money :** ₹ 2,02,600/- **Date and time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 03-10-2025.** For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website www.ireps.gov.in
Dy. CEE/PS/Maligaon/HQ NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

MISSING



Ref: **Lumding PS GDE No. 016 Dated- 15/09/2025 and MMR-91/2025.**

The above is the photograph of one missing namely, Taniya Dey (female) (22 yrs), D/O- Tapan Dey, R/O- Krishna Nagar, PS. Lumding, Dist. Hojai, Assam, who has been missing since 15/09/2025 from her own house. In this regard, the above-referred GDE and investigation is going on.

Description

- Complexion:- Fair.
- Eyes:- Black.
- Hair:- black.
- Age:- 22 years.
- Height:- 05' 2" approx.
- Built:- Medium.
- Wearing:- Jeans pant and top.

Any person having information about the above-mentioned missing person may kindly be communicated with the following phone numbers:-

- Police Control Room, Hojai:- 60009-24750
- Sr. Superintendent of Police, Hojai:- 03674-284100
- Addl. Superintendent of Police (HQ), Hojai:- 91272-68812
- O/C Lumding PS:- 70028-08580
- Email ID of SP Office, Hojai:- sphojai@gmail.com

Sd/-
Sr. Superintendent of Police,
Hojai: Assam.

DIPR /D/HLT/169/19-Sep-25

No. AYUSH/E-703636/1

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

(For admission into BAMS/BHMS Course)

Declarations are invited from the eligible candidates of NEET-UG-2025 for State quota seats for admission into BAMS/BHMS course in Govt. Ayurvedic College, Jalukbari, Guwahati-14 and SJK Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Guwahati-37 in the State of Assam for the session 2025-26.

To be eligible for State Quota seat

- a) The candidate must be a citizen of India.
- b) The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam. The Father/Mother or the candidate must be residing in the State of Assam continuously for not less than a period of 20 years. Provided that this shall not be applicable to the sons/daughters of officers of All India Services allotted to Assam.
- c) The candidate must study in all classes from class-VII to XII in the State of Assam and must pass the Qualifying Examination or its equivalent examination from any institute situated in the State of Assam.

Provided that, if a candidate studies outside Assam from class-VII onwards because his/her father/mother is posted outside Assam as an Assam State.

Government employee or as Central Government Employee or as an employee of a Corporation/Agency/Instrumentality under Govt. of Assam or Central Govt. whether on deputation or transfer or regular posting, then the period for which the said father/mother is working outside the State be relaxable for such candidate.

The "Declaration Forms" are available in the website of Directorate of AYUSH, Assam i.e. <https://ayush.assam.gov.in> and website of the Govt. Ayurvedic College, Guwahati-14 i.e. <https://gachguwahati.in>. The duly filled up Declaration Form must be submitted to the Office of the Principal, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Jalukbari, Guwahati-14, on or before 26th September 2025 up to 5:00 P.M.

The incomplete Declaration Form shall be summarily rejected.

N.B: Candidates are advised to visit the official website of the Directorate of AYUSH, Assam (<https://ayush.assam.gov.in>) from time to time for updates and notifications regarding the schedule of counselling. The list of the candidates who have submitted their declaration form and list of the summarily rejected candidates will be published in the same website mentioned above.

Sd/-
Director of Ayush, Assam
Dispur, Guwahati-06

DIPR /D/HLT/167/19-Sep-25

Disaster prevention remains a top priority of Sikkim govt, says CM

GANGTOK, Sept 18: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Thursday said that the state government has given high priority to the safety and security of citizens in the event of natural calamities.

He said this on the occasion of State Disaster Risk Reduction Day, which was observed by the government. This day marks the 14th anniversary of the devastating 6.9 magnitude earthquake which rocked Sikkim on September 18, 2011, causing loss of many human lives, besides extensive destruction of property and disruption of livelihoods.

"The state government has placed high priority on disaster pre-

vention and is firmly committed to ensuring the safety and security of every citizen in the event of any such occurrence," the CM said in a message.

"It is high time that we collectively reflect on the lessons drawn from past disasters and reaffirm our commitment to strengthening resilience across Sikkim," Tamang said.

"This day serves as a solemn reminder of the inherent vulnerabilities of our region, situated in the fragile Himalayan ecosystem and of the pressing need to remain vigilant and prepared for the uncertainties posed by natural and human-induced hazards," the chief

minister said. He said that over the years, Sikkim has faced several challenges such as earthquakes, landslides, glacial lake outburst floods, flash floods and other calamities with each incident testing the strength, patience and unity of the people.

These adversities, however, prompted the citizens to demonstrate exemplary courage, solidarity and resilience and rise to the occasion as the first responders in times of crisis, supporting each other, extending timely assistance to affected families and working together with the government in rebuilding lives and communities, Tamang said. (PTI)

Cane and bamboo technology park at Nagaland Bamboo Resource Centre

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Sept 18: On the World Bamboo Day celebration at Nagaland Bamboo Resource Centre in Chumoukeda on Thursday, Nagaland development commissioner Temsunaro Aier announced the setting up of a state-of-the-art cane and bamboo technology park at the centre.

Gracing the programme as the chief guest, Aier said the park will serve as a centre for research, training, and production.

The celebration was held on the theme "Next Generation Bamboo: Solution, Innovation & Design". Aier described bamboo as the "green gold" of Nagaland, highlighting its deep cultural, ecological, and economic significance.

She urged stakeholders to sustain this legacy with pride and responsibility. She noted bamboo's role in food, shelter, craft, art, and livelihood.

Aier stressed the need for sustainable practices, citing bamboo's rapid



growth, carbon absorption, and soil conservation benefits, making it a strong ally in the fight against climate change.

She commended the Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency (NBDA) for promoting bamboo-based enterprises, training artisans, and supporting self-help groups.

She said products such as handicrafts, furniture, incense sticks, blinds, mats, and bamboo shoots are gaining

recognition, turning Nagaland into a hub for bamboo industries.

In his keynote address, Kuko Mero, state mission director, NBDA, said with over 43 species of bamboo, Nagaland has immense potential in bamboo-based sustainable development.

He said the NBDA has carried out block plantations, covering 1506 hectares, trained over 200 entrepreneurs and artisans, and set up two common facility centres, generating

employment for more than 500 people.

Mero added that the agency has also established processing units, nurseries with 1.5 lakh saplings, rural haats, bamboo bazaars, and upgraded the Nagaland Handicrafts Emporium in New Delhi and Kolkata under the brand "Naturally Nagaland."

On the occasion, a weeklong training programme for 26 artisans was also launched to enhance their skills in bamboo design, manufacturing, and value addition.

Certificates and machinery were distributed to the trainees, and the Bamboo Entrepreneur Award was presented to Bukhaio Khiamningang.

A special publication titled "Facilitating Ease of Doing Business in the Bamboo Sector in Northeast India: Removal of Compliance Burdens" was also released in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry during the programme. The event featured a bamboo theme song by Musik-A School.

KAJOL, AJAY, ALIA, RANBIR JOIN SHAH RUKH KHAN AT ARYAN'S DEBUT SERIES LAUNCH



MUMBAI, Sept 18: The premiere of "The Ba***ds of Bollywood", the directorial debut series of superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan, turned out to be a star-studded affair with prominent celebrities, including Kajol, Ajay Devgn, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor, attending the event.

The event on Wednesday evening, where the show's first episode was showcased, was also attended by billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani and his family, Madhuri Dixit with husband Shriram Nene, Tamannah Bhatia, Vijay Verma, Vicky Kaushal, Karan Johar, Atlee and Farhan Akhtar.

Aryan's mother Gauri Khan, sister Suhana Khan and brother AbRam turned his cheerleaders at the event and posed for the photographers. Shah Rukh, who had his arm in a sling after he suffered an injury on the sets of his upcoming film "King", got his photos clicked with the paparazzi.

In a video circulating on social media, Aryan is seen clicking his father's pictures with the photographers from various angles.

"The Ba***ds of Bollywood" delves into the

life of an outsider as he navigates the glitzy yet challenging world of Bollywood.

On social media, Kajol, Shah Rukh's co-star from many Hindi cinema hits such as "Baazigar", "Karan Arjun" and "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai", shared a video of her standing between Ajay and Shah Rukh while joking about the show's name with her former co-star. She also shared pictures with Aryan as well as his sister Suhana Khan and mother Gauri Khan.

"With the 'Ba***ds of Bollywood'... congrats @**aryan**...only thing more awesome I'm sure will be your show! Too excited," she wrote in her caption. Akshay Kumar also sent his best wishes to Aryan in a post on his social media handles. "All the best @**aryan** beta, may this be the start of something truly amazing. Congratulations to the proud parents @iamsrk & @gaurikhan on such an incredible beginning," he said.

Vijay Verma posted a picture with Aryan on Instagram, captioning it, "We have a fab new director in the house! Congratulations on a solid debut @**aryan**... Can't wait to watch the remaining episodes.. and as Samay will say.. crazyyyy show

hai mere bhai." Ananya Panday took to her Instagram stories and posted, "Go Aryan!!!! You have poured everything into this show and now the world is gonna ENJOY!!!" Karan Johar shared a note on Instagram and welcomed Aryan to the movies.

"You treaded a path that many never believed you would... the daunting task of being behind the camera... of being a story teller and the captain of its execution... have seen you work tirelessly and passionately for over 2 years and never once taking the opportunity given to you for granted..."

"You have an individual style of telling your story and I can't wait for everyone to see and hear your voice in badsofbollywood... I am so proud of you and love you so much!!!" he said. The show, which premieres on Netflix on Thursday, stars Lakshya Lalwani, Sahher Bamba, Bobby Deol, Raghav Juyal, Anya Singh and Mona Singh. It will also feature cameos by many celebrities, including Johar, Salman Khan, Aamir Khan, Ranveer Singh and Shah Rukh.

The show is produced by Gauri Khan through the banner Red Chillies Entertainment. (PTI)

LAKSHYA AND RAGHAV JUYAL ON REUNITING IN 'THE BA***DS OF BOLLYWOOD': WE COME AS A PACKAGE



MUMBAI, Sept 18: From playing enemies in "Kill" to now sharing a romance in "The Ba***ds of Bollywood", actors Lakshya and Raghav Juyal they understand each other and their off-screen friendship feeds the dynamic that they have build on the show.

In 2023's "Kill", Juyal played a violent train robber who crosses path with a commando off duty. Lakshya plays a rising young actor in Bollywood while Juyal is his best friend in the new Netflix show that marks the directorial debut of Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan. The show, which features a host of cameos from the industry, including Aamir, SRK and Salman Khan, Karan Johar, Ranveer Singh and others.

Asked about reuniting with Lakshya for the new show, Juyal told PTI: "We understand each other, we've same set of friends. We come in a package."

Lakshya said they shared a bond off-screen during the shooting of "Kill" and this show helped them showcase that bond on the screen.

"I understand him, I don't usually understand many people as they talk and do something else, but he speaks from his heart. There is a transparency and honesty in this man," Lakshya told PTI while praising Juyal.

"The ease that he has, and his inherent being is humorous. I've learned a

lot from him. One thing he is great at is comedy, which is the toughest thing to do for any actor to do. That is what I learn from him," he said, joking that he wouldn't mind romancing his co-actor in their next outing.

Set against the backdrop of the film industry, "The Ba***ds of Bollywood" is dubbed as a multi-genre project that promises an "unabashed, entertaining ride through the adventures of a charming, ambitious outsider navigating the glitzy yet tricky world of Bollywood". Aryan is also the creator on the show.

Lakshya said to play his character of an aspiring actor, he drew inspiration from Shah Rukh Khan.

"For the character, I've used references from myself a lot and seen a lot of interviews of sir. I took inspiration from him. Whenever I felt stuck, I used to look at Aryan because being the son, he used to give me the right direction," he said.

"Also, we are playing Shah Rukh Khan in our personal lives when we are with girls, like being charming and all that. He has inspired us so much. I've tried it a lot, but I don't think there is a better charmer than him," he added.

Juyal said he has modeled his character in the series on a close friend named Tabesh. (PTI)

Deepika Padukone will not be part of 'Kalki 2898 AD' sequel: producers

MUMBAI, Sept 18: Bollywood star Deepika Padukone will not be returning for the sequel to the 2024 Telugu blockbuster "Kalki 2898 AD", the makers announced on Thursday. Vyjayanthi Movies, which produced the Nag Ashwin-directed film, also starring Prabhas and Amitabh Bachchan, shared the news in a post on social media platform X. "This is to officially announce that @deepikapadukone will not be a part of the upcoming sequel of #Kalki2898AD. After careful consideration, we have decided to part ways. Despite the long journey of making the first film, we were unable to find a partnership."

"And a film like @Kalki2898AD deserves that commitment and much more. We wish her the best with her future works," the studio said.

Set in a dystopian future in the year 2898 AD, "Kalki" followed the story of a group on a mission to protect lab subject SUM-80's (Padukone) unborn child, believed to be Kalki. The film released in June 2024 and earned over ₹ 1000 crore at the global box office. (PTI)



Post Malone to perform in Guwahati for first-ever headline show

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Sept 18: Grammy nominated global superstar Post Malone will return to India this December for his first-ever solo headline show. The exclusive concert will take place on December 8 at Khanapara Veterinary Ground here, marking his first stadium performance in the region.

Tickets for Post Malone's performance in Guwahati will be available beginning Saturday on BookMyShow.

BookMyShow signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Assam, this year, to build and scale the state's live entertainment ecosystem. Post Malone's upcoming show in Guwahati, exclusively his only performance in India, will be the first milestone in this partnership, marking a historic moment for the region's live entertainment landscape.

Naman Pugalia, Chief Business Officer - Live Events, BookMyShow, said, "Post Malone represents the very best of contemporary global music, an artist whose unique

sound and persona resonate with millions across the world. To bring him exclusively to Guwahati is to open a powerful new chapter for live music in the Northeast."

Padmapani Bora, Managing Director, Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC), said, "Assam is endowed with rich biodiversity, vibrant heritage, music, and culture, and has always been a preferred tourist destination. Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister, Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam has embarked on an exciting journey into Concert Tourism, leveraging its newly introduced Concert Tourism Policy to attract a larger influx of tourists aiming at greater economic advantage to the region."

Now, with his debut solo headline show in India, Post Malone marks a new chapter in his global touring story. The Guwahati concert is set to be a historic show not only for fans across the Northeast but also for the entire nation, underscoring Assam's emergence as a vibrant destination for international performers.

Jessica Chastain, Ben Stiller to headline Apple TV+ limited series 'The Off Weeks'

LOS ANGELES, Sept 18: Oscar winner Jessica Chastain is set to collaborate with Hollywood star Ben Stiller for "The Off Weeks", an eight-episode limited series from streamer Apple TV+.

The thriller drama will be directed by Michael Showalter, known for "The Idea of You" and "The Dropout", and showrun by Alissa Nutting, co-creator of "Made for Love". Both Chastain and Stiller will also serve as executive producers.

The series follows Gus Adler, a writing professor whose life spirals after a divorce. While he struggles to maintain order during his "on weeks" with custody of his children, his "off weeks" take a darker turn when he falls dangerously in love with Stella West, a mysterious woman whose arrival threatens to unravel both his responsibilities and desires.

Showalter, who developed the project with Semi-Formal Productions, executive produces alongside Jordana



Mollick. Paul Lee and Gabriel Fisher executive produce for Wiip, with Peter Principato, Allen Fischer and Brian Steinberg for Artists First, according to a press release.

The show marks Stiller's latest collaboration with Apple TV+ after the multiple Emmy Award-winning series "Severance" and the upcoming documentary "Stiller & Meara: Nothing is Lost".

Chastain will also be seen in the streamer's upcoming thriller miniseries "The Savant". (PTI)

SHABANA AZMI BIRTHDAY: 10 CINEMATIC GEMS FROM VETERAN ACTOR'S CAREER

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: Actor Shabana Azmi, who turns 75 on Thursday, has delivered some of the most memorable films in her career of over 50 years where she dabbled in both commercial and parallel cinema. A five-time National film award-winner, Azmi stood out in the industry from the very beginning of her career, portraying emotionally layered and complex female characters at a time when women were mostly cast in decorative roles in the movies. Here is a look at ten of the most important films from her vast filmography:

Ankur: The 1974 film marked both Shyam Benegal and Azmi's debut as a director and actor. Azmi features as Lakshmi, a Dalit woman who is married to Kishitayya, a deaf-mute alco-

holic potter. Her desire is to have a child of her own but obstacles are created when the couple are hired by Surya, the son of the village landlord. The film, praised for exploring human relationships in the rural setting, the caste-class conflict and feudalism, won her the National Film Award for best actress.

Arth: The 1982 film by Mahesh Bhatt featured Azmi in the role of Pooja Malhotra who is devastated when her husband leaves her for another woman. Pooja's search for meaning solidified her as a strong woman in the Indian cinema space. For her performance, Azmi received her second National Award for best actress. **Mandi:** The 1983 film, once again directed by Benegal, was set around the lives of the women in a

brothel. It featured Azmi as Rukmini, the strict but kind-hearted madame of the brothel. Their livelihood is threatened when a politician tries to remove them to develop the area as a prime location. It also starred Smita Patil and Naseeruddin Shah in pivotal roles.

Masoom: This 1983 film was directed by Shekhar Kapur and featured Azmi and Shah as a husband and wife, whose harmonious marriage is rocked when she learns that he had an affair and has a child. The couple tries to navigate the shifting dynamics in their relationship and family when Shah's son comes to live with them. The film is still remembered for its mature portrayal of a marriage.

Khandhar: Based on Premendra

Mitra's Bengali short story Telnapota Abishka, the 1984 film was directed by Mrinal Sen. The film followed Azmi's Jamini, a lonely young woman who lives with her mother who awaits the arrival of a distant cousin to marry her daughter.

Three friends from the city visit the ruins and one of them, a photographer, pretends to be Jamini's suitor. The film won Azmi her third National Award for best actress. **Paar:** For her performance as Rama in the 1984 film, directed by Goutam Ghose, Azmi bagged her career's fourth National award for best actress. The film follows Naurangia, played by Naseeruddin Shah, and his pregnant wife Rama, a marginalised couple, who become fugitives when Naurangia murder his landlord's

brother.

Fire: The 1996 Indo-Canadian film by Deepa Mehta was the first in her elements trilogy. One of the first mainstream films to showcase same-sex romance, the movie centred around two women, Azmi's Radha and Sita, played by Nandita Das. They find love in each other after being neglected by their husbands. The film had courted a huge controversy at the time of its release, leading to protests in various parts of the country. **Godmother:** The 1999 Hindi biographical drama film, directed by Vinay Shukla, featured Azmi as Rambhiji and was inspired by Santokben Jadeja, who ran the Mafia operations in Gujarat in the late 1980s and early 1990s and later emerged as a politician. The film won Azmi her

fifth National Award for best actress. **Honeymoon Travels Pvt. Ltd.:** The 2007 film which marked the beginning of filmmaker Reema Kagti's career, showcased stories of various couples on their honeymoon. It featured Azmi as Naheed alongside Boman Irani's Oscar Fernandes. The couple navigates the stigma associated with finding love at an old age.

Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani: In the 2023 film, which marked Karan Johar's return to directing after "Ae Dil Hai Mushkil", Azmi played the role of Jamini Chatterjee, the grandmother to Alia Bhatt's Rani. Her and Dharmendra's characters, who were lovers in the past, serve as a catalyst for the progression of Rocky and Rani's love story. (PTI)

Neeraj Chopra ends disappointing 8th, Sachin Yadav takes 4th spot at World Championships

TOKYO, Sept 18: Defending champion Neeraj Chopra endured a nightmarish outing at the World Championships' men's javelin throw finals to end a disappointing eighth, outperformed by debutant compatriot Sachin Yadav who logged a personal best performance to finish a creditable fourth here on Thursday.

On a day when no thrower managed to cross 90m, Chopra was ousted after the fifth and penultimate round with a best effort of 84.03m that left him eighth overall.

The 27-year-old fouled the fifth attempt to exit the competition at the same venue where he won a history-making Olympic gold back in 2021.

Only the top six athletes compete in the sixth and final round and it was surprisingly Yadav who ended up being India's representative.

His best throw of 86.27m, which came in the very first attempt, was a personal best performance and he bested not just Chopra but also German star Julian Weber (86.11m), and

Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem (82.75m) among others.

The gold went Keshorn Walcott (88.16m) of Trinidad and Tobago, followed Grenada's Anderson Peters (87.38m) and Curtis Thompson (86.67m).

Nadeem, a silver-medallist in the previous edition, was among the first set of throwers to exit in the fourth round.

Chopra, a two-time Olympic medallist, began with 83.65m which put him at fifth place and improved upon it with 84.03m



before fouling his third throw.

He dropped to eighth after the second round and remained there at the halfway stage.

His fourth throw measured 82.86m, which meant that he had to better 85.54m and Kenya's Julius Yego in his fifth throw to remain in competition.

But Chopra fouled his fifth attempt to end the day in disappointment.

After releasing his spear, he fell down sideways and crossed the curved line to see the red flag from the official. He removed his

waist belt and buried his face in it for a while before regaining composure.

Known for his consistency, it was inexplicable for Chopra not to even cross the 85m mark in five attempts. Before Thursday, his worst was 82.27m while winning gold at the Federation Cup in May 2024.

He had breached the 90m mark with a 90.23m throw in the Doha Diamond League in May under the tutelage of the legendary Jan Zelezny but since then his graph has seen a dip. (PTI)

Man United posts record revenues but is still making losses

MANCHESTER, Sept 18: Manchester United posted record revenues in its latest annual accounts despite missing out on Champions League soccer and enduring its worst-ever Premier League campaign.

But despite revenues of 666.5 million pounds (\$910 million) the 20-time English champion still reported losses of 33 million pounds (\$45 million).

"To have generated record revenues during such a challenging year for the club demonstrates the resilience which is a hallmark of Manchester United," chief executive Omar Berrada said.

The accounts for the year ending June 30, 2025 came after minority owner Jim Ratcliffe embarked on cost-cutting measures, which have seen two rounds of job cuts with an estimated reduction of more than 400 members of staff, as well as ticket price hikes.

United told fans in January it could not sustain its losses and Ratcliffe later said the club was in danger of running out of money by the end of the year.

Losses fell from 113.2 million pounds to 33 million.

United's commercial strength comes despite its ongoing troubles on the field, which have seen it struggle to keep pace with Premier League rivals like Liverpool, Manchester City and Arsenal.

It did not play in the lucrative Champions League last season and finished 15th in England's 20-team top division — its lowest since the inception of the Premier League in 1992.

It also recorded its lowest points total and highest number of losses, which led to it failing to qualify for any European soccer competition this season.

United has not won the league title since Alex Ferguson retired in 2013. This season has not started well either, with Ruben Amorim's team only winning one of four games and having been eliminated from the English League Cup by fourth-tier Grimsby Town.

"As we settle into the 2025-26 season, we are working hard to improve the club in all areas," Berrada said. "As we start to feel the benefits of our cost-reduction program, there is significant potential for improved financial performance, which will, in turn, support our overriding priority: success on the pitch." (AP)

PSG copes without star forwards and routs Atalanta 4-0 in Champions League



PARIS, Sept 18: Paris Saint-Germain coped easily without its star forwards and could even afford to miss a penalty as it began its Champions League title defense with a 4-0 victory over Atalanta on Wednesday.

The exceptional teamwork in coach Luis Enrique's side was a

hallmark of their Champions League title run last season. It was on display once again as central defender Marquinhos, winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, left back Nuno Mendes and substitute Gonçalo Ramos all scored at Parc des Princes.

"It's a joy to see such a per-

formance. I think our fans can be happy," Luis Enrique said. "We created a lot of chances and deserved the win."

So far it does not look like the crisis some PSG fans feared after Ousmane Dembélé and Désiré Doué — who starred in the 5-0 rout of Inter Milan in the Cham-

pions League final — both were injured on international duty with France this month.

In their absence, 19-year-old striker Senny Mayulu got a rare start. He scored PSG's last goal against Inter on May 31 and Luis Enrique selected him ahead of Ramos, who netted 19 goals in all

competitions last season.

Kvaratskhelia, who sustained a calf injury in a French league game Sunday, scored the second goal in the 39th minute with a trademark surging run and shot.

Central defender Marquinhos gave PSG a third-minute lead when he tapped in Fabián Ruiz's ball from the left.

PSG created four other clear chances inside the first 15 minutes, with Mayulu failing to connect with a low cross and right back Achraf Hakimi shaving the post.

Bradley Barcola had a goal ruled out for offside and then the winger saw his penalty saved on the stroke of halftime.

Mayulu came off shortly after Mendes had made it 3-0 in the 51st minute after combining with Barcola down the left and showing excellent close control before firing a shot inside the post. Ramos showed great composure to clip in a late fourth, continuing his habit of late goals.

"We wanted to control the game from the start and managed to do so," Mendes said. "We are on the right path."

While the manner of PSG's victory was encouraging for its fans, Atalanta hardly posed a threat to new goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier — Gianluigi Donnarumma's replacement — and PSG will likely face a far harder test at five-time champion Barcelona on Oct. 1. (AP)

Bayern Munich's early season form is ominous for Bundesliga rivals

BERLIN, Sept 18: Bayern Munich is purring in the Bundesliga after a perfect start to the season.

Eintracht Frankfurt — arguably the only side that looked capable of challenging the Bavarian powerhouse — lost at Bayer Leverkusen last weekend, leaving a far-from-perfect Borussia Dortmund team and overachieving Cologne and St. Pauli as Bayern's closest rivals after three rounds.

Bayern saw off Chelsea's challenge in the Champions League on Thursday to stretch its winning start to five games across all competitions — six including the German Supercup. The defending champion already has 14 goals in three Bundesliga games. A visit to Hoffenheim is next on Saturday.

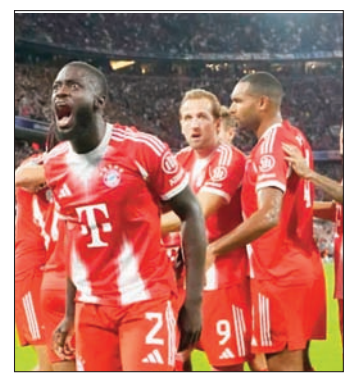
Bayern coach Vincent Kompany will be tempted to rotate his squad at Hoffenheim, where Tom Bischof

might expect to feature after his summer switch between the sides. Former Chelsea forward Nicolas Jackson might also see more playing time to give the in-form Harry Kane a rest.

Leverkusen hosts Borussia Mönchengladbach on Sunday for a Rhine derby between the only clubs to have fired their coaches after three rounds. Kasper Hjulmand, Erik ten Hag's replacement, made a winning start against Frankfurt last weekend, while Gladbach is still looking for a replacement for Gerardo Seoane, who was fired after the 4-0 loss at home to Werder Bremen, a result that extended the team's goalless start.

Dortmund hosts Wolfsburg on Sunday, when Frankfurt welcomes Union Berlin.

Assuming Kompany gives him more playing time, Nicolas Jackson



will be keen to show what he can do at Hoffenheim after doing his utmost to join Bayern from Chelsea.

Johan Bakayoko scored his first goal for Leipzig last weekend. He's just one of a host of new arrivals at the club who get another chance to impress against Cologne on Saturday.

Victor Boniface made his Bremen debut last weekend. He didn't score but could get off the mark against visiting Freiburg on Saturday.

Denmark playmaker Christian Eriksen could make his Wolfsburg debut against Dortmund.

Bayern is without Raphaël Guerreiro because of a stomach muscle injury sustained in the 5-0 win over Hamburger SV last weekend.

Bayern could have an issue at left back with Josip Stanišić going off injured against Chelsea.

The team was already without long-term patients Jamal Musiala, Alphonso Davies and Hiroki Ito.

A nine-year-old boy was seriously injured during an organized fireworks display off the floodlights after Hansa Rostock's third-division match against 1860 Munich on Wednesday. (AP)

Back on track after her four-year 'Burrito Ban,' Shelby Houlihan looks to make up for lost time

TOKYO, Sept 18: For stretches of her four long years in running purgatory, the poster child for a drug-fighting system in sports that nobody truly understands was likely to be seen driving her '71 VW minibus across the country as working out on the track.

America's reigning 5,000-meter champion, Shelby Houlihan, used what is now known, infamously, as her "Burrito Ban" to scratch some things off her bucket list. She bought the burgundy bus — sight unseen — and logged an estimated 6,000 miles on a tour of America that wasn't possible when she was training. "I thought, I didn't have running to hold me back," Houlihan said. "I've got to go do some fun things." Now that her ban is expired, "fun" means rediscovering the purpose for all those miles she's piled up — not in the minibus, but over four years of running just to run. Houlihan was entered in the 5,000 meters at world championships in Japan's National Stadium, the place she was denied a chance to compete four years ago in the wake of a polarizing doping ban that took away not one, but two Olympics.

This will be her first major outdoor track meet since she finished fourth in the 1,500 in Doha at the 2019 worlds. "Most people believe your prime is like 27 to 30 or 31, and those are the years that I missed," said the 32-year-old Iowa native who lives out of a camper with her boyfriend, two dogs and a cat in Flagstaff, Arizona.

"I can't do anything to get those back," she said. "Part of me wonders what I could've done. But that's a rabbit hole I don't need to go down." Houlihan says she shifts between trying to shine a light on a system she says ultimately betrayed her and going about the business of making up for lost time.

She said she "blindly believed" in the global anti-doping system because, as she put it, "I knew I didn't cheat." Then, it turned drastically

and dramatically against her.

Four years after she made news of the ban public on the eve of the 2021 Olympic trials, there remain some who saw Houlihan improve drastically in the late 2010s and never believed her alibi for testing positive for a performance enhancer: that she ingested it by eating a drug-tainted pork burrito bought from a food truck.

Among those who did, however, were the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, which tested her 53 times between 2017 and 2021 without turning up a positive. USADA has passed on a number of similar contamination cases over the years, and the subject has become even more fraught in the years since Houlihan's case erupted.

The World Anti-Doping Agency's handling of a case involving Chinese swimmers in the leadup to the Paris Olympics brought recriminations about the differing ways drug-fighting agencies choose to handle cases steeped in the complex science of contamination.

Houlihan's case was taken up not by USADA but by the Athletics Integrity Unit — the agency formed to help World Athletics police doping — and it offered her no bailout. It also offered her no consideration for the fact that rules concerning contamination had been relaxed to account for recent improvements of lab equipment to detect the most scant traces of banned substances.

Houlihan's return to the big-time comes less than a week after the Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld a contamination ban levied against U.S. sprinter Erriyon Knighton — a case in which USADA believed Knighton's excuse, but the AIU appealed.

"If they follow up on something, there's probably a really good reason why they're doing it," World Athletics President Seb Coe said when asked about how different agencies handle contamination cases differently. "They don't leave a lot to chance." (AP)

Have natural understanding with Mandhana, don't need to make effort: Pratika Rawal

MULLANPUR (CHANDIGARH), Sept 18: Young top-order batter Pratika Rawal feels she has a "natural understanding" with star opener Smriti Mandhana, which has translated into several flourishing starts for India and could prove crucial in the ODI Women's World Cup starting September 30.

The Delhi cricketer, who made her ODI debut in December last year and has emerged as one of the most consistent batters at the top in a short span of time, says that despite Mandhana being an "introvert" like her, the two have a unique chemistry.

Pratika made a century partnership with Mandhana in the first ODI against Australia here and was again involved in a 70-run stand with the star cricketer in the second game, which India won by a record 102-run margin.

"I think it's (understanding) quite easy and quite natural. We don't have to talk much between



innings, she does what she does best, and I do what I do best. There's an understanding between us that feels natural, not made up," the 25-year-old cricketer, who has scored six half centuries and a ton since making it to the

India side, told 'JioHotstar' show Off the Pitch.

"Even off the field, she (Mandhana) is an introvert and so am I, though we'd call ourselves more ambiverts. Because of that, we don't need to put in extra effort to

connect, we already understand each other."

The World Cup will be hosted by India and Sri Lanka and the two hosts will take on each other in the opening game in Guwahati on September 30.

Pratika said she enjoys batting with Mandhana with the focus of both the players on building the innings ball by ball.

"On the field, the only focus is the next ball, and everything else follows step by step. I enjoy batting with her more than she enjoys batting with me, so it's always great, especially the way she plays and takes on every ball. It's just so amazing to see."

Pratika said she puts team goals ahead of personal ambitions.

"There are team meetings and different strategies, but beyond personal goals, I value team goals more. If I can be an asset to the team, I believe that's the greatest contribution I can make."

Pratika said when the news

about her World Cup selection broke, her family hardly displayed any emotion, but deep within she knows they are very happy.

"My mom and dad are not very expressive. They don't show emotions openly, but I know they feel a lot. When my name was announced at the press conference, I was at home with my brother while my parents were out.

"I went to my brother's room and told him, 'Say congratulations to me.' He asked why, and I said, 'I got selected for the World Cup.' His reaction was just, 'That's it? Good for you, yaar.'"

"Later, I called my mom and told her, and she simply said, 'It's a very good thing, very good.' They play it subtle, but I can feel their pride. Even my coach told me that my mom has had a different smile on her face for days. They may not show it directly, but I know they are very happy," she said. (PTI)

INDIA VS OMAN

Chance to give batters game time before Super 4s

DUBAI, Sept 18: The Suryakumar Yadav-led India will ideally prefer to bat first and make full use of the 20 overs when they take on an embattled Oman in their final Asia Cup group league game that will be played in Abu Dhabi on Friday.

Having already qualified for the Super 4s and with one eye on the important rematch against arch-foes Pakistan on Sunday, the Oman game is a perfect opportunity for the team management to just get some wood on leather after two lopsided low-scoring chases in the first two games.

While Abhishek Sharma has got a couple of blazing starts, Shubman Gill might want to bat a bit longer. Skipper Suryakumar had a good outing against Pakistan but he would like Tilak Varma to get some more batting time.

Ideally, the middle-order lineup of Hardik Pandya, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube and Axar Patel would all like to get some decent hit out there in the middle before the business week of the tournament commences, with four games in a space of seven days if India make it to the final.

Such is the quality of the Indian bowling line-up that in case Oman bat first, there is every chance of the match finishing early as Jatinder Singh and Co. have very little chance of negotiating the likes of Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarty.

In Oman's two games against



Pakistan and the UAE, their batting was evidently not at its best.

The two totals of 67 and 130, while chasing in a losing cause, don't exactly paint a rosy picture. Such has been their plight that across two games, not a single batter has crossed the individual score of 30.

Hammad Mirza scored 27 against Pakistan while Aryan Bisht made a painstaking 24 off 32 balls against UAE.

India head coach Gautam Gambhir might not like to experiment too much with the line-up except for giving a bit of breather to his lethal weapon Jasprit Bumrah - that too if he chooses to - before the Super 4s.

With only four overs to bowl and well rested after the Pakistan game, Bumrah himself might not

want a break that badly but one needs to be extra cautious when it comes to taking care of the "jewel in the crown".

That will also give the team a chance to check out Arshdeep Singh, who has been missing out due to the think tank's obsession with multi-skilled cricketers and batting depth till No. 8.

If Gambhir wants to be slightly more experimental, then he can also play Harshit Rana, giving one among Varun or Kuldeep a rest. This will also be the only game where Suryakumar can rejig his batting order a bit.

On a different note, it will also be a welcome departure from all the unwanted controversy surrounding Suryakumar and his team's refusal to shake hands with Pakistan players as a mark of re-

spect for the 26 Indian tourists killed in the Pahalgam terror attack.

The only unknown factor will be the track at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium, where India will play their only game of this tournament. In fact, the Indian team isn't even going to Abu Dhabi for training as it's a two-hour one-way bus drive.

In any case, the Indian team does a mandatory three-hour net session on training days and a four-hour bus journey (two on either side) would have certainly exhausted the players.

Therefore, they have opted for the 'in and out' policy wherein they travel on match day, play the game and return at night before taking an entire Saturday off ahead of playing Pakistan on Sunday.

Squads:

India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Shubman Gill, Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Jitesh Sharma, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakravarty, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Sanju Samson, Harshit Rana, Rinku Singh.

Oman: Jatinder Singh (c), Hammad Mirza, Vinayak Shukla, Sufyan Yusuf, Ashish Odedera, Aamir Kaleem, Mohammed Nadeem, Sufyan Mehmood, Aryan Bisht, Karan Sonavale, Zikriya Islam, Hassnain Ali Shah, Faisal Shah, Muhammed Imran, Nadeem Khan, Shakeel Ahmad, Samay Shrivastava.

Match Starts: 8 pm IST. (PTI)

Jurel's unbeaten ton drives India A's progress in unofficial Test' against Australia A



LUCKNOW, Sept 18: Wicket-keeper batter Dhruv Jurel's unbeaten 113 underlined a collective batting show from India 'A' that reached 403 for four against Australia A on day three of the unofficial Test here Thursday.

Apart from Jurel's 132-ball effort (10x4s, 4x6s) India were also bolstered by half-centuries from overnight batter N Jagadeesan (64), B Sai Sudharsan (73) and an unbeaten 86 from Devdutt Padikkal.

Sipper Shreyas Iyer (8), though, could not make a mark.

India A were trailing by another 129 runs as the contest heads for a draw.

Earlier, a brisk century from Sam Konstas (109) and Josh

Phillippe's unbeaten 123 had taken the Australia A side to 532 for six declared.

The teams will face off here at the Ekana Stadium from September 23-26 for the second four-day unofficial Test before heading to Kanpur for a three-match one-day series.

The day's proceedings began with India A resuming at 116 for one as overnight pair of Jagadeesan and Sudharsan looked to build a stand but they could not do so.

Jagadeesan, who had received a Test call-up in England last month, fell for 64 off 113 balls (7 fours, 1 six) after he was caught by Philippe off Xavier Bartlett.

The hosts carried on smoothly with the pair of Sudharsan and

Padikkal putting on 76 runs to consolidate the innings.

The bulk of the scoring was done by the left-handed Tamil Nadu batter Sudharsan who made his Test debut in England, but Connolly trapped him leg-before in the 59th over of the innings.

India A skipper Iyer indeed had an opportunity to prove his point after recent snubs from the national side and given that the India squad will be soon picked for a two-Test series against West Indies early next month.

But Iyer, who has otherwise not put a foot wrong and in particular enjoys success against spinners, fell to Western Australia spinner Corey Rocchiccioli for only 8 in the 62nd over, which did put India A in a spot of bother.

This was when Jurel and Padikkal joined forces to take control and the pair stayed unseparated until the stumps.

Jurel and Padikkal's unbeaten 181-run stand for the fifth wicket gave India A the bragging rights by the time play ended, since they scored their runs at a healthy run rate of nearly four an over.

Padikkal was batting on 86 not out off 178 balls with eight fours.

Brief Scores:

Australia A 1st innings: 532/6 decl

India A 1st innings: 403/4 in 103 overs (N Jagadeesan 64, B Sai Sudharsan 73, Devdutt Padikkal 86, Dhruv Jurel 113 not out; Liam Scott 1/31) (PTI)

Palmeiras beats River Plate 2-1 in Copa Libertadores quarterfinal 1st leg



BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA), Sept 18: Defender Gustavo Gomez and striker Vitor Roque scored first-half goals on Wednesday and Brazil's Palmeiras beat River Plate 2-1 in the first leg of their Copa Libertadores quarter-final series.

Gomez opened the scoring in the sixth minute while Roque added a goal in the 41st minute for the Brazilians, who are looking for their first championship in this tournament since 2021, when they won it back-to-back.

The second leg will be played on Sept. 24 at Allianz Parque in Sao Paulo.

Lucas Martinez scored in the 89th minute for River Plate, a four-time Copa Libertadores champion.

In the other quarterfinal series, Racing holds a 1-0 lead over Velez Sarsfield. On Thursday, Sao Paulo hosts LDU Quito while Argentina's Estudiantes plays against Flamengo. The Copa Libertadores final will be played in Lima, Peru on Nov. 29. (AP)

Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag enter China Masters quarterfinals

SHENZHEN (CHINA), Sept 18: Star Indian shuttler P V Sindhu and the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty sailed into the quarterfinals of the China Masters tournament with straight-game wins here on Thursday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, took just 41 minutes to get the better of sixth seed Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand 21-15 21-15 while the pair of Satwik and Chirag, who recently reached the Hong Kong Open final, aced the Chinese Taipei duo of Hsiang Chieh Chiu and Wang Chi-Lin 21-13, 21-12 in 32 minutes.

By virtue of the win, Sindhu, ranked 14th, improved her head-to-head record against the Thai shuttler to 6-5.

Sindhu will meet top seed An Se Young of Korea in the quarterfinals. An Se edged past Mia Blichfeldt of Denmark 23-21, 21-14.

Sindhu, who had exited the recently-concluded Hong Kong Open in the first round, was delighted with the straight-game victory and said she was alert from the start against her Thai opponent.

"I am happy with the win and it was very important for me from the beginning to be alert and give my 100 per cent. She (Chochuwong) is a top player. I played her in the Indonesia Open; that time also it was a hard match. After winning the first game, I was much more alert in the second game," the Indian said after the match.

"The points were going equal so it was very important for me to stay close to her as every point counts. I am happy that I am on the winning side and I gave my best.

"I have to prepare for tomorrow now. It's

good that if you win the first game you finish it off in the second game. Straight wins always give you that confidence. But you also have to be prepared for long matches and make sure that you are quicker on your feet," she added.

Sindhu said the key to winning matches where there is strong air-conditioning drift is to control one's shots.

"It's (drift) always there, every tournament there is wind but it is important that you have control. But sometimes it's very hard to control."

Sindhu is currently working along side Indian women's singles coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama, the former men's singles coach of the Indonesian badminton team.

She said the association is slowly and steadily showing results.

"It's very good (working relationship). It is a very good coach. Initially when we started, obviously we knew it will take time. We coordinated and figured out what needs to be done and changed. As a coach he is giving his best efforts, and as an athlete it's my duty also," she said.

Eighth seeded Satiwk and Chirag, who recently broke a string of early losses to make the Hong Kong Open final, beat the lower-ranked Chinese Taipei pair for the second time this year.

They had defeated Chiu and Wang in three tough games at the Hong Kong Open Super 500 tournament in the round of 32 earlier this month.

The first game was completely dominated by the Indian duo, once ranked No.1 in the world, taking an early 7-2 lead before pocketing the game in less than 15 minutes. (PTI)

Winning Asia Cup will be a balm for quake-hit Afghanistan: Gulbadin Naib

DUBAI, Sept 18: Afghanistan all-rounder Gulbadin Naib says his team wants to win the Asia Cup to bring joy to the country which is reeling from the devastation caused by a recent earthquake.

In the Nurgal District, Kunar Province, a 6.0 magnitude earthquake claimed more than 2,000 lives on August 31.

"Because of the situation that happened in Afghanistan, the earthquake, in which many people lost their lives...if we remember it again, it's a little bit painful. Because it's very difficult, there are not so many facilities in the country.

"But still, it will be a very happy occasion for us, for our people, if we win this tournament. We can give them some happiness," Naib told PTI Videos in an interaction on Thursday.

While the emotional weight of the national tragedy is heavy, Afghanistan has not lost sight of their aim to make a mark at the team's second home - the UAE.

"You look at the weather, it's very warm and hot. We are used to it here. It can be said that this is our second home ground in the UAE. We played a lot of cricket here, so we have no issues here," he said.

The 34-year-old insisted that in T20 cricket no team can claim to be favourite due to the unpredictable nature of the shortest format. "There are no favourites, especially in T20 cricket. It depends on the day and how you play. If the day is in your favour, you can beat any side.

"In my opinion, there are good teams in the tournament -- India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, even the UAE and



Hong Kong. Everyone is playing good cricket," he noted.

Naib admitted that the sweltering heat here has made life tough for spinners, including Afghanistan star Rashid Khan.

"There is a lot of sweating. The hands are totally wet. I've seen bowlers like Rashid Khan. It's very difficult to bowl in this weather.

"Maybe in Dubai and Sharjah it will be effective for the spinners, but not that much in Abu Dhabi," he said. The veteran also highlighted Afghanistan's enviable spin depth, with names like Rashid, Noor Ahmad and Qais Ahmad who are the driving force of the attack.

"There are so many world-class wrist spinners. Whether it's Noor, whether it's Rashid, whether it's Qais. Afghanistan gave a good fight to both India and Pakistan...we are also trying to beat any side.

"This is not limited to the Asia Cup. Our aim is that whenever, which team, where, which tournament we are participating, we should give our best," he added.

Afghanistan are facing an uphill task against Sri Lanka on Thursday which will be a knockout match for them after the loss to Bangladesh.

"Every day when you play with a good team, basically you have a good option for the next day. Because you are playing with them. But it's a big tournament, there are big teams. So every day is a new day." (PTI)

Top archers to compete for six franchises; Jyoti, Deepika, Dhiraj top Indians in inaugural APL

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: World number ones Andrea Becerra (compound) and Brady Ellison (recurve) are among 48 top archers who will compete in the inaugural Archery Premier League (APL), the first-ever franchise based event, at the Yamuna Sports Complex here from October 2 to 12.

Other top foreign archers featuring in the six-team league are world number six Matias Grande of Mexico (recurve), and women numero uno Mike Schloesser of Netherlands (compound).

The Indian archers were picked based on world rankings as well as Archery Association of India's (AAI) recent selection trials.

In recurve, world No. 3 Deepika and world No. 14 Dhiraj headline the field, alongside veterans Tarundeep Rai and Atanu Das.

Other women recurve archers include Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur, while the men's line-up features Neeraj Chauhan, Rahul, Rohit Kumar, Mrinal Chauhan, Sachin Gupta and Krish Kumar.

In compound, world record-holder Jyoti Surekha Vennam (No. 3) and world No. 9 Rishabh Yadav lead the charge. They are joined by veteran Abhishek Verma (No. 10), Prathamesh Bhalchandra Fuge (No. 11), Priyansh (No. 16) and Parneet Kaur (No. 17).

Among others, Aman Saini, Ojas Deotale, Sahil Rajesh Jadhav and Chittibomma Jignas will represent the men, while Prithika Pradeep, Avneet Kaur and Madhura Dhamangaonkar are part of the women's field.

The APL, launched by AAI, will feature six teams -- Prithviraj Yodhas (Delhi), Rajputana Royaks (Rajasthan), Chola Chiefs (Tamil Nadu), Kakatiya Knights (Telangana), Chera Archers (Jharkhand) and Mighty Marathas (Maharashtra).

Each team will comprise eight archers -- six Indian and two foreigners, both male and female. The total prize purse of the league is ₹ 2 crore.

The teams have been picked on Thursday following an eight-round players' draft. (PTI)

Mukul Kalita earns national acclaim in chess championship

HT Correspondent

MANGALDOL, Sept 18: Mukul Kalita, a distinguished international-rated chess player, coach, and general secretary of Darrang District Chess Association, has achieved a remarkable milestone by securing national-level recognition as the senior arbiter by appearing qualifying exam held in Tripura recently. Kalita, is the first from his region to earn this honour.

The All India Chess Federation commended Kalita for his outstanding performance, marking a significant achievement in his career. His success has garnered praise from the Darrang District Chess Association.



Govt. of Assam
Skill, Employment & Entrepreneurship Department
Directorate of Employment and Craftsmen Training



Notice for Spot Admission 2025-26
Admission into the Vacant Seats in various Trades in ITIs

Build Your Skills, Secure Your Future!

Centre of Excellence
(Established in Govt. ITIs in collaboration with Tata Technologies Ltd.)

Govt ITI, Private ITI and ITIs under PPP Mode

1. Courses Offered in the Centre of Excellence setup in Govt. ITIs

- ✓ Basic Designer and Virtual Verifier (Mechanical)-2 yrs.
- ✓ CNC Machining Technician-2 yrs
- ✓ Industrial Robotics & Digital Manufacturing Technician-1 yr
- ✓ Mechanic Electric Vehicle-2 yrs

2. Courses offered in all ITIs (Govt., PPP and Private) are available in the portal

Details of ITI wise Trades wise no of vacant seats are available in the admission Portal
www.itiassam.nic.in

Eligibility criteria for Admission

- 1 Passed 10th class examination
- 2 Age: Minimum 14 Yrs. as on 1st July 2025

Timeline for Registration

- 1 Candidate Registration: 18th - 22nd September 2025
- 2 Verification of Candidate Particulars at nearest Govt. ITIs: 18th - 22nd September 2025

For details of schedule for Rank generation, Spot Admission please visit admission portal.
Apply online: www.itiassam.nic.in

Published by Directorate of Information & Public Relations, Assam Connect with us @diprassam dipr.assam.gov.in
Subscribe to Asom Barta WhatsApp 'Assam' at 7636834943

DIPR /D/HLT/170/19-Sep-25