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PM launches ₹18,530 cr projects in state

Modi an architect of New India, says CM ● World's first bio-ethanol plant using bamboo to come up

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched projects worth ₹ 18,530 crore in Assam, including the world's first bio-ethanol plant using bamboo as raw material, along with major health and infrastructure projects at programmes in Darrang and Golaghat districts.

In Darrang district's Mangaldoi town, the PM laid foundation stones for three major projects with an investment of ₹ 6,300 crore.

These include the Darrang Medical College and Hospital, along with a GNM school and nursing college at a cost of ₹



570 crore, the Guwahati Ring Road (₹ 4,530 crore) and the Kuruwa-Narengi bridge over Brahmaputra (₹ 1,200 crore), officials said.

In Darrang, the Prime Minister, in the presence of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, laid the foundation stone for three landmark projects at Mangaldoi — the Darrang Medical College and Hospital (₹570 crore), the Guwahati Ring Road (₹4,530 crore), and the Kuruwa-Narengi bridge across the Brahmaputra (₹1,200 crore) and an ethanol plant and Petro Fluidised Catalytic Cracker Unit with a combined cost of ₹ 12,230 crore in Numaligarh.

These projects are expected to significantly boost connectivity, healthcare services, and economic development in Assam.

Addressing the gathering, Sarma described the Prime Minister as "an architect of New India" and credited him

for helping Assam move towards a "New Assam."

He said the projects will open new horizons for healthcare and infrastructure, fulfilling long-standing demands in the region. The Darrang Medical College, Assam's 24th medical institution, will admit 100 MBBS students annually and also feature a nursing school and BSc Nursing College with annual capacities of 40 and 60 students respectively.

The chief minister assured that the college would be completed within three years, providing much-needed medical education and healthcare services to (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

UPPL releases 2025 election manifesto

Document focuses on 'mother, land, community, education, and peace'

KOKRAJHAR, Sept 14: The United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) on Sunday released its 2025 Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) election manifesto, themed "Mother, Land, Community, Education, and Peace," with a pledge to build a prosperous and harmonious Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

The manifesto, titled Vision to Action, along with the Election Assurance Card, was unveiled at the party's Central Election Steering Committee office at Titaguri, Bhanipur, in Kokrajhar.

Chief Executive Member (CEM) of BTR and UPPL President Pramod Boro released the documents in the presence of the party's founder president and Assam cabinet minister Urkhao Gwra Brahma, Kokrajhar MP Joyanta Basumatary, UPPL Women's Wing President Pratibha Brahma, and several other



senior leaders. Speaking at the event, UPPL leaders emphasised that the party's vision for 2025 and beyond is rooted in inclusive growth, cultural preservation, quality education, women's empowerment, and lasting peace in the region.

The manifesto outlines comprehensive plans for economic development, education reforms, skill development, women's welfare schemes, (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Heavy rains, mudslides disrupt road communications

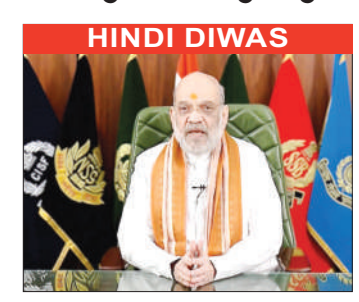
DIMAPUR, Sept 14: Torrential rains and mudslides have severely disrupted road communications along the Pagala Pahar stretch of NH-29 in Nagaland, leading to suspension of vehicular movement, officials said on Sunday.

A traffic official said multiple mudslides between Chathe Bridge and New Chumoukedima have blocked the Dimapur-Chumoukedima-Kohima route. Fortunately, there were (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Leaders call for promoting all languages

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Hindi Diwas was observed across India on Sunday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other top leaders underlining Hindi's role as a unifying factor in this linguistically diverse country while asserting the need for enriching all Indian languages.

PM Modi said the growing respect for Hindi on the world stage was a matter of pride and inspiration for all Indians, while Home Minister Amit Shah said Hindi should not just serve as a spoken tongue but must also become a language of science, technology, the



judiciary, and police. Hindi Diwas is celebrated every year on September 14 to mark the adoption of Hindi as an official language by (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Modi hails crackdown on Assam infiltrators

Cong accused of backing Pakistan-groomed terrorists

MANGALDOI/NUMALIGARH, Sept 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the Congress of siding with terrorists groomed by Pakistan instead of supporting the Indian Army, and hailed the Assam government for "evicting infiltrators from enclaved land". Addressing a public meeting at Mangaldoi in Darrang district, Modi slammed the grand old party for allegedly protecting infiltrators and anti-national forces.

At another rally at Numaligarh in Golaghat district, Modi said the central government is taking steps to reduce crude oil and gas imports, focusing more on the exploration of fossil fuels and green energy. The US recently increased levies on Indian products for

Quake of 5.8 magnitude hits parts of NE

GUWAHATI, Sept 14: An earthquake of 5.8 magnitude shook parts of the northeast region and West Bengal on Sunday, officials said.

There was no immediate report of any loss of life or damage to property, they said.

The epicentre of the earthquake that struck at 4.41 pm, was in Udalguri district, the officials said.

The depth of the quake was 5 km. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Assam earlier in the day, where he launched projects worth over ₹ 18,000 (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Those involved in violence during 'Gen Z' protest will be brought to justice: PM Karki

KATHMANDU, Sept 14: Nepal Prime Minister Sushila Karki on Sunday said that those involved in violence and destruction across the country during the anti-government protests last week will be brought to justice.

Karki, 73, who assumed office at the newly-built Home Ministry building at Singhdurbar Secretariat in Kathmandu at around 11 am, also announced that those who were killed during the 'Gen Z' protest will be declared "martyrs" and provided one million Nepalese rupees.

The former chief justice was appointed the caretaker prime minister by President Ramchandra Paudel on the recommendation of the Gen Z group, which overthrew the K P Sharma Oli government through a two-day protest on Tuesday.

Addressing a meeting of secretaries and senior government officials soon after assuming office, Prime Minister Karki said that those involved in the violence and destruction of public and private property will be brought to justice. She said that the arson and van-

dalism during the protests of September 9 was "pre-planned" and the Gen-Z protesters were not involved in such activities.

"The kind of arson and vandalism that has taken place is a criminal act. This was carried out in an organised manner. Those responsible must be punished," she said.

She also instructed Chief Secretary Ek Narayan Aryal to arrange for the repair of the destroyed police posts across the country.

As the Prime Minister's Office in Singhdurbar Secretariat was set on fire (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Rajnath approves new framework to rationalise revenue procurement

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a new framework to streamline, simplify and rationalise the revenue procurement process for the military.

The Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2025 also aims to foster jointness among the three services and help in maintaining the highest level of military preparedness through expeditious decision making process for revenue procurement, an official readout said on Sunday.

"It (DPM) will ensure timely

availability of requisite resources to the armed forces and at appropriate cost," it said.

Defence Minister Singh approved the DPM that will "further streamline, simplify, enable and rationalise the revenue procurement process in the Ministry of Defence and cater to the emerging requirements of the armed forces in the era of modern warfare", it said.

The ministry said ease of doing business has been further strengthened in the document, which aims to boost Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance) in defence manufacturing

and technology.

"The objective is to utilise the potential, expertise, and capability of the domestic market in defence sector by ensuring active participation of private players, MSMEs, start-ups, etc., along with the well-established Defence Public Sector Undertakings," it said in a statement.

Procurement of goods and services by the defence services and other organisations under the defence ministry is regulated by the DPM, which was last promulgated in 2009. (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Hindi attaining global prominence: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Sept 14: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday greeted people on Hindi Diwas and said the language has played a key role in uniting the country.

He said that Hindi is attaining global prominence, which is a testimony of the country's strength.

"Heartfelt greetings on Hindi Diwas! The Hindi language, filled with simplicity, ease and gracefulness, has united the country," Sarma said in a post on X.

"Under the leadership of Shri Modi ji, the global prominence of Hindi is increasing, which is a testimony of the strength of the country's unity," (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

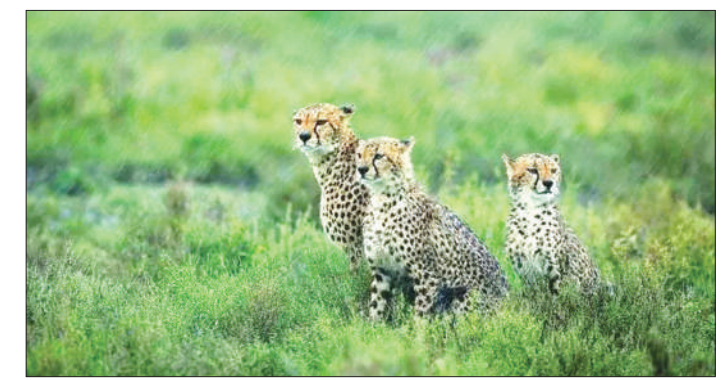
Env Min asks for wildlife and conservation assessments as project threatens forest land, habitats

Cheetah panel's input sought for MP irrigation project

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: An Environment Ministry panel has asked Madhya Pradesh Water Resources Department to obtain comments of the Cheetah Steering Committee about an irrigation project that will submerge 596 hectares of forest land.

The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC), in its meeting on August 29, recommended standard terms of reference for the Sonpura Major Micro Irrigation Project proposed on the Karai river, a tributary of the Kuno.

The project will irrigate 19,410 hectares in 92 villages across Shivpuri and Guna districts. It requires 1,042.9 hectares of land -- 615.14 hectares of forest land, 248.53



hectares of government land and 179.23 hectares of private land. The submergence area is 1,023.65 hectares, of which 596 hectares is forest land.

According to the minutes of the meeting, the panel directed the department to examine wildlife corridors within 10 km of the project site and prepare a site-specific

wildlife conservation plan.

The direction comes at a time when the government is working to establish a viable cheetah population in India.

Seventy years after the species went extinct in the country, Project Cheetah was launched in 2022 to reintroduce the big cat. As part of this effort, 20 African cheetahs were brought to Kuno National Park -- eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023.

Eleven of them have survived, including two that were transferred to Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary in April. Since the introduction, 26 cubs have been born, of which 17 have survived. (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

India brags about having 1.4 billion people but won't buy one bushel of US corn: Lutnick

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, Sept 14: India brags about having 1.4 billion people but won't buy even a small amount of American corn, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick has said, asserting that New Delhi must bring down its tariffs or face a "tough time" doing business with the US.

Lutnick made the comments during an interview on Saturday when he was asked whether the US is mismanaging "very valuable relationships" with "important allies" like India, Canada and Brazil with the tariffs imposed on these countries.

"The relationship is one way, they sell to us and take advantage of us. They block us from their



economy, and they sell to us while we are wide open for them to come in (and) take advantage," Lutnick said. "The president says, 'fair and reciprocal trade,'" he added.

"India brags that they have 1.4 billion people. Why won't 1.4 billion people buy one bushel of US

corn? Doesn't that rub you the wrong way that they sell everything to us and they won't buy our corn. They put tariffs on everything," Lutnick said.

He added that President Donald Trump has said "'bring down your tariffs, treat us the way we treat you'".

The commerce secretary further said "we've got to right years of wrong so we want a tariff going the other way until we fix this".

"That's the president's model, and you either accept it or you're going to have a tough time doing business with the world's greatest consumer," Lutnick said.

The Trump administration has imposed 50 (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Insurance Amendment Bill likely to be introduced in Winter session: FM

States should get compensation for GST revenue loss: Kerala FM

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Insurance Amendment Bill, which proposes 100 per cent FDI in the insurance sector, is likely to be introduced in Parliament in the upcoming Winter session, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said.

The winter session of Parliament generally commences in the second half of November and concludes before Christmas.

"I hope to", she told PTI when asked if the bill to further liberalise FDI in the insurance sector can be introduced in Parliament in the upcoming Winter session.

The finance minister, in this year's Budget speech, proposed to raise the foreign investment limit to 100 per cent from the existing 74 per cent in the insurance sector as part of new-generation financial sector reforms.

"This enhanced limit will be available for those companies which invest the entire premium in India. The current guardrails and conditionalities associated with foreign investment will be reviewed and simplified," she had said.

So far, the insurance sector has



NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said...

attracted ₹ 82,000 crore through foreign direct investment (FDI).

The finance ministry has proposed to amend various provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938, including raising foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector to 100 per cent, a reduction in paid-up capital, and a provision for a composite licence.

As part of a comprehensive legislative exercise, the Life Insurance Corporation Act 1956 and the Insurance Regulatory and Develop-

ment Authority Act 1999 will be amended, alongside the Insurance Act 1938.

The amendments to the LIC Act propose to empower its board to take operational decisions like branch expansion and recruitment.

The proposed amendment primarily focuses on promoting policyholders' interests, enhancing their financial security, and facilitating the entry of more players into the insurance market, leading to economic growth and employ-

ment generation.

Such changes will help enhance the efficiency of the insurance industry, enabling ease of doing business and enhancing insurance penetration to achieve the goal of 'Insurance for All by 2047'.

The Insurance Act of 1938 serves as the principal Act to provide the legislative framework for insurance in India. It provides the framework for the functioning of insurance businesses and regulates the relationship between an insurer, its policyholders, shareholders and the regulator Irdai.

The entry of more players in the sector would not only push penetration but also result in greater job creation across the country.

Currently, there are 25 life insurance companies and 34 non-life or general insurance firms in India, including specialised general insurance companies like Agricultural Insurance Company of India Ltd and ECGC Ltd.

The FDI limit in the insurance sector was last raised - from 49 per cent to 74 per cent - in 2021. In 2015, the government hiked the FDI cap in the insurance sector from 26 per cent to 49 per cent. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Kerala Finance Minister KN Balagopal on Sunday said GST rate rationalisation benefits should be passed on to the common people, but if there is no compensation for the annual revenue loss, then states will be unable to continue to meet their social responsibilities.

For Kerala, the annual revenue loss due to the GST rate rationalisation is estimated at ₹ 8,000 crore to ₹ 10,000 crore.

Asserting that economic growth should be beneficial for the entire country, Balagopal told PTI that progressive taxation should not mean less tax for all and high-income or high-end luxury goods should be taxed more, which is the general good taxation practice.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, which represents the Centre and the states, approved a two-rate GST structure - 5 and 18 per cent - on September 3. The revised rates, to be effective from September 22, will bring down the prices of a large number of items.

While Kerala has welcomed the rate rationalisation exercise, it is concerned about not having a compensation mechanism for the revenue loss.

Currently, there are four rate slabs - 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent.

In an interview with PTI in the national capital on Sunday, Balagopal stressed that if the GST rate rationalisation is not functioning with all the safeguards for the state, then the situation will be detrimental for the public finances in the future.

"GST rationalisation will result in huge discounts in taxes, and the prices should come down in the coming days. It should be passed on to the common com-

sumers 'Aam Aadmi'... in the past, whenever rate rationalisation came (in 2017-18), the tax difference was not passed on to the people," the senior leader of the ruling CPI(M)-led Left Front in Kerala said.

GST, sales tax and Value Added Tax (VAT) are among the main revenue income sources for a state, while the Centre has a lot more options, the minister said and highlighted that if the revenue loss is not compensated, then states cannot continue with their social responsibilities like health, education and public distribution system.

According to Kerala-based Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, the state's annual revenue loss due to the GST rate rationalisation is estimated to be in the range of ₹ 8,000 crore to ₹ 10,000 crore, with the revenue loss related to goods alone pegged at around ₹ 6,300 crore.

"The Indian economy is growing like anything. We are all happy about that... the growth should be beneficial for the entire country... those who are deserving should get it... Otherwise, a Laissez-faire economy and free market will not help the country to run," Balagopal said.

If the states are weakened without anything for welfare activities, then "what is the meaning of development we are boasting about?" the minister asked.

On September 3, Balagopal told the GST Council that the current rationalisation framework considers revenue neutrality at the national level, but consumption patterns differ widely across states.

"For Kerala, where the consumption basket is heavily skewed towards higher-rate items, the impact will be disproportionately severe compared to the national average," he had said. (PTI)

Sugar industry has survived due to use of ethanol: Gadkari

Activewear maker TechnoSport to invest ₹ 200 cr to open 300 exclusive stores

Power lines across Punjab to undergo upgrade

PUNE, Sept 14: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said the sugar industry has survived due to the advent of ethanol, and asserted there is a need for new technologies in farming.

Speaking at an event of Naam Foundation in Pune, Gadkari attributed cultivator suicides in Maharashtra's Vidarbha and Marathwada regions to the scarcity of water for farming.

The senior BJP leader hailed the work of Naam Foundation, led by actors Nana Patekar and Makrand Anaspure, in the field of water conservation and the welfare of the children of farmers who had committed suicide.

"Water was the main cause behind the suicides of farmers in Vidarbha and Marathwada regions. If water was available in abundance, the farmers would not have to take the ex-

trême step," said Gadkari. He said there is a need to bring in technology in the farming sector and experiments regarding the same have already been undertaken. "We import fossil fuel worth ₹ lakh 22 crore due to ethanol. Today, the sugarcane cultivators and sugar mill operators have survived just because of the advent of ethanol," the minister said.

Sugar is in surplus in India and sugar mills have managed to survive just because of ethanol, he added. Earlier this month, the Congress levelled conflict of interest allegations against Gadkari, claiming he has been "aggressively lobbying" for ethanol production while his two sons are involved in firms that produce ethanol and "benefitted" from government policy. (PTI)

KOLKATA, Sept 14: TechnoSport, one of India's fastest-growing activewear brands, on Sunday said it will invest about ₹ 200 crore to open 300 exclusive outlets across the country over the next two years, as part of its aggressive retail expansion, a company official said on Sunday.

The company's promoters, who have roots in Kolkata, had so far relied on general trade. The decision to expand through exclusive brand outlets (EBOs) follows a 40 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) since 2022, driven by traction in modern retail, e-commerce and brand stores.

"We have opened our 21st exclusive brand outlet on Sunday, and that is in Kolkata. With this, we now have two stores in West Bengal. Our plan is to scale up to 300 stores nationwide over the next two years at an estimated capex of ₹ 200 crore," TechnoSport

CEO Pushpan Maity told PTI. He said that eastern India will account for around 30 per cent of the new stores, underscoring the brand's focus on the region.

The company is also investing ₹ 100 crore in a new manufacturing facility in Odisha, complementing its existing yarn-to-fabric plant in Tirupur, he said.

The Indian active and sportswear market is estimated at around ₹ 4,500 crore, Maity said, adding that the opportunity for "internationally benchmarked products at affordable prices remains huge".

For FY'26, the company is targeting revenues of ₹ 600 crore, with an aim to touch ₹ 1,000 crore by FY'27, driven by retail expansion and product innovation. The brand will also launch a winter wear line this fiscal, but will remain focused on activewear rather than expanding into formal clothing, Maity said. (PTI)

LUDHIANA, Sept 14: Power lines across Punjab will undergo a comprehensive upgrade in an effort to improve public safety, reduce power outages, and enhance the aesthetics of urban areas.

Punjab Power Minister Sanjeev Arora said on Saturday that during various election meetings, the primary demand from the public was an improvement in power infrastructure.

The Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) has launched a special initiative to upgrade power lines in 13 major municipal corporations, covering a total of 87 subdivisions. This effort aims to improve public safety, reduce power outages, and enhance the aesthetics of urban areas. A key component of this project involves removing non-electric wires from PSPCL electric poles. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

PM launches ₹18,530

Darrang and surrounding areas. The Guwahati Ring Road, a 121.43 km project, will be executed in three phases to improve mobility and reduce congestion.

It will serve as an alternative route for vehicles, including freight traffic from neighboring states. The Kurua-Narengi bridge is expected to boost regional trade and the development of satellite towns, strengthening the Northeast's economy.

The chief minister further highlighted the government's broader development agenda, citing projects like the Namrup Fertilizer Plant, the Tata Semiconductor Project in Jagoirad, and the large power generation plant at Chapar in Dhubri district.

He also announced that the road from Baihata Chariali to Tezpur will be converted into a four-lane highway.

Referring to the Prime Minister's leadership, he expressed confidence that the state would soon emerge as a developed and prosperous region.

However, alongside the launch of these projects, the Prime Minister mounted a fierce attack on the Congress party.

The programme was attended by Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal, revenue and disaster management minister Keshab Mahanta, public health engineering minister Jayanta Mallabaruah, MLAs Basanta Das and Dr Paramananda Rajbongshi, chairman of Assam Fisheries Development Corporation Gurujyoti Das, among others.

UPPL releases 2025

infrastructure upgrades, environmental protection, and the full implementation of the 2020 Bodo Peace Accord by 2027. The party assured that it would focus on creating a prosperous BTR with peaceful coexistence among all communities, aiming to transform the region into a model of harmony and progress.

CEM Pramod Boro stated that the UPPL is committed to working for the all-round development of society and is relentlessly dedicated to the upliftment and welfare of the people. He said that the citizens of BTR have been experiencing peace and tranquility since the signing of the Bodo Accord.

He added that the UPPL is poised to win a majority of the 40 seats in the BTC election.

Quake of 5.8 magnitude

core. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, in a post on X, said, "The epicentre (of the earthquake) was near Udalguri. So far, there has been no report of any major damage or loss of life. We are actively monitoring the situation."

Residents of Udalguri, Sonitpur, Tamulpur, Nalbari and several other districts in Assam felt the tremors, the officials said.

Panic-gripped people were seen rushing out of their residences in Guwahati. People in the western parts of Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh also felt the jolt. Residents in Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar could also be seen scampering out of their houses and shops in panic. According to state disaster management secretary Dani Sulu, no reports of structural damage or casualties have been reported from the state so far.

"The situation is being closely monitored, but there is no cause for alarm," he said. The northeastern states fall in the high seismic zone, and earthquakes frequently hit the region. A report from West Bengal said the tremors were also experienced in parts of north Bengal - Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Dooars, Alipurduar, Coochbehar.

"I could feel the earth shaking for a few seconds. I rushed out of my house as a precautionary measure," said Bikash Dey, a Siliguri resident.

Some people also blew conch shells, a custom believed to mitigate the impacts of a quake. There was no report of any fatality or damage to structures due to the earthquake in any part of West Bengal, an official said. (PTI)

Modi hails crackdown

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had on Saturday night shown him a video in which a former Congress president was seen saying that the "BJP was honouring singers and dancers". The Congress leader's comment came after the BJP had bestowed the Bharat Ratna on Bhupen Hazarika in 2019, Modi said. "The wounds inflicted by Jawaharlal Nehru, during the Chinese aggression in 1962, on the people of Assam are yet to heal, but this insult to Hazarika is like adding salt to the wound," the prime minister claimed. "I am pained by this insult to Bhupen da, but people are my masters and they will answer whether the BJP was right or not in conferring the Bharat Ratna on the legendary singer," Modi said. People should also ask the Congress why its leaders "insulted a legend like Bhupen Hazarika", the PM said.

The BJP's double-engine government is committed to realising the dreams of Assam's great sons like Hazarika, he said.

The term double engine is used by BJP leaders to refer to the party being in power at the Centre as well as in a state.

The PM again took a dig at the Congress in the second meeting of the day at Numaligarh, alleging that it was responsible for insurgency and unrest in Assam.

"The Congress also ignored the heritage and icons of Assam. But, the BJP brought development and gave recognition to the state's heritage," he claimed.

The PM said at Mangaldoi that the Congress had ruled Assam for decades, but

built "only three bridges" over the Brahmaputra river, while the BJP-led dispensation constructed six such structures in the last 10 years.

Modi also praised Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for "evicting infiltrators from encroached land and ensuring that farmers can now cultivate on these plots". The land parcels once illegally occupied are now witnessing an agricultural revolution in the hands of farmers and indigenous people, he claimed.

"The BJP will not allow infiltrators to grab land, insult women and girls, and conspire to change demography, which is a threat to national security," he asserted.

"Mukabla ho jai" (let there be a fight) in protecting Assam from infiltrators who are protected by certain sections of the society, and I challenge them as the BJP will not allow this (infiltration)," Modi said.

The prime minister also said, "There are conspiracies to alter the demography in the border regions through infiltration, and this poses a serious threat to national security; therefore, a nationwide Demography Mission is now being launched."

On the development front, Modi said that though India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, the country is still dependent on foreign nations for crude oil and gas.

"To change this, the focus has to be on meeting our energy requirements. The government is working on oil exploration and green energy generation," the PM said. Modi added that Assam's growth rate was at a staggering 13 per cent.

"This was achieved due to the efforts of the double-engine government. The Centre and the state government are developing Assam as a health hub. The Northeast has a big role to play in achieving the 'Viksit Bharat' dream," the PM said.

The Centre has been focusing on connectivity in the Northeast, which has helped businesses and created employment opportunities for youth, he said.

"Rapid development in any region requires robust connectivity, and our government is committed to enhancing seamless multimodal connectivity in the North East," he said. The PM said that 25 years of the 21st century have passed, and the next chapter of this century "belongs to the East and the North East".

Modi urged people to buy 'swadeshi' goods for the development of the country and the bright future of their children. (PTI)

Hindi Diwas: Leaders call

the Constituent Assembly on September 14, 1949. Indian missions abroad marked the occasion with essay competitions, poetry recitals, and seminars. Many foreign diplomats in India challenged themselves with Hindi tongue twisters, while the French Embassy shared a video on social media where its envoys explained why they were learning the language.

An evidence of Hindi's increasing global footprint is Russia witnessing a growing interest in students wanting to learn the language. Russia's Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education, Konstantin Mogilevsky, said, "We want more of our students to learn Hindi." "India is the world's most populous country today, and more and more Indians are starting to use Hindi in their daily lives instead of English. We need to learn Hindi and other Eastern languages," Mogilevsky told the Russian News Agency TASS.

Prime Minister Modi urged people to take a pledge to enrich all Indian languages, including Hindi, and pass them on to the coming generations with pride.

"Infinite best wishes to all of you on Hindi Diwas. Hindi is not just a medium of communication, but a living heritage of our identity and culture. On this occasion, let us all take a pledge to enrich all Indian languages, including Hindi, and pass them on to the coming generations with pride," Modi said in a post in Hindi on X.

"The growing respect of Hindi on the world stage is a matter of pride and inspiration for all of us," he said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah asked everyone to respect all Indian languages and move forward towards a self-reliant, self-confident and developed country.

He also asserted that there was no conflict between Hindi and other Indian languages, and stressed that it should not just serve as a spoken tongue but must also become a language of science, technology, the judiciary, and police. Shah said that while Sanskrit has given us "the Ganga of knowledge, and Hindi has taken this knowledge to every home, and that knowledge has reached every person through our local languages".

"Ours is fundamentally a language-oriented nation. Our languages have been a powerful medium for carrying forward culture, history, traditions, knowledge, science, philosophy, and spirituality from generation to generation," he said in a message on the occasion of Hindi Diwas.

In the 'Amrit Kaal' of Independence, the home minister said Modi has taken 'Panch Pran' (five pledges) to free the country from the symbols of slavery, in which languages have a significant role. "We must adopt Indian languages as the medium of communication and interaction," he said.

The home minister said in 2024, on Hindi Diwas, the Bharatiya Bhasha Anubhag was established with an aim of ensuring seamless translation between all major Indian languages. "Our goal is to ensure that Hindi and other Indian languages become not just a medium of communication but the cornerstone of technology, science, justice, education, and administration," he said. "Mithila's poet Vidyapati ji rightly said: 'Desil bayana sab jan mitha' means, one's own language is the sweetest," he said.

Addressing the inaugural session of the 5th Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha Sammelan, Shah also egged on Indians to preserve their languages and make them "immortal", urging parents to speak to children in their mother tongue.

"There is no conflict between Hindi and other Indian languages. Learned men like Dayanand Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi, KM Munshi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and

many others accepted Hindi and promoted it. Gujarat, where Gujarati and Hindi have coexisted, is an excellent example of the development of both languages," he said.

"This is very important for the child's future, as many psychologists and educationists have confirmed that a child thinks in his mother tongue. ... As soon as you impose a language other than the mother tongue on a child, 25 to 30 per cent of his mind's capacity will be spent in translating it," Shah added. (PTI)

Heavy rains, mudslides

no reports of injuries or casualties.

The strong currents of Chathe River, which has risen above the danger level due to continuous heavy rainfall, swept away a suspension bridge connecting Chumoukedima and Seithekema. Floodwaters also submerged the bailey bridge linking Dubagaon and Klughovi village, cutting off road communication between the two villages.

Several low-lying colonies in Dimapur town were inundated, damaging property and disrupting daily activities. Meanwhile, landslides along the Mhainamsii-Pimla road, an alternate route to Kohima, further disrupted vehicular movement.

In response, the Peren district administration issued a travel advisory restricting the movement of essential commodities and commuters on the Pimla-Mhainamsii road.

Under the advisory, light vehicles would be allowed to ply in both directions between 6 am and 6 pm, while heavy vehicles (up to six-wheel) will be permitted from Pimla to Mhainamsii between 4 pm and midnight, and in the reverse direction from midnight to 6 am. (PTI)

Those involved in

during the two-day agitation, the newly-constructed building for the Home Ministry within the Singhdarbar complex will be used as the Prime Minister's Office.

The agitation, which began on Monday against a government ban on social media, quickly expanded into a larger campaign reflecting public anger over corruption and perceived apathy of the political class.

K P Sharma Oli quit on Tuesday shortly after hundreds of agitators entered his office demanding his resignation for the death of at least 19 people in police action during Monday's protests.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary Aryal informed that the death toll during the agitation has reached 72, including three policemen. It includes 59 protesters and 10 prisoners, he said. (PTI)

Rajnath approves new

The new manual was under revision in the ministry in consultation with the armed forces and other stakeholders. "The DPM lays down the guiding principles and provisions for all revenue procurements in the ministry valuing around Rs 1 lakh crore for the current financial year," the ministry said.

"There has been a pressing need for this manual to be aligned with latest developments in the field of public procurement duly ensuring the use of technology in procurement with utmost fairness, transparency, and accountability," it said. (PTI)

Hindi attaining global

he added, Hindi Diwas is observed on September 14 every year to commemorate the adoption of Hindi as one of the official languages in India. (PTI)

India brags about

per cent tariffs on India, including 25 per cent for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, among the highest imposed on any country in the world.

India has described the US action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable". Defending its purchase of Russian crude oil, India has been maintaining that its energy procurement is driven by national interest and market dynamics. (PTI)

Cheetah panel's input

The EAC said the project area supports wild species protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act and directed that studies on the presence of such species must be included. It also required measures to minimise human-animal conflict, highlighting that submergence of large forest patches and construction activity could disturb natural habitats and restrict the movement of animals.

"PP shall submit comments of the Cheetah Steering Committee regarding the project," the EAC said. On aquatic ecology, the EAC asked for assessments of seasonal variations in river flow, impacts on fish productivity and changes in the aquatic system once the reservoir is created. For human communities, the minutes record that the project will affect villages with a significant tribal population. The land to be acquired includes forest-dependent areas, raising concerns about loss of grazing grounds, fodder, fuelwood and minor forest produce.

The EAC said the environmental impact assessment should specifically study these impacts on livelihoods and suggest mitigation. The committee also pointed out that Stage-I forest clearance has not yet been applied for and will be essential before the project can proceed. (PTI)

ATSU to launch stir over Sixth schedule, land encroachment

ATSU demands eviction of illegal encroachers



HT Correspondent
MORIGAON, Sept 14: The central committee of the All Tiwa Students' Union (ATSU) has announced a series of agitation programmes in Morigaon district, starting from September 24, 2025, in protest against the Assam government's failure to fulfill their long-standing demands.

The union, in a crucial meeting held on September 12, 2025, decided to launch a phased agitation. The planned protest events include a dharna at Jagiroad on September 24, a Gana Dharna at Morigaon on October 16, and a Gana Samabesh at Mokaria, Nellie on November 12.

ATSU has demanded the immediate inclusion of the Tiwa Autonomous Council (TAC) under

the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and the eviction of illegal encroachers from the remaining tribal belts and blocks in the district.

According to the organisation, approximately 22,022 bighas of land across seven tribal belts and blocks in Morigaon district are currently under illegal encroachment. They urged the government to take swift action to free these lands.

While expressing appreciation to the Chief Minister for evicting illegal settlers from Kasutoli in Kamrup (Metro) district recently, the union also voiced strong displeasure over not being informed about the state cabinet's decision to include TAC in the Sixth Schedule—news of which they only learned through the media.

PM Modi inaugurates Bio-Ethanol Plant at Numaligarh

Projects worth ₹ 12,230 crore launched in presence of CM



HT Bureau
NUMALIGARH, Sept 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accompanied by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, inaugurated the 2nd Generation Bio-Ethanol Plant at Numaligarh on Saturday. In the same event, the Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for a state-of-the-art Polypropylene Plant, marking a major push towards industrial development in the region.

The two major projects are part of a larger development initiative in Assam, with a total investment of Rs 12,230 crore. Speaking at the occasion, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma highlighted the significance of the projects, stating that they will not only boost the state's economy but also generate substantial employment opportunities.

The 2nd Generation Bio-

Ethanol Plant is expected to promote clean energy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels, aligning with India's long-term sustainable development goals. The proposed Polypropylene Plant will help in expanding Assam's industrial footprint by strengthening the petrochemical sector.

Bakalia LAMPS celebrates Golden Jubilee with grandeur

HT Correspondent
BAKALIA, Sept 14: The Bakalia Large Area Multipurpose Society Ltd (LAMPS) marked its golden jubilee with a celebratory event held at the Bakaliaghat Higher Secondary School auditorium on Sunday.

The event commenced with the traditional welcoming and felicitation of guests using Assamese phulan gamochas, led by LAMPS secretary Bikash Hazarika. As part of the celebration, Langpher BJP Mandal Committee president Mahendra Lekhe cut the jubilee cake, joined by LAMPS members.

An annual general meeting was also convened during the programme, presided over by LAMPS Chairman Indra Tokbi. Secretary Bikash Hazarika presented the annual report for the previous year along with the budget proposal for 2025-26. Junior Inspector and Auditor of Cooperative Societies, Diphu, Lionel Teron, attended the meeting as an observer. According to the secretary, the society currently has 1,248 members.

Among other dignitaries present were Chairman of the Education Board Langsompai Block, Khoysing Teron; BLCC Chairman Bipul Bora; former Bakalia LAMPS secretary Biman Handique; and several members of the society.

NHRC issues notice to Assam DGP over assault on Journalist in Lumding

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the Director General of Police (DGP) of Assam following reports of a journalist being allegedly assaulted and grievously injured by a group of anti-social elements near the Lumding Railway Institute earlier this month.

Taking suo motu cognisance of a media report published on September 9, the NHRC stated that the incident occurred around midnight on September 7, when the journalist was returning home after work.

According to the report, the victim was attacked near the Lumding Railway Institute and was later rescued by police and taken to a hospital for treatment. In a statement released on Saturday, the NHRC noted that the reported incident, if true, raises serious concerns about the safety of journalists and a possible violation of human rights. The Commission has directed the Assam DGP to submit a detailed report within two weeks. The alleged assault has drawn strong condemnation from the Lumding Press Club and local citizens, who have de-

manded immediate action against the perpetrators. They also called for improved security measures for journalists working in the region.

The injured journalist has reportedly expressed fear for his safety and urged the authorities to register a case and take appropriate legal action against those involved in the attack. The NHRC's intervention highlights growing concerns over the safety of media personnel, particularly in sensitive or remote areas, and underscores the need for stronger protections for journalists across the country. (PTI)

Preparatory meeting for Durga Puja 2025 held in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Sept 14: The District Administration of Kokrajhar convened a preparatory meeting on Sunday at the Conference Hall of the Election Office to review and coordinate arrangements for the upcoming Durga Puja celebrations in 2025. The meeting was chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioners Subhram Aditya Bora, Kabita Deka, and Wadiul Islam, and attended by executive magistrates, officials from various departments, and representatives of Durga Puja Committees.

The primary focus of the meeting was to ensure the safe, smooth, and organised conduct of the festival across the district. Clear instructions were issued that all Puja pandals must obtain prior clearance from the relevant authorities. It was also emphasised that pandals must not obstruct public roads and should be equipped with essential safety features including CCTV cameras, fire extinguishers, and designated entry and exit points for effective crowd management. Deployment of volunteers at each pandal was also stressed.

Puja Committees were instructed to strictly follow the designated route plan prepared by the police for the immersion (Visarjan) of idols. The administration informed that sufficient police personnel will be deployed, with continuous patrolling to maintain law and order during the festivities. Traffic personnel will be responsible for regulating vehicle and pedestrian



movement to prevent congestion.

Additionally, the SDRF team under the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), equipped with lifeboats, has been instructed to remain on standby to handle any emergency situation. Authorities have also directed that strict measures be taken to curb the use of intoxicants and prevent disorderly behavior during the celebrations.

Grievances and suggestions raised by various Puja Committees were taken into consideration, and the district administration assured that all necessary steps will be taken to address their concerns to ensure a peaceful and joyous Durga Puja celebration in Kokrajhar.

LOST

I, Konika Biswas, Advocate, Diphu Judicial Court daughter of shri Alok Kumar biswas and s m t . R a s h a n a Biswas, resident of Harilal Basti, Diphu lost my original BA Part III Marksheet bearing Roll. A-06500 No. 0043. If anybody finds, Contact : 7002141794

Pre-Republic Day camp begins at Jorhat NCC academy

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Sept 14: The 10-day Pre-Republic Day Camp of the North Eastern Region (NER) Directorate of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), conducted by the 5 Assam Battalion NCC, commenced on September 13 at the NCC Academy in Jorhat.

The inaugural ceremony was held at the academy's conference hall and was formally inaugurated by Colonel Madhab Boro, the Camp Commandant. In his address, Colonel Boro highlighted the importance of

the Republic Day Camp (RDC) in the life of an NCC cadet, emphasizing its value in terms of exposure, discipline, and national pride.

A total of 402 cadets from eight NCC groups under the NER Directorate, representing the Army, Navy, and Air wings, are participating in the camp. Over the course of ten days, cadets will undergo intensive training and selection processes for the Republic Day Parade, cultural events, and flag area competitions scheduled to be held in New Delhi.

Bijoy Biswas conferred Bangla Shrestha Samman 2025

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Sept 14: Renowned Assamese singer, music composer, and retired senior planning officer Bijoy Biswas was recently honoured with the prestigious Bangla Shrestha Samman 2025 by the Aranya Bangla Foundation, Kolkata. The award was presented at a special function held at Urban View Banquet in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Biswas received the award in recognition of his contributions to Indian music as a global harmony singer and composer. Known for his deep admiration and lifelong dedication to musical legend Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika, Biswas has been singing Hazarika's songs for over 48 years. In every cultural programme he participates in, he consistently dedicates at least two of the maestro's evergreen songs. A familiar face in both Kolkata and Guwahati-based television channels, Bijoy Biswas has also earned recognition as a playback singer in several Assamese and Bengali television serials. Over the years, he has been honoured with numerous awards in both Assam and West Bengal. Notably, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Sur Nandan Bharati in 2024.

However, it is regrettable that despite his decades-long dedication to Dr Bhupen Hazarika's musical legacy, Bijoy Biswas has not been invited to any event organised as part of the ongoing birth centenary celebrations of the legendary bard, as of the time of reporting.

Financial Awareness Meet held in Dimow to promote inclusion

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Sept 14: A financial awareness meet was recently organised by Punjab National Bank's (PNB) Phulaguri branch at the Dimow Chariali Samuhiya Bhavan near Bebejia. The event aimed to enhance financial literacy and promote inclusion among the local population.

The meet saw the participation of over 400 individuals, including various community support workers such as Jeevika Sakhi, Bank Sakhi, Bima Sakhi, Krishi Sakhi, Pashudhan Sakhi, and Sangyog Sakhi. Rupjyoti Borah, a young entrepreneur, mentored the event, which featured sessions by prominent financial experts.

Among the key resource persons were Susmita Phukan, Regional Director of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI); Punam Chetia, Deputy General Manager of Financial Inclusion and Development

Department (FIDD); Santosh Kumar, Lead District Officer (LDO); Mohammad Khurshed Alam, Deputy Circle Head of PNB; and Moniram Bosumotari, Lead District Manager (LDM) of Nagaon. The speakers highlighted the importance of financial planning and urged attendees to avail themselves of various government schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY), which are designed to improve financial security and inclusion.

The awareness meet provided a valuable platform for local residents to gain insights into financial schemes and services. The initiative by PNB's Phulaguri branch was widely appreciated, reflecting the bank's ongoing commitment to fostering financial literacy in the region.

Assamese nation has retention only, there is no desertion: Dr Goswami

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, Sept 14: Assamese nation has retention only, there is no desertion, said Dr Basanta Kumar Goswami, President of Assam Sahitya Sabha on Friday while addressing the Janagosthiya Samannay Sammilan (Ethnic Coordination Meet) at West Kalabari Higher Secondary School in Gohpur in Biswanath district. 'We do not know the languages of other ethnic communities even after residing beside them. We must learn each other's languages and immerse ourselves in them, since we are one; and our essence is also the same.' Dr Goswami further added. Emphasizing unity, peace, and cooperation Dr Goswami urged, 'Through coordination, we must stand together, though Assam has been fragmented for a section of politicians.'

During his speech as Chief Guest Dr Goswami also stated that the government must take responsibility to end the current crisis and eliminate forces that destroy our society. Shading light over unrest felt in our society Dr Goswami in his speech urged the parents to embrace their children as family members rather than to treat them as guests. Deliver-



ing the introductory speech in the concluding session of Janagosthiya Samannay Sammilan organized with two-day programme from Thursday by the Swajatiya Maitribandhan Sub-committee of Assam Sahitya Sabha in support of the Biswanath District Sahitya Sabha and hosted by Kharaporia Swarna Sahitya Samaj, Assam Sahitya Sabha Principal Secretary Debojit Bora said, 'The Assam Sahitya Sabha is tirelessly working to foster coordination among different ethnic groups. Sabha is to offer equal dignity to every indigenous community of the state to shape the Assamese identity and the Assamese na-

tion.'

Vice President of the Sabha Padum Rajkhowa attending the programme as keynote speaker added, 'Assam is a land of diverse ethnic groups. Every community must be provided opportunities for development and prosperity. Governments must recognize their responsibility and ensure that the pain of these communities is understood and addressed.' He also urged the Government of India to grant tribal status to communities like Moran-Motok and Koch-Rajbongshi.

The event attended by prominent leaders including former General Secretary

GOVT. OF ASSAM
DIRECTORATE-CUM-ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,
PWD, (R&B), HILLS, ASSAM, DIPHU.

NO.ACEH/E(G)/10/2025-2026/19, Dated Diphu, the 12th September, 2025.

CORRIGENDUM

Please read as "21-09-2025" instead of "21-09-2005". Due to some technical error, the year of Witten Examination in the Admit Card of Section Assistant were inadvertently oversighted.

N.B: All terms and conditions mentioned in the Admit Card shall remain unchanged. The inconvenience caused is deeply regretted.

Sd/-
Director-Cum-Addl. Chief Engineer,
PWD(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.
Cum
Member Secretary,
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QUOTE OF THE DAY

It is easy to sit up and take notice, what is difficult is getting up and taking action. -Honore de Balzac

Decline of BRS in Telangana

Why do political families believe they can hold onto power indefinitely? This is common in many one-man or one-woman parties, where leaders often engage in nepotism by appointing relatives to positions of authority. For example, the late Mulayam Singh Yadav, leader of the Samajwadi Party, had over 20 family members active in politics at one time. However, these families frequently face power struggles as the leader's influence declines. This is precisely what is unfolding in Telangana, where the Bharat Rashtra Samithi chief and former Telangana Chief Minister, K. Chandrashekar Rao, has suspended his daughter, K. Kavitha, for engaging in anti-party activities, though he had encouraged her earlier. Kavitha was also ambitious. A power tussle is looming large between KCR's daughter and son, K.T. Rama Rao. By directly naming her cousins Harish Rao and Santosh Kumar, she has even challenged the party's contention that the indictments against KCR and Harish Rao by the Commission were politically motivated. Kavitha's allegations could help BRS's opponents and open the door for political shifts. Soon after her suspension, Kavitha quit the party and her membership in the Legislative Assembly. She is considering launching her own political organisation. This move could significantly alter the state's political landscape, but only if she succeeds.

This story reflects key themes in the regional politics of South and North India. Succession issues have long troubled regional parties, with a traditional preference for sons over daughters as political heirs. Political rivalries abound, including V.N. Janaki versus J. Jayalalithaa, N. Chandrababu Naidu versus Lakshmi Parvathi, MK Stalin versus MK Alagiri, Uddhav versus Raj Thackeray, and now Kavitha versus K.T. Rama Rao. The family feud within the BRS has intensified into a political drama as KCR's health and influence decline. His charisma failed to sway voters in the 2023 elections, resulting in a loss of power for his party. In the 2004 Lok Sabha polls, BRS got zero. Kavitha, recently released on bail after being jailed for a multi-crore liquor case, has now targeted her father's confidants. She has been struggling to remain relevant politically.

KCR had a grand dream of becoming the Prime Minister, making his daughter Kavitha a Central Minister, and his son K.T. Rama Rao the Chief Minister of Telangana. But they remained a dream because KCR was a minor player in the overall national politics. The blow to BRS came when it lost power in 2023. As it happens to many regional parties, the BRS, which finished third in the 2023 polls, got demoralised. Following a total defeat in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, KCR has withdrawn from public life, making occasional public appearances. Most of his time is now spent at his farmhouse. Thus came a gap which needs to be filled by a capable political heir. KCR himself had depended on his son KTR as his political heir. Kavitha has been openly critical of her party, writing a six-page letter to her father about KCR's recent lack of energy. She condemned his silver jubilee speech for neglecting important issues and lacking speaking skills. Kavitha alleged that her cousins have a "tacit understanding" with Congress to harm her father's image and warned they might face similar consequences. Interestingly, Kavitha, KTR, and Harish Rao are all seeking the party presidency. Kavitha's revolt occurred at a critical moment since the Central Bureau of Investigation is set to investigate alleged issues with the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project, which the BRS has hailed as the jewel of Telangana.

Bamboo to Biofuel: Assam's Numaligarh refinery powers India's green energy future

In the verdant heart of Assam, a quiet revolution is taking shape. Nestled in Numaligarh, Golaghat district, a first-of-its-kind facility is nearing completion, promising to transform bamboo from a neglected resource into a cornerstone of India's clean energy future. Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL), in partnership with Fortum (Saxelox Oil and Associates) and Finland-based Chemopolis OY, is spearheading India's first bamboo-based bioethanol project. With an investment of ₹12,000 crore, the project represents a convergence of innovation, sustainability, and rural empowerment that few industrial ventures in the country have matched.

A landmark moment for India's energy and petrochemical sector is now here. On 14th September, Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the world's first 2G Bio Ethanol Plant using bamboo feedstock and also lay the foundation stone of NRL's Polypropylene Plant at Numaligarh. With a combined investment of more than ₹12,200 crore, these projects will empower rural communities through the bamboo value chain, reduce crude oil imports to save foreign exchange, strengthen India's #NetZero2070 commitments, and build downstream industries across plastics, healthcare, and consumer goods. When the Prime Minister inaugurates the bio-refinery, it will mark more than just the commissioning of a new plant. It will mark India's bold step into a new era of renewable energy, rural development, and industrial self-reliance.

The Making of India's First Bamboo-Based Bioethanol Plant

The journey of this bio-refinery has been years in the making. Engineers India Limited (EIL), one of the country's premier public sector engineering and consultancy companies, has overseen the execution of the project in Engineering, Procurement, and Construction Management (EPCM) mode. From conceptualization to mechanical completion, EIL's role has been pivotal, ensuring that the project transitioned from demonstration to full-scale implementation without losing sight of sustainability goals.

The bio-refinery, implemented through Assam Bio Ethanol Private Limited (ABEPL)—a joint venture in which NRL is the major shareholder—is designed to produce 49,000 tonnes per annum (TPA) of bioethanol. But ethanol is not its only product. The plant will also yield 11,000 TPA of acetic acid and 19,000 TPA of furfural, a chemical with applications in adhesives and with significant export potential, especially to European markets. A captive 20 MW power generation unit will ensure self-sufficiency in energy, minimizing operational dependencies.

Turning vision into reality: NRL's pioneering 2G Bio Ethanol Plant at Numaligarh will:

1. Process 5 lakh tonnes of bamboo annually
2. Produce 50,000 tonnes of ethanol
3. Generate 19,000 MT of furfural and 11,000 MT of acetic acid—both vital industrial chemicals
4. Empower 50,000+ households in Assam & neighbouring states
5. Generate 2.4 million man-days of employment
6. Add ₹200 crore annually into the rural economy
7. Operate as a carbon-neutral facility with 25 MW of green electricity

This clean fuel and clean energy-based initiative strengthens India's economy and accelerates the journey of energy self-reliance. It will also increase the income of bamboo farmers and create new employment opportunities in the sector. Assam, under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi, is transforming into an oil and natural gas hub, writing a new chapter in the history of the Northeast.

Unlike first-generation ethanol, derived from food-based feedstocks such as sugarcane or cereals, the Numaligarh facility uses second-generation (2G) ethanol technology. It processes non-food biomass—specifically bamboo—making it an environmentally sound alternative that does not exacerbate the food-versus-fuel debate. Once fully operational, the plant will process around 3 lakh metric tonnes of bamboo annually, translating into 49,000 metric tonnes of ethanol and additional by-products that diversify its revenue streams.

Bamboo: From Decline to Renewal

Bamboo has long been integral to the economy and culture of Assam and the wider Northeast. Its rapid growth rate, abundance, and multiple uses made it a staple resource. Yet, the closure of paper mills in the state left bamboo farmers without a dependable market, pushing the resource into near economic obscurity. The Numaligarh bio-refinery revives bamboo's relevance, not merely as a raw material but as the backbone of a modern, sustainable energy economy.

The refinery requires around 5 lakh metric tonnes of green bamboo annually (equivalent to 3 lakh dry tonnes), creating a new market linkage for farmers. A carefully designed supply chain ensures inclusivity and transparency: bamboo growers, trained harvesters, local entrepreneurs managing pre-processing units, and bamboo chip transporters form the four pillars of the system. Farmers will sell bamboo to trained harvesters, who in turn deliver it to pre-processing centers. These centers, operated by local business owners, will act as regional storage hubs where bamboo is chipped and prepared for transport to the refinery. Crucially, all participants in this chain—including farmers—will receive payments via electronic bank transfers, ensuring direct benefit and eliminating middlemen exploitation.

The economic impact is expected to be profound. Nearly 30,000 rural households will be integrated into this bamboo-based economy, with total business opportunities worth approximately ₹200 crore annually. By institutionalizing bamboo cultivation, the project not only restores livelihoods but also positions bamboo as an economic lifeline for the region. Tissue-cultured bamboo saplings, promoted under this initiative, will further ensure productivity, sustainability, and resilience against climate variability.

Economic Multiplier Effects

The Numaligarh bio-refinery is more than an engineering marvel—it is a catalyst for social and economic change. The refinery creates direct and indirect employment across multiple levels: from farmers and harvesters to entrepreneurs and logistics providers. Beyond employment, it promotes micro-entrepreneurship in transport and storage, empowering small business owners to become stakeholders in the green energy revolution.

In addition to ethanol, by-products such as furfural, acetic acid, and food-grade carbon dioxide add significant value. Furfural, in particular, is in demand for its industrial applications and has strong export potential. Acetic acid, used in everything from textiles to food preservation, opens another revenue stream, while food-grade carbon dioxide has applications in the beverage and food industries. Together, these outputs improve the financial viability of the refinery, offsetting the higher costs typically associated with second-generation biofuel production.

This integration of technological innovation with social inclusion makes the Numaligarh project a textbook example of how industrial ventures can serve as engines of rural revitalization. In the broader context of India's ethanol blending program—targeting 20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2025—the refinery's contribution is strategically significant.

Massive Refinery Expansion: A Twin Milestone

While the bio-refinery captures headlines, NRL is simultaneously undertaking one of the largest refinery expansions in India's Northeast. Its capacity is being scaled up from 3 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA) to 9 MMTPA at an estimated cost of ₹33,901 crore. More than 80% of the work is already complete, with full operations expected by year's end. A new 6 MMTPA unit is being built to process imported crude oil, supported by a massive 1,640-kilometre crude oil pipeline stretching from Paradip in Odisha to Numaligarh. The pipeline, traversing five states—Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Assam—represents one of India's longest energy conduits. Among its engineering feats is a 4-km stretch laid beneath the Ganga River using Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD), the longest such installation in the country.

The expansion will not only meet growing energy demands in Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Eastern Uttar Pradesh but also enable exports to neighboring Bangladesh, Nepal, and Myanmar. Through the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL), surplus energy output will enhance regional cooperation and position the Northeast as an energy hub. The project also includes infrastructure for producing propylene, a critical petrochemical feedstock, thus laying the foundation for a polypropylene unit that will reduce India's reliance on petrochemical imports.

Currently, around 8,000 workers are engaged in this massive undertaking, reflecting the scale and urgency of NRL's expansion drive.

Sustainability and Policy Dimensions

The Numaligarh project is emblematic of India's broader commitment to clean energy and sustainability. By investing in second-generation ethanol, India is aligning itself with global best practices that prioritize non-food biomass as a feedstock. The refinery supports India's twin goals: reducing crude oil imports and achieving its international climate commitments, including the target of Net Zero emissions by 2070.

A government-appointed committee is presently working to establish a pricing formula for 2G ethanol derived from feedstocks such as bamboo, maize, and rice straw. By formalizing a pricing mechanism, the government seeks to create a predictable market en-

vironment that encourages more investment in 2G biofuels. Moreover, export opportunities for ethanol and furfural are under active consideration, positioning India to tap into premium international markets while boosting domestic industrial growth.

This policy ecosystem dovetails with flagship initiatives such as Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India). The Numaligarh bio-refinery integrates local biomass with global technology, creating a model where indigenous resources power national and international ambitions.

Challenges on the Horizon

Despite its promise, the project is not without challenges. Stabilizing refinery operations, particularly in handling bamboo feedstock at scale, will require meticulous coordination among farmers, transporters, and technology partners. Market acceptance of bamboo-based ethanol, though likely given India's blending targets, must be actively fostered through awareness campaigns and supportive policies. Logistical complexities in sourcing, storing, and processing bamboo on such a massive scale will also test the resilience of the supply chain.

If these hurdles are effectively managed, the Numaligarh bio-refinery can serve as a replicable model for other bamboo-rich northeastern states such as Mizoram and Meghalaya, further embedding the region into India's green energy transition.

A Symbol of Inclusive Green Industrialization

The Numaligarh bio-refinery stands as a symbol of what modern India can achieve when visionary policy, technological innovation, and grassroots participation intersect. It is a story not merely of ethanol production but of how an underutilized resource can be transformed into an engine of growth, sustainability, and empowerment. From reviving bamboo's economic relevance after the collapse of Assam's paper mills to creating a decentralized supply chain that directly benefits 30,000 rural households, the project encapsulates the essence of inclusive development. It brings together farmers, entrepreneurs, engineers, and policymakers into a single ecosystem, demonstrating how industrial growth can be reconciled with ecological balance and social equity.

Toward a Global Case Study

In an era when the world is grappling with the urgency of transitioning to renewable energy, the Numaligarh model holds the potential to become a global case study. It illustrates how decentralized, community-centric innovation can simultaneously address energy security, rural livelihoods, and climate commitments. By harnessing bamboo—a fast-growing, renewable, and abundant local resource—India is not only charting a sustainable path for itself but also offering a blueprint for other bamboo-rich regions across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

As the refinery gears up for inauguration, its significance extends far beyond Assam. It represents a transformative step for India's green energy ambitions and a reaffirmation of the Northeast's strategic role in national development. In Numaligarh, bamboo is no longer just a symbol of tradition—it has become a symbol of innovation, resilience, and a greener, more inclusive future. *(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigptd@gmail.com)*

The role of youth in Assam's social transformation

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The story of Assam has always been deeply intertwined with the voice, passion, and resilience of its youth. From the early days of social and cultural awakening to the present age of rapid globalization, young people of the state have consistently played a defining role in shaping the course of its destiny. Their energy has been the driving force behind movements of resistance, reform, and renewal, and their aspirations have continuously guided the region toward reimagining its future. As Assam navigates the challenges of modern times—cultural identity, economic transitions, environmental concerns, and social equity—the role of youth in its social transformation remains central, acting as both a reflection of societal change and a catalyst for further progress.

The historical memory of Assam reveals that the youth have always stood at the forefront whenever the society demanded courage, innovation, or reform. The legacy of the student community in the shaping of Assamese society is particularly significant. The Assam Students' Conference held in the early twentieth century brought together young voices who later played defining roles in strengthening Assamese identity and culture. From contributing to the freedom struggle against colonial rule to organizing social and cultural renaissance movements, the youth established themselves as agents of transformation, standing against injustice and advocating for a society rooted in equality and dignity. This legacy has passed down generations and continues to define the contours of social action in the state.

The youth's role in Assam's cultural transformation is especially remarkable. The modern Assamese identity has been constantly negotiated and reinforced through cultural expressions led by young minds. The rise of literary movements, the flowering of theatre, and the creation of musical traditions have all seen young Assamese taking the lead. Icons like Jyotirupen Hazarika, Bishnurasad Rabha, and Bhupen Agarwala, though remembered today as towering figures, were themselves young voices when they ignited new cultural sensibilities. Their commitment to social justice and equality found expression in literature, music, and drama, showing that transformation in Assam has always been both cultural and political, and youth have been the bridge connecting the two. Even today, contemporary young artists, writers, and performers continue to question social inequalities, celebrate cultural heritage, and bring new forms of creativity that reassert Assam's uniqueness in the global cultural landscape.

Another sphere where youth have acted as

transformative agents is the realm of politics and mass movements.

The Assam Movement of the late 1970s and 1980s is a reminder of how student leadership can reshape the political landscape. Though deeply complex and controversial in its outcomes, it reflected the enormous influence of youth power in demanding accountability, asserting identity, and reshaping governance. Beyond movements, many young leaders have entered mainstream politics, civil society, and community organizations, where they continue to influence policy and discourse. Their presence is not without challenges, for the volatile nature of political agitation often risks being exploited by vested interests. Yet, the consistent participation of youth in political discourse demonstrates their irreplaceable desire to influence the course of Assam's future.

The social transformation of Assam cannot be discussed without considering education, where the youth play both roles—as seekers and as reformers. Institutions like Cotton University, Gauhati University, Tezpur University, Dibrugarh University, and countless colleges have historically been breeding grounds for fresh ideas, debates, and activism. Student unions and campus collectives have long been spaces where questions of social justice, environmental protection, women's rights, and cultural preservation are debated with intensity. At the same time, young Assamese professionals returning from other states and abroad have infused global experiences into the local framework, blending traditional knowledge with modern approaches to social change. The exchange of ideas between the local and the global is largely facilitated by the youth, making them the architects of a more inclusive and forward-looking society.

One of the most defining aspects of contemporary Assamese society is its engagement with issues of identity and diversity, and here too, the youth have played a pivotal role. Assam is home to a mosaic of ethnicities, languages, and faiths, and navigating this diversity has always been both a challenge and a strength. Young activists, writers, and entrepreneurs are increasingly championing inclusivity, bridging divides, and celebrating plurality. While inter-community tensions have at times marred Assam's social harmony, it is largely through youth-led initiatives that narratives of coexistence and peace-building gain momentum. Youth forums, cultural exchanges, and grassroots organizations led by young leaders are reshaping dialogues around identity from confrontation to collaboration, thus fostering a more cohesive society.

Equally significant is the role of youth in ad-



ressing economic and developmental challenges. Assam's economy, though rich in natural resources, has often struggled with underdevelopment, unemployment, and migration. For decades, the lack of adequate employment opportunities led to frustration among the youth, but in recent years, a new spirit of entrepreneurship has begun to emerge. Young entrepreneurs are venturing into fields such as information technology, agri-business, eco-tourism, and creative industries, showing that economic transformation is possible when fresh ideas meet determination. Start-ups, community-based enterprises, and digital initiatives are not only generating employment but also reimagining Assam's economic potential in harmony with its environment and culture. By embracing innovation while retaining their connection to the land, young Assamese are gradually rewriting the economic narrative of the region.

The environmental dimension of Assam's social transformation is another space where the youth have taken on a leadership role. Situated in the ecologically fragile Brahmaputra valley, Assam constantly faces the challenges of floods, erosion, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. For a state whose identity is deeply tied to its natural environment, the struggle to preserve ecology is also a struggle to preserve culture and livelihood. Youth-led environmental movements, from tree plantation drives to campaigns against poaching

in Kaziranga, reflect the growing awareness among young people of their responsibility toward sustainable development. Social media has become a powerful tool in this regard, allowing youth to amplify ecological concerns, raise awareness about climate change, and mobilize communities for environmental justice. Their activism, often rooted in science but guided by cultural sensitivity, is shaping a more sustainable vision for Assam's future.

The youth's engagement with social issues such as gender equality, rights of marginalized communities, and human trafficking has also brought new momentum to Assam's transformation. Women-led student bodies and youth collectives are increasingly vocal about the need for gender justice, breaking taboos, and pushing for greater participation of women in public life. Simultaneously, youth organizations are actively working against the menace of human trafficking, substance abuse, and domestic violence, which have long haunted Assamese society. By refusing to remain silent, the youth have pushed these issues into the public sphere, demanding structural and policy-level changes that can ensure justice and dignity for vulnerable groups.

Technology and digital platforms have added a new dimension to the role of youth in social change. The rise of social media activism, online campaigns, and digital journalism has created

spaces where young Assamese can voice their opinions instantly and mobilize support across borders. The digital generation of Assam is not confined by geography, and their ability to connect with global movements while articulating local concerns gives them an unprecedented advantage. From climate strikes to cultural preservation initiatives, digital activism has allowed Assamese youth to become global citizens while staying rooted in their immediate realities. The transformative potential of this digital engagement is immense, for it democratizes voices and ensures that social transformation is not confined to elite spaces but is participatory and inclusive.

Yet, the role of youth in Assam's social transformation is not without contradictions and challenges. Economic uncertainty, political manipulation, and social unrest often threaten to derail youthful energy into directions that may not always lead to constructive outcomes. The risks of radicalization, communal polarization, and disillusionment are real, and they highlight the importance of guidance, mentorship, and systemic reforms. For the youth to sustain their transformative role, society must create enabling environments that nurture creativity, critical thinking, and ethical engagement. Education must be more than rote learning; governance must be transparent and inclusive; and platforms must be created where young voices can engage meaningfully with decision-making processes.

The strength of Assam's youth lies in their ability to blend memory with imagination, heritage with innovation, and tradition with transformation. They carry the memories of past struggles, cultural legacies, and social values, while at the same time imagining a society that is more equitable, progressive, and sustainable. In a world marked by uncertainty and rapid change, the youth of Assam embody hope—not as passive inheritors but as active architects of the future. Their role in social transformation is not a matter of choice but of necessity, for without their participation, Assam's journey toward justice, prosperity, and harmony will remain incomplete.

As Assam moves forward, the task is clear: to harness the creative power of its youth, to provide them with opportunities to thrive, and to recognize them as equal partners in the making of a just and inclusive society. The story of social transformation in Assam is far from finished, but it is evident that the youth will continue to be its most dynamic authors. Their courage, creativity, and conviction remain the state's greatest assets, ensuring that the river of change flowing through the Brahmaputra valley carries with it not just memories of the past but also dreams of a brighter tomorrow.

Unlocking Ayurveda's Potential: NEP 2020's vision for global impact

By: Satyabrata Borah

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, has been a cornerstone of holistic healing for thousands of years, rooted in the philosophy of balancing body, mind, and spirit. With its emphasis on natural remedies, preventive care, and personalized treatments, Ayurveda has long thrived in India and parts of South Asia. In recent years, its appeal has surged globally, driven by growing interest in integrative medicine, wellness tourism, and sustainable healthcare practices. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a landmark reform in India's education system, presents a unique opportunity to elevate Ayurveda's global relevance by fostering research, innovation, and integration with modern scientific frameworks. By embedding Indigenous Knowledge Systems into its vision, NEP 2020 positions Ayurvedic education at a pivotal juncture, where tradition can converge with cutting-edge advancements to address contemporary health challenges. This article explores how NEP 2020 can catalyze Ayurveda's global resurgence through a transformative approach to education, research, and international collaboration.

NEP 2020 seeks to overhaul India's education system by promoting multidisciplinary learning, research-driven innovation, and the integration of traditional knowledge with modern science. For Ayurveda, this policy offers a framework to bridge the gap between its ancient wisdom and the demands of evidence-based medicine. Historically, Ayurveda has faced challenges in gaining global acceptance due to limited scientific validation, inconsistent standardization, and skepticism about its efficacy compared to allopathic medicine. While Ayurveda's holistic principles such as its focus on diet, lifestyle,

and herbal remedies resonate with modern wellness trends, its global credibility hinges on rigorous research and standardized education. NEP 2020 addresses these challenges by emphasizing research-oriented curricula, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and promoting the documentation and validation of traditional knowledge systems.

One of the most significant ways NEP 2020 can elevate Ayurveda is through its emphasis on research and innovation. The policy advocates for the establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF), which aims to fund and promote cutting-edge research across disciplines, including traditional knowledge systems like Ayurveda. By channeling resources into Ayurvedic research, the NRF can support studies that validate the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatments, explore their pharmacological mechanisms, and develop standardized protocols for clinical practice. For instance, research into the bioactive compounds in herbs like turmeric, ashwagandha and tulsi widely used in Ayurveda can provide scientific evidence to support their therapeutic claims. Such studies can also pave the way for the development of new drugs or integrative treatment protocols that combine Ayurvedic remedies with modern medicine, appealing to global healthcare markets.

NEP 2020's focus on multidisciplinary education creates opportunities to integrate Ayurveda with fields like pharmacology, biotechnology, and data science. By encouraging collaborations between Ayurvedic scholars, scientists, and technologists, the policy can foster innovations such as personalized medicine based on Ayurvedic principles of prakriti (individual constitution). For example, advances in genomics and bioinformatics could be used to study how genetic



variations influence responses to Ayurvedic treatments, enabling precision medicine that aligns with Ayurveda's personalized approach. Such interdisciplinary efforts can position Ayurveda as a forward-thinking system that complements modern healthcare rather than competing with it, making it more appealing to global audiences.

Another critical aspect of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on reviving and documenting Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Ayurveda, with its vast repository of texts like the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, is a treasure trove of medical wisdom. However, much of this knowledge remains inaccessible due to language barriers, fragmented documentation, and a lack of systematic translation. NEP 2020 encourages the preservation and digitization of ancient texts, which can make Ayurvedic knowledge more accessible to researchers and practitioners worldwide. By creating digital archives and translating key texts into global languages, India can position itself as a hub for Ayurvedic scholarship, attracting international students, researchers, and healthcare professionals. This accessibility can also facilitate cross-cultural exchanges, enabling Ayurveda to integrate with other traditional

systems like Traditional Chinese Medicine or naturopathy, further enhancing its global appeal.

The policy's push for internationalization of education also plays a pivotal role in making Ayurveda globally relevant. NEP 2020 encourages Indian institutions to collaborate with global universities, establish international campuses, and attract foreign students. For Ayurvedic education, this opens doors to partnerships with institutions specializing in integrative medicine, such as those in the United States, Europe, and Australia, where interest in holistic health is growing. Collaborative programs could include joint research projects, student exchange programs, and dual-degree courses that combine Ayurveda with modern medical sciences. Such initiatives can expose Ayurveda to global academic scrutiny, encouraging the adoption of universal standards for training, certification, and practice. By aligning Ayurvedic education with international benchmarks, India can train practitioners who are equipped to practice globally, thereby expanding Ayurveda's footprint.

NEP 2020 also emphasizes skill-based education and vocational training, which can strengthen the practical application of Ayurveda. By incorporat-

ing hands-on training in areas like Ayurvedic diagnostics, Panchakarma therapy, and herbal formulation, educational institutions can produce skilled practitioners who meet global standards. Additionally, the policy's focus on entrepreneurship can encourage the development of Ayurvedic startups, which could innovate in areas like herbal product development, wellness tourism, and digital health platforms. For instance, startups could create AI-driven apps that recommend personalized Ayurvedic diets or lifestyle practices, making Ayurveda accessible to a tech-savvy global audience. By fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem, NEP 2020 can help transform Ayurveda into a commercially viable industry with global reach.

The integration of Ayurveda into mainstream healthcare systems is another area where NEP 2020 can make a significant impact. The policy's vision of holistic education encourages the inclusion of Ayurveda in medical curricula, enabling allopathic doctors to gain familiarity with its principles. This can pave the way for integrative healthcare models where Ayurveda and modern medicine coexist. For example, Ayurvedic therapies could be used alongside conventional treatments for chronic con-

ditions like diabetes, arthritis, or mental health disorders, which are on the rise globally. By training healthcare professionals in integrative approaches, India can lead the way in developing protocols that combine the best of both systems, appealing to health-conscious consumers worldwide. The global relevance of Ayurveda under NEP 2020 is not without challenges. One major hurdle is the need for standardized education and practice. Variations in Ayurvedic curricula across institutions in India have led to inconsistencies in training quality, which can undermine global trust. NEP 2020's push for a unified regulatory framework and accreditation system can address this by ensuring that Ayurvedic education meets rigorous standards. Additionally, the policy's emphasis on teacher training can enhance the quality of instruction, ensuring that educators are equipped to teach both traditional knowledge and modern research methodologies. Overcoming these challenges will require sustained investment, collaboration between government and private sectors, and a commitment to aligning Ayurveda with global healthcare expectations.

Another challenge is the perception of Ayurveda as an alternative rather than a complementary system. To counter this, NEP 2020's focus on evidence-based research is crucial. By supporting clinical trials and peer-reviewed studies, India can build a robust body of evidence that validates Ayurveda's efficacy. For instance, research demonstrating the benefits of Ayurvedic interventions for stress management or immune health could resonate with global audiences seeking natural solutions. Furthermore, partnerships with international health organizations like the World Health Organization, which has shown interest in tra-

ditional medicine, can enhance Ayurveda's credibility. By leveraging NEP 2020's research ecosystem, India can position Ayurveda as a scientifically validated system that complements modern medicine.

The global rise in wellness tourism also presents an opportunity for Ayurveda under NEP 2020. With its focus on experiential learning, the policy can support the development of specialized training programs for Ayurvedic wellness professionals, such as therapists and yoga instructors. These programs can cater to international tourists seeking authentic Ayurvedic experiences, boosting India's economy while promoting its cultural heritage. By establishing world-class Ayurvedic wellness centers and integrating them with medical tourism, India can attract health-conscious travelers from across the globe, further cementing Ayurveda's relevance.

NEP 2020's transformative vision for education provides a roadmap for Ayurveda to achieve global prominence. By fostering research, standardizing education, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and embracing internationalization, the policy can empower Ayurveda to meet the demands of modern healthcare. The convergence of ancient wisdom and contemporary innovation can position Ayurveda as a leader in holistic health, appealing to a global audience seeking sustainable and personalized solutions. As India implements NEP 2020, it has the opportunity to not only revive its traditional knowledge systems but also share them with the world, establishing Ayurveda as a cornerstone of global wellness. Through strategic investments, robust research, and a commitment to excellence, NEP 2020 can ensure that Ayurveda transcends its cultural roots to become a universal system of healing, respected and embraced worldwide.

Heart attacks may be linked to bacterial infections, study finds

By: Corrie Pelc

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Trusted Source, about 19.8 million people around the world died from heart disease in 2022, with about 85% of these deaths attributed to stroke and heart attack.

Medically known as myocardial infarction, a heart attack occurs when blood in the arteries is blocked from being able to reach the heart. Arterial blockage can be caused by the formation of blood clots, a coronary artery spasm, or the buildup of plaque — made partially from cholesterol, an event known as atherosclerosis — on the insides of the artery walls, leading to coronary artery disease.

Previous research has linked bacterial infections Trusted Source from bacteria that have entered the body's bloodstream as a risk factor for heart disease. Furthermore, past studies have also linked bacterial infections to an increased risk of arterial plaque buildup. Pekka J. Karhunen, MD, PhD, a professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Technology at Tampere University in Finland, told Medical News Today that:

"The possibility that infectious agents are involved in the chronic inflammation of coronary plaques has been considered for a long time, but this theory was abandoned about 20 years ago due to failed large long-term antibiotics trials. The interest has now been renewed due to the development of molecular microbiological methods that enable the identification of bacterial DNA even in small amounts of biological specimens."

Karhunen is the first author of a new study recently published in the Journal of the American Heart Association Trusted Source, which has found that bacteria typically found in the mouth and throat may be a trigger for a heart attack.

How would oral bacteria cause a heart attack?

For this study, researchers analyzed coronary plaque samples from 121 people who had died from sudden cardiac death, and from 96 people who had undergone surgery to have the plaque from their arteries cleaned, a procedure known as an endarterectomy. At the study's conclusion, the scientists discovered that the bacteria viridans group Streptococci — an umbrella-term for types of Streptococcus bacteria commonly found in the mouth, in saliva and dental plaque — were the most common bacteria in the coronary plaque samples.

"Oral viridans group Streptococci are known to act as early colonizers in the buildup of the dental biofilm known as dental plaque," Karhunen explained. "This signals that the streptococci may not be there alone — it is possible that there is a biofilm composed of many bacteria. In fact we have unpublished results confirming this." "In the bacterial biofilm, the bacteria are safe inside the jelly-like cover and they do not cause any harm to the individual,"

he continued.

However, he noted, "the situation changes dramatically when the biofilm activates for [some] reason or other, and starts to produce new generation of bacteria that break out from the biofilm and infiltrate the atherosclerotic plaque, causing inflammation that can rupture the plaque ending up in the formation of a thrombus."

"We aim to show that there is a biofilm consisting of many bacteria in the atherosclerotic plaques and we also study the possibility that calcification of the biofilm — which occurs in the surface of the teeth — might also be involved in the calcification of coronary arteries," Karhunen added. "We also studied the possibility of developing a vaccine against the formation of a biofilm and bacterial-induced thrombosis."

How might bacteria trigger a heart attack?

MNT spoke with Sergiu Darabant, MD, a cardiologist with Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute, part of Baptist Health South Florida, about this study, who said he did not find the study surprising, but intriguing. "We've long suspected that inflammation is a key driver of cholesterol plaque formation and plaque rupture leading to heart attacks," Darabant, who was not involved in the research, said. "This study adds another piece to the puzzle — showing how bacteria from the mouth might play a hidden role in driving coronary inflammation."

"Even though we've made significant progress over the years in the advancement of medical therapies aimed at cardiovascular risk reduction and secondary prevention of cardiovascular events, our prevention toolkit is still limited," he continued.

"Pinpointing modifiable, time-varying triggers — e.g., transient bacteremia Trusted Source, respiratory infections — could enable targeted new therapies that complement commonly used medication for lipid, blood-pressure, and diabetes control," added Darabant.

MNT also spoke with Yu-Ming Ni, MD, a board-certified cardiologist and lipidologist at MemorialCare Heart and Vascular Institute at Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, CA, likewise not involved in the study, about these research findings. "This bacteria, strep viridans, is a very common oral bacteria, and the fact that it seems to be implicated in atherosclerosis is interesting," Ni commented.

However, he cautioned that "it's important to recognize that these studies have some limitations because you're taking a picture in the aftermath, so you don't have a great timeline for what exactly is happening in someone's plaque that leads them to have this vascular event." "So I would be cautious to just go and make the assumption that these bacteria are definitely the reason for plaque disruption. I think there's maybe more to that than just that, but it does support the idea of inflammation as a key factor in the development of clinical heart disease." — Yu-Ming Ni, MD

Should you worry about this type of bacterial infection?

When hearing the term "bacterial infection," there may be worry that you could also be at risk of acquiring it.

Brett A. Sealove, MD, FACC, FAHA, RPVI, CPE, chair of cardiology at Hackensack Meridian Jersey Shore University Medical Center, and associate professor and vice chair of cardiology at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine in New Jersey, told MNT people need not immediately worry about strep viridans, as these bacteria are typically benign, and help maintain a healthy balance in the mouth and body. "These bacteria live synergistically within the human body, most abundantly in the oral cavity as well as the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts," Sealove detailed. "However," he explained, "problems arise when they enter the body — mostly via the mouth — and can cause other infections, most notably an infection of heart valves, called endocarditis. So, they are benign and normally found in the body. It's their displacement and travel that can potentially cause harm."

How might you fend off a heart attack caused by bacterial infection?

There is no vaccine approved for strep viridans, Edward Liu, MD, MPH, FACP, FIDSA, chief of infectious diseases at Hackensack Meridian Jersey Shore University Medical Center in New Jersey told MNT. "Strep viridans is common and expected to be in parts of the body, especially the mouth," Liu explained. "I would not expect other strep vaccines — for example, strep pneumonia vaccines like pneumovax or prevnar 13 or 20 — to protect against strep viridans." Liu recommended treating any active infections in a timely manner, as they occur:

"For example, a dental infection may likely include strep viridans as well as other bacteria found in the mouth. We know that severe dental infections can lead to bacteria in the blood, so timely treatment of dental infections could be beneficial."

Speaking of dental care, Sealove said that optimizing one's oral hygiene and seeking dental treatment where necessary is a way to help people protect themselves from bacterial infections that may lead to heart attack. "The oral-systemic link is backed by an abundance of growing evidence, and very much supported by this article, which focuses on the connection between oral and systemic health," he explained. "The mouth provides function and aesthetics but also is an active ecosystem which needs to be healthy, and can impact one's systemic health — especially the cardiovascular system." And Darabant advised staying up to date on influenza, COVID-19, and pneumococcal vaccines, as recommended by current practice guidelines. "These reduce risk of severe infections, which have been associated with cardiovascular events, especially in high-risk and post-myocardial infarction patients," he added. (Courtesy: MNT)

Healthy urban greenery depends on smarter choices and careful maintenance

By: Raj Kumar Srivastava

Greening cities has become one of the defining themes of urban planning in India. Across the country, municipalities proudly announce plantation drives, highlight the number of saplings planted, widen medians to accommodate trees, and carve out green belts to curb dust. The sight of tree-lined avenues and landscaped parks is undoubtedly a relief in an era of choking smog and record-breaking heat. Yet, behind this enthusiasm lies a reality we are often reluctant to acknowledge: not all greenery is necessarily good for health. Poorly chosen or badly maintained vegetation can aggravate respiratory illnesses, heighten allergies, and in some cases, worsen the very pollution it was intended to mitigate. If India's urban spaces are to become truly liveable, the goal must shift from making them merely greener to making them genuinely healthier.

For most of us, the presence of trees and gardens is instinctively associated with cleaner air. However, scientific evidence tells a more complex story. Several ornamental and fast-growing species commonly used in city landscaping release large amounts of allergenic pollen. Mulberry, ash, and certain grasses are among the worst culprits. In densely populated cities, their pollen translates into seasonal spikes in asthma, allergic rhinitis, and chronic bronchitis.

Neglected lawns also accumulate dust, which rises easily into the air during dry spells, further irritating the lungs. The story of Parthenium hysterophorus, or "Congress grass", is a classic example.

Introduced decades ago, it spread unchecked across India's cities and has become one of the most allergenic plants known. Its flowering seasons consistently coincide with increases in hospital visits for respiratory distress. Doctors at AIIMS in Delhi have long observed that asthma admissions rise sharply during these periods.

A 2023 study by the Indian Council of Medical Research linked respiratory distress in schoolchildren directly to high pollen levels in urban parks. Ironically, the very "green lungs" of our cities often end up straining the lungs of their citizens. The solution lies not in rejecting greenery but in making smarter choices. Urban landscaping must prioritise species that do not endanger public health. Native, low-allergen trees such as neem, jamun, amla, or peepal not only provide shade and absorb pollutants but also yield edible or medicinal benefits, all without releasing harmful levels of pollen.

Avoiding monocultures is equally important. When a single species dominates an entire stretch of road or park, it concentrates allergens and exposes whole neighbourhoods to unnecessary risks. Planting a diverse mix spreads these risks, enhances ecological balance, and creates healthier habitats for pollinators, birds, and bees. Gender balance in planting is another detail often overlooked. Many dioecious species — trees with separate male and female plants — are disproportionately planted with male trees because female trees drop fruit and seeds that require cleaning. Yet, it is the male trees that release massive amounts of pollen. A more balanced planting pattern would reduce pollen loads and restore ecological equilibrium.

Healthy landscaping also means creating protective green buffers. Shrubs and trees planted along highways can filter dust and vehicular emissions before they enter residential neighbourhoods. Dense foliage serves as a natural barrier, while taller trees form canopy cover that cools microclimates and combats the urban heat island effect. In compact city spaces, vertical gardens and rooftop greenery offer alternatives, absorbing pollutants and lowering temperatures without adding to pollen

burdens.

Even neglected plots of land can be transformed into "mini-forests" using dense planting techniques such as the Miyawaki method, which creates small but vibrant ecosystems that act as breathing sanctuaries for local communities.

The benefits of these interventions, however, can only be realised with proper maintenance. A tree left unpruned before flowering can flood the air with pollen. Lawns allowed to dry out quickly become dust reservoirs. Roadside plants coated with soot and dust can re-release pollutants into the atmosphere unless they are periodically washed.

Municipal bodies must therefore view landscaping not as a ceremonial exercise tied to plantation drives, but as a continuous public health service. Seasonal pruning, replacing high-pollen grasses with allergy-friendly ground covers, and regular upkeep should be considered essential components of urban planning. If cities are to move from greener to healthier, landscaping must also be linked to healthcare systems.

Pollen-monitoring stations should be established and advisories issued much like weather alerts. Such information would be invaluable for vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and asthma patients. Hospitals and clinics, too, could prepare for predictable seasonal surges in respiratory illnesses. Public awareness campaigns must educate citizens about pollen peaks, safe outdoor hours, and the importance of protective measures like masks or indoor air filters. Schools, in particular, should be landscaped only with safe species so that young children are not exposed to respiratory hazards during their formative years.

Communities and institutions have a vital role to play in this transformation. Resident Welfare Associations can ensure that local parks are maintained in allergy-friendly ways and that pruning schedules are followed. Schools and colleges can serve as demonstration sites, teaching students about biodiversity and showing how health-friendly greenery can be integrated into urban life. Corporate Social Responsibility funding presents another powerful opportunity. Companies can invest in biodiversity parks, vertical gardens, or roadside green belts, contributing not just to environmental sustainability but also to measurable improvements in public health. Aligning corporate initiatives with citizen well-being enhances both community trust and ecological impact.

The challenge is made more urgent by climate change. Rising temperatures are lengthening pollen seasons, while erratic weather patterns worsen air pollution. This calls for climate-smart landscaping — choosing drought- and heat-resistant native species, expanding rooftop greenery to counter heat islands, and aligning green interventions with broader resilience programmes such as the National Clean Air Programme and the Smart Cities Mission. Adopting a "One Health" approach that links human health, ecological balance, and climate action is no longer optional. It is the only way to ensure that urban greenery strengthens, rather than undermines, the health of citizens.

Ultimately, India's cities need greenery, but not at the expense of public well-being. Poorly chosen species and inadequate maintenance make life harder for those already vulnerable to pollution and climate stress. On the other hand, thoughtful species selection, biodiversity, balanced planting, and scientific upkeep can transform urban greenery into a form of ecological medicine. As India urbanises rapidly, the true test of urban greening should not be how many saplings are planted, but how many citizens — especially children and the elderly — can breathe easier because of them. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

Operation Sindoor bravehearts on path to recovery

PUNE, Sept 14: Corporal Varun Kumar, a paramedic with the Indian Air Force, lost his right hand when an enemy missile struck a first-aid post at the forward location of Udhampur airbase during Operation Sindoor.

Within weeks, Kumar, who recuperated at the Artificial Limb Centre (ALC) in Pune, has begun performing his daily activities on his own with the help of a cosmetic hand, a strong will and support from the doctors of the premier institute.

Besides Kumar, two more armed forces bravehearts, a Subedar from the Indian Army and a Sergeant from the Air Force, who had sustained injuries during operational preparedness in Operation Sindoor, have also made remarkable progress at the ALC, said officials.

The Subedar lost both his hands, while the sergeant lost a leg.

Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh visited the ALC last month and met Kumar, who received a Vayu Sena Medal for his role in India's military strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir following the Pahalgam terror attack.

The IAF chief interacted with Kumar and other armed forces personnel at ALC, a tri-service institution of the Armed Forces Medical Services, and took an update of their recovery.

Kumar has been provided with a cosmetic hand and has also been trained to use his left hand for daily activities such as writing, eating, and wearing clothes, Brigadier CN Satish, the Commandant of ALC told PTI.

"Though a right-handed earlier, he has adapted well with strong motivation and support from the doctors and staff at the centre," he said.

Kumar has been sent home to make him adopt with home set up and once he returns, he will be provided with a bionic hand which will help him perform his activities more smoothly, said Brigadier Satish.

He added that at ALC, amputees are trained step by step to carry out various activities, with the aim of making them self-reliant.

"We use specially designed gauntlets, utensil prosthetics and artificial limbs to make the amputees perform their activities on their own," he added.

Talking about the Subedar who lost his hands, Brigadier Satish said that using the specially designed gauntlets, he can attach tools such as a spoon, toothbrush, knife, or comb and perform his chores.

"Over time, he will also be provided with bionic hands and trained in their use so that he can function independently. With appropriate fittings and certain modifications to a car, an amputee can even learn to drive," he said.

The officer said that they maintain a list of essential tasks like writing, brushing, feeding and bathing and systematically teach these to the amputees. (PTI)

PM to launch development projects worth over ₹ 36,000 cr in Bihar

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Bihar on September 15, 2025, to lay the foundation stones and inaugurate a series of major development projects worth over ₹ 36,000 crore.

The initiatives are aimed at boosting infrastructure, connectivity, energy security, and rural empowerment, reflecting the government's commitment to accelerating Bihar's socio-economic growth.

A key focus of the Prime Minister's visit will be on railway infrastructure, with projects that promise to transform transport networks and improve both passenger and freight movement across the state.

One of the flagship initiatives is the inauguration of the Araria-Galgolia (Thakurganj) New Railway Line, a long-awaited project connecting Araria and Kishanganj districts.

Executed by the Northeast Frontier Railway (NF Railway) at a cost exceeding ₹ 4,410 crore, the nearly 111 km rail corridor features multiple bridges and 15 stations.

Once operational, it is expected to significantly improve connectivity in the Seemanchal region and enhance cross-border trade with Nepal.

The Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone for the ₹ 2,170-crore Bikramshila-Katareah

EC should have ordered probe instead of using offensive language against Rahul

Former chief election commissioner slams Election Commission (EC)

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Coming down hard on the Election Commission for its response on "vote theft" allegations, former chief election commissioner S Y Quraishi on Sunday said the poll body should have ordered a probe into Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's charges instead of "shouting" at him in a language that was "objectionable and offensive".

In an interview with PTI, Quraishi said much of the terms used by Gandhi while making the allegations such as likening them to a "hydrogen bomb" were "political rhetoric" but asserted that the complaints which he was raising need to be investigated in detail.

The former chief election commissioner slammed the Election Commission (EC) over the manner in which it carried out the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, and said it is not only "opening a Pandora's box" but the poll body has put its hand in the "hornet's nest" which will hurt it.

The EC has rejected all the allegations of "vote theft" in the past. It has also all along maintained that the SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar will cleanse the voters' list of ineligible people, duplicate entries and include those eligible as per law to vote.

"You know when I hear any criticism of the EC, I feel very concerned and very hurt not only as a citizen of India but also because having been the CEC myself, I have also laid a brick or two in that institution," Quraishi told PTI ahead of the launch of his new book 'Democracy's Heartland' published by Juggernaut Books.

"When I see that institution under attack or weakened in any way I feel concerned and the EC itself has to do introspection and has to feel concerned. It is up to them to stand up to all the forces and the pressures that may be influencing their decisions," said Quraishi, who was the



Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) between July 30, 2010 and June 10, 2012.

"They have to win the confidence of the people - you need the confidence of the opposition parties. For me, I always gave preference to the opposition parties because they are the underdogs," he said.

Quraishi opined that the party in power doesn't need as much pampering as the opposition does because the latter is out of power.

"So the instruction generally to my staff (when I was the CEC) was to throw the doors open, if they (opposition) want an appointment, give them immediately, listen to them, talk to them, if they want some small favour, do it if it is not at the cost of somebody else," he said.

Here the opposition has to go to the Supreme Court every now and then and in fact, 23 parties have had to say they are not getting an appointment and nobody is listening to them.

Specifically responding to Quraishi's remarks calling for giving opposition parties a hearing whenever they ask for it, an EC functionary said, "We are holding regular meetings with the political parties. I think at no other time this has been in such a structured manner."

Quraishi argued that the EC should have called for a probe into Gandhi's allegations instead of asking him to submit an affidavit.

"Rahul Gandhi is the Leader of Opposition (LoP) after all, don't shout at him the way the EC did. I think it is not like the EC that we have known. He is after all the LoP, he is not a man on the street. He is representing millions of people, he is voicing the opinion of millions of people and to say to him, 'give an affidavit otherwise we will do this and do that', the body language and the language used is both objectionable and offensive," Quraishi said. "I have often said, suppose they (opposition) also turn around and say that 'ok you are coming up with a new roll, give an affidavit that it is mistake free. And if there is a mistake you will be held criminally liable'. Can you think of that situation?" he said. Asserting that the EC should have ordered a probe into the allegations, Quraishi said not just the LoP but if anybody had complained, the normal practice was to immediately order a probe. "Not only we (EC) have to be fair but we have to appear to be fair. The probe brings out the facts. So instead of the way the EC responded, the probe was the right thing to do and they missed an opportunity," he said. His remarks come after Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said at a press conference here last month that Gandhi should either give a declaration under oath within seven days on his allegations of irregularities in the voters list, else his 'vote theft' claims would be rendered baseless and invalid. Levelling allegations of "vote chori", Gandhi had, through a presentation at a press conference, cited data from the 2024 Lok Sabha polls to claim that over 1 lakh votes were "stolen" in Mahadevapura assembly segment in Karnataka through five types of manipulation. He alleged similar irregularities in other states. (PTI)

With 14 cr memberships, BJP world's largest political party: JP Nadda

VISAKHAPATNAM, Sept 14: BJP national president JP Nadda on Sunday said that the saffron party has become the world's largest political party with 14 crore members, out of which two crore are active.

The party has 240 Lok Sabha members, around 1,500 MLAs and more than 170 MLCs across the country, he said.

Addressing a party rally here, Nadda termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA regime as "responsible and responsive".

"We are the largest political party in the world with 14 crore members. In India, we have the NDA governments in 20 states and the BJP governments in 13 states. We are the largest representative party in the country. We have 240 MPs (Lok Sabha). We have around 1,500 MLAs. We have more than 170 MLCs," he said.

Nadda said in the 11 years under PM Modi's leadership there has been politics of performance and accountable government, while in the previous governments there were politics of non-performance, and they did not carry out development works. They also forgot the promises made in the manifestos.

There was family-based politics, corruption and appeasement, he said.

"We come from a party which has an ideological base," the BJP

president said.

The BJP leader said, as promised by the party, Article 370 was abrogated, Ram Mandir in Ayodhya was constructed, made amendments to the CAA and Waqf Act and ended triple talaq.

He further said India, which is now the fourth-largest economy in the world, is aspiring to become the third largest.

Nadda said PM Modi gave a gift to the nation by restructuring the GST rate slabs to just two from the earlier four.

"Our defence exports have increased by seven times. We have become the world's pharmacy in medicine. India is now producing and manufacturing 92 per cent mobile phones," he said.

Listing out the developmental works undertaken in Andhra Pradesh, Nadda said the Centre has provided ₹ 15,000 crore for the construction of the capital Amaravati.

He further said the union government has established several institutions such as IIT and IIM in Andhra Pradesh. Attacking the previous YSRC regime, the BJP leader said it was a government of non-performance. "It was a government of non-governance. It was full of corruption. Now under the leadership of PM Modi, the NDA government is marching towards development," he said. (PTI)

Great Nicobar project being bulldozed through despite challenges to clearances in courts: Cong



NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh on Sunday said the Great Nicobar mega infrastructure project was an "ecological disaster" being "bulldozed" through by the Modi government, even though environmental clearances have been challenged in courts.

Ramesh, a former environment minister, said the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation is going ahead with inviting expressions of interest for enumeration, felling, logging and transportation of trees and marking on the ground areas under the project.

"In August 18, 2022, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration, controlled by the Union Home Ministry, certified that all individual and community rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, had been identified, settled, and consent obtained for diversion to the Great Nicobar mega infrastructure project.

"On December 18, 2024, he said, this approval was challenged in the Calcutta High Court by Meena Gupta, a retired IAS officer

who had been secretary in both the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests and had also been a senior official in the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs," he said in a post on X.

Ramesh said her petition contended that the certification of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration did not follow the Forest Rights Act, 2006, in letter and spirit and, in fact, constituted a very serious breach of the law passed by Parliament in December 2006.

"Thereafter, on February 19, 2025, the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, quite strangely, filed an affidavit in the Calcutta High Court submitting that it should be removed from the list of respondents," the Congress leader said.

However, on September 8, 2025, he claimed, the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs sought a factual report from the Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands on several points raised by the Tribal Council of Little and Great Nicobar Islands regarding the non-compliance by the local administration with the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

"The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs seems to be curiously ambivalent even as the challenge in the Calcutta High Court awaits a detailed hearing," Ramesh said.

Separately, he claimed, the environmental clearance to the Great Nicobar mega infrastructure project is also under challenge in the National Green Tribunal.

Parl panel urges govt to develop legal, tech solutions to act against those behind AI-based fake news

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: A parliamentary committee has asked the government to develop concrete legal and technological solutions for identifying and prosecuting individuals and entities responsible for spreading Artificial Intelligence-generated fake news.

The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology, in its draft report, called for a balanced approach for deploying AI to curb fake news, noting that the technology is being used to detect misinformation but can be a source of misinformation as well.

The draft report of the committee, headed by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, was recently submitted to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. It will be tabled in Parliament during the next session.

The Committee also urged for "close coordination between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and other ministries and departments concerned to develop concrete legal and technological solutions for identifying and prosecuting individuals and entities responsible for disseminating AI-generated fake news", according to sources.

The Committee has recommended inter-ministerial coordination for exploring the feasibility of licensing requirements for AI content creators and mandatory labelling of AI-generated videos and

content. The committee's suggestions are not binding on the government. However, the government often looks to implement them as parliamentary committees are representative of Parliament, and their recommendations often carry the weight of bipartisan spirit.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the Committee noted, has constituted a nine-member panel to examine problems related to the "issue of deepfakes".

Two projects to detect fake news currently underway are: fake speech detection using a deep learning framework and design and development of software for detecting deepfake videos and images, it said. While stating that advances in technology, particularly in AI, offer promising solutions to address concerns over fake news, the Committee highlighted the related ministries' stand that AI is evolving and works on the use of pre-existing information available on the internet. In its present state, it cannot be used for a subject as complicated as fact-checking, the ministries told the Committee. But AI could be used to flag potentially fake news and misleading content for review by human intervention as a second layer of monitoring, the Committee added.

The Committee said various research projects and initiatives are exploring AI's use in combating fake news. (PTI)

Pahalgam victim urges boycott of Indo-Pak Asia Cup match

PUNE, Sept 14: Asavari Jagdale, whose father Santosh Jagdale was one of the 26 people who lost their lives in the Pahalgam terror attack, called for the boycott of the India-Pakistan Asia Cup cricket match scheduled to be held in Dubai on Sunday.

India and Pakistan will face off on Sunday evening in what will be the first match between the traditional rivals since the escalation of the border conflict in May, when India struck terror infrastructure in the neighbouring country following the Pahalgam attack on April 22.

According to the government's new sports policy, India will not play bilateral contests against Pakistan, but will continue to face them in multilateral tournaments such as the ongoing Asia Cup and ICC events. Talking to PTI, Asavari said, "I feel that today's match should not take place. Just over five months ago, the Pahalgam attack claimed 26 lives. And after all this, if the BCCI still thinks that they should go ahead with the match, then it is wrong." Asavari was at Baisaran Valley with her parents when terrorists gunned down her father and their family friend, Kaustubh Ganbote. She said that allowing the match would amount to playing with the emotions of the victims' families.

"I feel deep shame for those who are ready to play, those who organise the game, and those who will cheer this evening, forgetting the Pahalgam attack, the sacrifices of soldiers, and countless such attacks over the years," she said. (PTI)

Campaign being implemented across all 2,303 villages Punjab floods: Special health drive focusing on medical camps, door-to-door visits begins

CHANDIGARH, Sept 14: To protect the health of citizens in the flood-ravaged areas of the state, Punjab Health and Family Welfare Minister Balbir Singh has issued orders for a massive mobilisation of the state's entire medical fraternity in several affected villages from Sunday.

The minister has issued orders directing the deployment of all available resources, including government doctors, private volunteers, Ayurveda medical officers, and MBBS interns, to spearhead a 'Special Health Campaign' in 2303 flood-affected villages from Sunday.

Singh has mandated that Civil Surgeons engage every possible medical professional to man health camps and door-to-door teams, ensuring no village is left without access to medical care and preventive measures," Singh said on Sunday.

Elaborating on the strategy, the health minister said the campaign is built on three core components - first being health and medical camps under which daily medical



ing outbreaks of vector-borne, waterborne, and communicable diseases.

"The well-being of our people is our topmost priority. In the aftermath of this calamity, we are launching a comprehensive, multi-layered health intervention to ensure no one is left without access to medical care and preventive measures," Singh said on Sunday.

Elaborating on the strategy, the health minister said the campaign is built on three core components - first being health and medical camps under which daily medical

in these villages to distribute essential health kits containing mosquito repellent, ORS, paracetamol, chlorine tablets, soap, and other supplies, he said, while adding that they will also screen for illnesses and raise awareness about disease prevention. As part of the last component, a rigorous fumigation and vector-control exercise will be carried out every day for the next 21 days in all affected villages. Teams will conduct indoor and outdoor fogging, larvicidal spraying, and breeding checks in households, schools, markets, and other public places to prevent outbreaks of dengue and malaria. The campaign will be supported by a robust fleet of over 550 ambulances, including 180 government ambulances and 254 arranged through the Indian Medical Association, to strengthen health services and patient access.

The health minister stated that the department has identified 85 essential drugs and 23 consumables for flood relief, which are in sufficient stock and will be made available at all health camps and facilities. (PTI)

'RESUMPTION OF AIR SERVICES FROM KAILASHAHAR AIRPORT IS ESSENTIAL TO ENHANCE DEFENCE CAPABILITY AT BORDER TOWN' TIPRA MOTHA SUPREMO BACKS CONG DEMAND FOR FUNCTIONAL AIRPORT



AGARTALA, Sept 14: Tipra Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Sunday backed the Congress' demand for a functional airport and railway link at Kailashahar in Tripura's Unakoti district.

Recently, the Unakoti District Congress observed a 12-hour strike in Kailashahar on an 11-point charter of demands, which included operationalising the Kailashahar airport and ensuring railway connectivity to the district headquarters.

"I have spoken several times to Congress MLA Birajit Sinha on the issue that Kailashahar needs a proper functional airport and a railway link," Debbarma said on a Facebook post.

He wrote, "These demands have substance and merit as it will be a huge boon to people not just in Kailashahar, but the surrounding areas, including some bordering parts of Assam and Mizoram".

"This matter will be raised in Delhi officially," he added.

Responding to Debbarma's post, Sinha thanked him for realising the ground reality of having a functional airport at Kailashahar.

"Resumption of air services from Kailashahar airport is not only important for ferrying passengers or boosting tourism, but also essential to enhance defence capability at the border town," Sinha said.

Sinha claimed the

Bangladesh government has developed Shemshernagar air base, which is just 10 km away from Kailashahar town.

"We must have an air facility at Kailashahar to counter any threat from across the border. People had witnessed how Kailashahar airport was utilised during the 1971 India-Pakistan war", he said.

"Chief Minister Mank Saha and Transport Minister Sushanta Chowdhury are in favour of resumption of services from Kailashahar airport. It appears land acquisition is a problem", he added.

Kailashahar airport, which was made functional in 1989, has remained non-functional since 1993. (PTI)

Panchayat president killed in landslide in Gyalshing

GANGTOK, Sept 14: A 47-year-old panchayat president was killed in a landslide, triggered by incessant rain, in Sikkim's Gyalshing district, police said on Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday evening when a massive landslide buried Rajen Gurung, the president of the Sardung Lungjik Gram Panchayat unit, near his residence, a senior officer said.

He was looking at the drainage system near his residence when the landslide occurred, the police said. Chief Minister PS Tamang said he was deeply saddened to learn about the "untimely demise of Gurung, who succumbed to his injuries caused by a landslide near his residence on Saturday night".

"In this moment of profound grief, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and pray for eternal peace to the departed soul. Late Shri Gurung's selfless service to his community and his tireless contributions towards the welfare of the people will be remembered with deep respect and gratitude," the chief minister said in a social media post.

The CM said he, on behalf of the state government and the people of Sikkim, stands in solidarity with the grieving family in this hour of irreparable loss.

Tamang said it was also reassuring to note that the district administration and authorities concerned have promptly responded to the incident and are extending all necessary support to the family members and the affected area. (PTI)

Khandu calls for wider use of Hindi to strengthen national unity

ITANAGAR, Sept 14: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Sunday extended greetings on the occasion of Hindi Diwas, underlining the role of the language as a unifying factor in a linguistically diverse country like India.

Hindi Diwas is observed on September 14 every year to commemorate the adoption of Hindi as one of the official languages in India. "Arunachal Pradesh is known for its vibrant cultural heritage and diverse tribal languages. In such a context, Hindi has become a medium for us that connects different languages and cultures, making communication seamless," Khandu said in a post in Hindi on X.

Urging citizens to adopt Hindi more actively in everyday life, the chief minister remarked, "On this Hindi Diwas, let us all pledge together to make Hindi our daily language, thereby strengthening the unity and integrity of the nation. Heartfelt wishes to all on Hindi Diwas." Khandu said while Hindi unites people across the state and the nation, equal importance must be given to nurturing local tribal languages and traditions. "Our diversity is our strength. Alongside Hindi, preserving and promoting our mother tongues is essential to safeguarding Arunachal's cultural identity," he said. (PTI)

Modi to visit Tripura on Sept 22, says CM Manik Saha

AGARTALA, Sept 14: PM Narendra Modi will visit Tripura on September 22 and unveil the redeveloped Tripureswari temple, Chief Minister Manik Saha said on Sunday.

Addressing the Neermahal Jal Utsav in Sepahijala district, Saha said he had invited the PM to unveil the redeveloped Tripureswari temple, and he accepted the invitation.

"PM Modi is coming to unveil the redeveloped Tripureswari temple on September 22, and offer puja there," he said.

The redevelopment works at the temple, a Shakti Pith, were carried out under the Centre's PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual Augmentation Drive) scheme at a cost of Rs 51 crore.

Maintaining that his government was focusing on promoting spiritual tourism in the state, Saha said

replicas of all 51 Shakti Piths are being built in Gomati district's Bandowar at a cost of Rs 97 crore.

"We can't visit all the 51 Shakti Piths as they are spread across many countries, including Bangladesh and Nepal. Once the replicas are built at Bandowar, people can easily have a glimpse of the 51 Shakti Piths in one place," he said.

Saha urged the people to promote the lake palace of Neermahal through social media.

"I had been to Udaipur and experienced the beauty of the lake palace there, which is comparable to our Neermahal. But many people don't know about Neermahal. I appeal to you to promote Neermahal on social media," he told the gathering.

Built by Maharaja Bir Bikram in 1930, Neermahal was declared a Ramsar site in 2007. (PTI)

Police outposts set up at TRIHMS and RK Mission Hospital amid security concerns

HT Correspondent

NAHARLAGUN, Sept 14: In the wake of recent unrest and security concerns at the state's lone medical college, TRIHMS, the Home and Border Affairs Minister Mama Natung recently announced that police outposts have been installed at both TRIHMS and RK Mission Hospital, with plans to extend similar measures to other medical facilities. The minister assured that the state government is committed to resolving all security-related issues and providing full support to healthcare institutions.

Addressing the media following a high-level meeting at TRIHMS, Minister Natung said the discussions focused on improving security arrangements and addressing ongoing concerns affecting doctors, nurses, and hospital staff.

The meeting was attended by Health and Family Welfare Minister, local MLA Techi Kaso, DGP Anan Mohan, the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Itanagar and Naharlagun, along with representatives from TRIHMS and



the Health Department.

"We have begun resolving the issues one by one. The police outpost at TRIHMS is already operational, and another at RK Mission Hospital is in the process of being set up. We are committed to addressing the problems in a structured manner," he stated. The meeting was convened after recent unrest at the premier medical institute, which raised serious concerns about security gaps and deteriorating trust between medical professionals and patients. Minister Natung acknowledged

their duties without fear or disruption. "Peace and tranquility are essential. When there is peace, work flows smoothly. Everyone must abide by the law and work together for the greater good of society," he added. Referring to the Supreme Court's directive on providing security to healthcare institutions, minister Natung confirmed that adequate security measures have been implemented at TRIHMS.

"We want doctors and nurses to work without hindrance. Their dedication to patient care is invaluable, and peace is a must for smooth functioning," he emphasised.

The minister also appealed to healthcare professionals to discharge their responsibilities with sincerity and compassion, prioritising patient welfare above all.

"Trust among colleagues and towards patients is the foundation of good healthcare. We are committed to creating a safe environment so that medical services can be delivered effectively for the benefit of the people of the state," he said.

India, Thailand conclude joint military exercise 'Maitree' in Meghalaya

UMROI, Sept 14: The 14th edition of the India-Thailand joint military exercise, Maitree, concluded in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district on Sunday, with both armies enhancing interoperability and familiarising themselves with each other's operational procedures and combat drills.

The two-week exercise, conducted under the United Nations mandate, culminated with a 48-hour validation phase that saw both contingents carry out complex tasks such as setting up a temporary operating base, establishing an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) grid, isolating a village, helicopter operations, raids and hostage rescue.

The exercise also featured the display and use of new-generation equipment by both sides.

Defence officials said the joint training helped soldiers from the In-

dian Army and the Royal Thai Army learn valuable lessons in counter-terrorism operations, peacekeeping drills, intelligence sharing and the application of modern technology on the battlefield. The closing ceremony was marked by felicitation of outstanding soldiers and a series of cultural programmes showcasing the rich martial and cultural traditions of the two nations.

Friendly volleyball, basketball, and tug-of-war matches further strengthened the bonds between the contingents. "The exercise was an astounding success and a significant milestone in ensuring cordial relations between the two countries. Besides promoting understanding and inter-operability between the two armies, it has further cemented the ties between India and Thailand," a senior Indian Army officer said.

(PTI)

Flash floods, landslides in parts of Manipur following torrential rain



IMPHAL, Sept 14: Flash floods and landslides have been reported in various parts of Manipur following torrential rain during the last 24 hours, officials said on Sunday.

Several areas in Yaingangpokpi, Santikhongbal and Sabungkhok Khunou in Imphal East, and Kakwa and Sagolband in Imphal West, have been inundated due to the downpour, they said.

Some houses and residential compounds have also been submerged in these areas.

Landslides were reported from Awangkhol in Noney district as

well as from the hill districts of Senapati and Kamjong, the officials said.

The water level of major rivers, including Imphal river, Nambul and Iri, rose significantly, but are yet to reach the danger mark, they said.

The Water Resources Department is closely monitoring the situation.

Most parts of the northeastern state have recorded moderate to heavy rainfall in the past 24 hours, with forecasts of more downpour on Sunday, he added. (PTI)

Protest in Manipur's Churachandpur over arrest of two

CHURACHANDPUR/ IMPHAL, Sept 14: A mob clashed with security forces in Manipur's Churachandpur district on Sunday, protesting the arrest of two youths for allegedly vandalising the banners and cutouts put up in connection with the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, police said.

On the night of September 11, several banners and cutouts put up at Pearsonmun and Phailien Bazaar were vandalised. In connection with that incident, several youths were picked up by the police. While all of them were released after questioning, two youths were arrested.

Demanding their immediate release, a mob started a demonstration near the Churachandpur police station. The situation subsequently escalated, and they hurled at the security forces.

Police said they were trying to



bringing the situation under control.

Modi visited the state on Saturday for the first time after ethnic clashes broke out between Kukis and Meiteis in May 2023. He addressed a public rally in Churachandpur, promising to make the state a "symbol of peace".

He also met the people affected by the violence in the district and unveiled a slew of developmental projects. (PTI)

Itanagar: Nocte community felicitates APPSC achievers

HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Sept 14: The Nocte Chalo Loku Committee (NCLC) of Itanagar organised a felicitation ceremony on September 13 to honor three distinguished candidates from Tirap District who successfully cleared the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission Combined Competitive Examination (APPSC-CCE) 2024.

The event, held at the DK Convention Hall, celebrated the academic excellence and perseverance of some of the community's brightest talents. The felicitation ceremony witnessed a large turnout, including members of the Nocte Women Group, students from Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU) and various colleges in the Capital Region, as well as senior community leaders and stakeholders.

The gathering came together to applaud the accomplishments of Phamhoi Wangchu, Jamwang Lowang, and Ejoy Ketok, whose success in the highly competitive

examination has brought pride to the community.

The program was graced by Ranpho Ngowa, IFS, Secretary of Tourism, who attended as a special invitee.

In his address, he encouraged the students and aspiring candidates to aim high and pursue excellence with determination and hard work.

"Success is not an accident but the outcome of discipline, persistence, and resilience," he said, urging the youth to dream big and prepare with focus.

Adding cultural vibrancy to the event, the ceremony began with a traditional Nocte welcome song per-

formed by the Itanagar Nocte Women Group.

The performance was widely appreciated by the audience and set a celebratory tone for the day-long event. During the course of the program, the achievers shared their ex-

periences and offered motivational advice to fellow students and community members. Phamhoi Wangchu elaborated on her study techniques and time

management methods that helped her excel in the examination. Jamwang Lowang stressed the significance of defining clear goals and maintaining discipline throughout the preparation phase.

Ejoy Ketok, meanwhile, shared

insights on how he overcame personal and academic challenges on his journey toward success.

Wangton Lowang, the organising chairman of the event, praised the committee's initiative, stating that such efforts "highlight the community's unwavering commitment to education and the pursuit of excellence." He emphasised the importance of creating an environment that nurtures young talents and encourages them to strive for higher achievements.

The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Manje Tangiang, who expressed gratitude to the organisers, invitees, and participants for making the event a resounding success.

The felicitation not only acknowledged the achievements of the successful candidates but also served as a source of inspiration for students and aspiring candidates across the region, reinforcing the value of education, hard work, and perseverance.



Justice M Sundar new chief justice of Manipur HC



NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Justice M Sundar of the Madras High Court has been elevated as the chief justice of the Manipur High Court, the law ministry said on Sunday.

In a statement, the ministry said justice Sundar will assume charge following the retirement of incumbent chief justice Kempiah Somashekar on Sunday. High court judges demit office on attaining the age of 62 years, while Supreme Court judges retire at 65.

The Supreme Court collegium had on Thursday recommended the names of three judges for elevation as chief justices of different high courts.

The collegium recommended names of Karnataka High Court's Justice Pankumar B Bajanthri as Chief Justice of Patna HC (at present acting CJ of Patna HC), Calcutta High Court's Justice Soumen Sen as Chief Justice of Meghalaya, and Madras High Court's Justice Sundar as Chief Justice of Manipur High Court. (PTI)

UAE, Oman seek first points in Group A clash

ABU DHABI, Sept 14: Hosts United Arab Emirates will look to shake off the drubbing against India when they face debutants Oman in a Group A clash at the Asia Cup here on Monday.

UAE, playing only their second Asia Cup, were skittled for a mere 57 in 13.1 overs in their opener as India raced to their fastest T20 win.

Oman too fared no better, bowled out for 67 in 16.4 overs while chasing 161 against Pakistan, underlining the gulf in class between the associate teams and the tournament

heavyweights.

Coach Lalchand Rajput, who had coached India to the T20 World Cup triumph in 2007, admitted his UAE side had never encountered such quality of bowling and looked overawed by India's star-studded line-up. Against Oman, however, the hosts will find themselves on a more level playing field.

UAE qualified for the tournament by winning the ACC Men's Premier Cup last and came into the event following a triseries against Pakistan and Afghanistan. They have

showed flashes of brilliance but never could sustain it over the entire match and it will be about holding on to the advantageous positions.

Captain Muhammad Waseem, along with Alishan Sharafu, Rahul Chopra, Asif Khan and left-arm spinner Haider Ali will be key as the team seeks its first points.

For Oman, Shah Faisal and Aamir Kaleem impressed with three wickets apiece against Pakistan, while Hammad Mirza was the lone bright spot with the bat. The debutants, many of whom juggle cricket



with day jobs, will be eager to make a mark.

Skipper Jatinder Singh praised his side's bowling and fielding effort and vowed to "play positive cricket" against UAE.

"Really proud of the boys - the way they bowled and fielded. Our team is a lot better than what we performed today, and confident that we can do a lot better," Singh had said.

Teams (from): United Arab Emirates: Muhammad Waseem (c), Alishan Sharafu, Aryansh Sharma, Asif Khan, Dhruv Parashar,

Ethan D'Souza, Haider Ali, Harshit Kaushik, Junaid Siddique, Matiullah Khan, Muhammad Farooq, Muhammad Jawadullah, Muhammad Zohaib, Rahul Chopra, Rohid Khan, Simranjeet Singh, Saghir Khan.

Oman: Jatinder Singh (c), Ashish Odedara, Aamir Kaleem, Karan Sonavale, Hassnain Shah, Mohammad Nadeem, Vinayak Shukla, Hammad Mirza, Sufyan Mehmood, Aryan Bisht, Sha-keel Ahmed, Samay Shrivastava, Mohammad Imran. (PTI)

Strong Sri Lanka face struggling Hong Kong in Asia Cup



DUBAI, Sept 14: Sri Lanka will look to build on their perfect start in Asia Cup when they take on a struggling Hong Kong here on Monday.

Sri Lanka, who won the Asia Cup the last time it was held in the T20 format, ticked all boxes in their opener against Bangladesh.

From getting wickets in the powerplay to sealing the game inside the first six overs with the bat, Sri Lanka sent ominous signals to the tougher teams in the eight team competition.

They meet Hong Kong, a side which has lost two games in a row with its batters having a tough time against the more accomplished opponents.

Considering their batting struggles, a drastic improvement will be needed against Sri Lanka to make a match out of it.

The pace duo of Nuwan Thushara and Dushmantha Chameera would be fancying themselves against Hong Kong's fragile top-order.

If the Yasim Murtaza led unit is able to negotiate them

in the powerplay, overcoming spinner Wanindu Hasaranga could prove to be a tougher task. Trust Hasaranga to target the stumps and fox the batters with an odd googly.

Death overs specialist Matheesha Pathirana had an off day against Bangladesh and he would be eager to roll over the opposition with a barrage of yorkers.

On the batting front, Sri Lanka's top-order comprising Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis and Kamil Mishara can be destructive on their day. Nissanka and Mishara go into the game with runs under their belt.

Murtaza, who is among the few boundary hitters in his side, knows where his batters need to work on. However, the bowlers showed big improvement in their last game against Bangladesh.

"To be honest, I am happy with the batters but would have been happier if one of them got 60-70+ and got a big total. I think we know what we need to work on, hopefully we'll do better next time,"

Murtaza said after the loss to Bangladesh.

Hong Kong openers Zee-shan Ali and Anshuman Rath have been underwhelming thus far and if their team is to do any better, they must get the runs in the powerplay.

Charith Asalanka (c), Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Kusal Perera, Nuwanidu Fernando, Kamindu Mendis, Kamil Mishara, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Chamika Karunaratne, Maheesh Theekshana, Dushmantha Chameera, Binura Fernando, Nuwan Thushara, Matheesha Pathirana.

Yasim Murtaza (c), Babar Hayat, Zeeshan Ali, Nizakat Khan, Nasrulla Rana, Martin Coetzee, Anshuman Rath, Kalhan Challu, Ayush Shukla, Aizaz Khan, Ateeq Iqbal, Kinchit Shah, Adil Mehmood, Haroon Arshad, Ali Hassan, Shahid Wasif, Mohammad Ghazanfar, Mohammad Waheed, Anas Khan, Ehsan Khan.

Match starts 8 PM IST. (PTI)

Double delight: Jaismine, Minakshi crowned world champions



LIVERPOOL, Sept 14: Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and Minakshi Hooda (48kg) carved their place in Indian boxing history by clinching titles with hard-fought wins at the World Championships here.

Capping off a stupendous campaign that saw her dominate all her rivals, Jaismine outclassed Paris Olympics silver medalist Julia Szeremeta of Poland in the 57kg summit clash late on Saturday night, prevailing 4-1 on the judges' scorecards (30-27 29-28 30-27 28-29 29-28). Minakshi followed suit a day later on Sunday, by out-punching Paris Olympics bronze medalist Kazakhshtan's Nazym Kyzaybay with the same margin in the 48kg summit clash.

However, Nupur Sheoran (80+kg) and the seasoned Pooja Rani (80kg) signed off with silver and bronze medals respectively in non-Olympic weight categories.

With the victory, Jaismine and Minakshi joined an illustrious list of Indian world champions featuring six-time winner Mary Kom (2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2018), two-time winner Nikhat Zareen (2022 and 2023), Sarita Devi (2006), Jenny RL (2006), Lekha KC (2006), Nitu Ghanghas (2023), Lovlina Borgohain (2023) and Saweety Boora (2023).

Competing in her third World Championships, the 24-year-old Jaismine grew steadily into the bout. After a relatively sedate start where both pugilists sized each other up, it was Szeremeta who drew first blood, prodded into action by the referee.

The much shorter Pole, who had lost the Olympic final to

gender-row boxer Lin Yu-ting, was fast and precise, using defensive manoeuvres to dart in and out. She negotiated Jaismine's long reach to win the opening round 3-2.

But the Indian came roaring back in the second. Adjusting her rhythm, she began controlling the distance, evading Szeremeta's advances, and unleashing crisp combinations that swayed all the judges in her favour. Jaismine employed the jab and defended stoutly.

When the final verdict was announced, the usually serene Jaismine let out a brief yell, raising her hand before graciously embracing her crestfallen opponent.

At the medal ceremony, her eyes glistened as the Indian national anthem reverberated through the arena.

In the second final of the night, Nupur walked away with silver after a narrow 2-3 defeat to Poland's technically astute Agata Kaczmarek.

Despite enjoying a substantial height advantage, Nupur could not impose herself on the contest. She started brightly with a flurry of punches, but Kaczmarek countered with relentless aggression, weaving through her reach and landing body blows that wore the Indian down.

As the bout progressed, Nupur grew hesitant to throw punches, while the Pole dodged jabs with ease and responded with hooks. At one point, Kaczmarek even wrestled Nupur onto the canvas. The defining moment came in the final round when the Pole unleashed a stunning uppercut which was enough to tip the verdict 3-2 in her favour and seal her maiden crown. (PTI)

Satwik-Chirag, Lakshya finish runners-up at Hong Kong Open

HONG KONG, Sept 14: India squandered a golden opportunity to return with two titles as both Lakshya Sen and the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty signed off with runner-up finishes at the Hong Kong Open Super 500 here on Sunday.

Lakshya could not blunt the attack of world No. 4 Li Shi Feng and went down 15-21 12-21 in a rather sedate men's singles final.

Satwik and Chirag, who bagged a second successive World Championships bronze last month, let go of a one-game advantage before losing 21-19 14-21 17-21 to China's Olympic silver medallists Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang in a tense 61-minute men's doubles summit clash. "Yeah, obviously feels good. Been a good week, especially after the world

championships a week later and here we are playing a final. Feels good," Chirag said. "You would want to go and win that title but I think, credit to them, they played well. There's always a next time and overall happy with the performance."

For Lakshya, it was his first final since the Syed Modi Super 300 last November, but he could not match his familiar foe Li, against whom he was playing for the 14th time in a rivalry dating back to their junior days.

The Indian held a slender 7-6 edge in the head-to-head, but the Chinese has dominated this season with wins at both the All England and China Open.

The 2021 World Championship bronze medallist Lakshya made a brisk start in the opening game, surging to a 4-0 lead before Li found his rhythm with sharp

body attacks and flat exchanges to close in at 6-7. The Chinese drew level at 8-8 with an athletic net kill and then reeled off five straight points with a mix of tight net play and steep smashes to take control at 14-10.

Lakshya tried to wrest back the front court but misjudged at crucial moments as Li moved ahead 19-15. The Chinese then unleashed a jump cross-court smash to pocket the opener 21-15.

Playing with the drift in the second game, Lakshya again started brightly at 4-1, only for Li to claw back with measured rallies. Errors at the net and a wide smash saw the Indian trail 7-4, and despite producing some sharp defensive strokes to reduce the deficit to 9-12, he was unable to blunt Li's relentless attack. (PTI)

Meghana wins maiden World Cup medal, India finish 5th

NINGBO (CHINA), Sept 14: India's Meghana Sajjanar clinched her first-ever World Cup medal, a bronze in the women's 10m air rifle, as the country finished fifth in the season-ending ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol.

In her first World Cup final in eight years, Meghana shot 230.0 to secure bronze behind Norwegian Jeanette Hegg Duestad, who won silver.

The event was dominated by China's rising star Peng Xinlu, who shattered the world record with a score of 255.3, bettering compatriot Wang Zifei's 254.8.

On Saturday, Esha Singh gave India their first gold medal of the event in the women's 10m air pistol. China topped the tally with three golds, while Norway came away second with two golds in their kitty, of the 10 available.

Early on Sunday morning, Meghana shot a solid 632.7 in the second qualification rally to claim the seventh spot, while Peng topped with a superlative 637.4. The Chinese began the 24-shot final with a perfect 10.9 as Meghana lay at the bottom of the eight-woman field after the first series of five single shots. A strong second series of 52.3 moved her up to sixth and over the next 10 single shots, the experienced Indian shot nothing less than 10.2, including a crucial 10.9 for her 12th, to ensure her first ever medal at this level. (PTI)

India coach Khalid Jamil names 30 probables for Asian Cup Qualifiers against Singapore

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Fresh from India's credible third-place finish in the CAFA Nations Cup, the national men's football team head coach Khalid Jamil on Sunday announced a 30-member probables squad, including talisman Sunil Chhetri, for the upcoming AFC Asian Cup qualifier against Singapore.

The national team's preparatory camp will begin in Bengaluru on September 20 with the squad reporting to the city a day prior.

Players from Mohun Bagan SG and FC Goa, who have been shortlisted for the probables squad, will be called up later after their AFC Champions League 2 engagements are over.

Apart from these, five players have been kept on standby - two from the U23 men's national team, and three senior players. Their names will be an-

nounced at a later date.

The camp is aimed at helping the Blue Tigers prepare for their two 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers final round in Group C, where they will play two back-to-back matches against Singapore on October 9 at the National Stadium and on October 14 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Margao, Goa.

The final squad for these two matches will be selected from the probables.

The recent CAFA Nations Cup, matches of which were organised in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, was Jamil's first assignment with the national team after the experienced gaffer succeeded Manolo Marquez.

Jamil had opted to rest Chhetri from the CAFA Nations Cup.

The 30-member probables:

Goalkeepers: Amrinder Singh, Gurmeet Singh, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

Defenders: Anwar Ali, Bikash Yumnam, Chinglensana Singh Konsham, Hmingthanmawia Ralte, Muhammed Uwais, Pramveer, Rahul Bheke, Ricky Meetei Haobam, Roshan Singh Naorem.

Midfielders: Ashique Kurunyan, Danish Farooq Bhat, Jeakson Singh Thounaojam, Jithin MS, Macarton Louis Nickson, Mahesh Singh Naorem, Mohammed Aimen, Nikhil Prabhu, Suresh Singh Wangjam, Vibin Mohanan.

Forwards: Irfan Yadwad, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Manvir Singh (jr), Muhammed Sanan K, Muhammed Suhail, Parthib Gogoi, Sunil Chhetri, Vikram Partap Singh.

Head Coach: Khalid Jamil. (PTI)

Born into legacy, carving her own: Jaismine's road to world glory

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: When Jaismine Lamboria missed a medal by a whisker at the 2022 World Championship, she was crushed.

"I need to be more aggressive," the then 21-year-old had admitted to PTI, her voice heavy with regret. It was a lesson that would come back to her in painful ways. The following year, she stumbled again, falling at the quarterfinal stage of both the World Championships and the Asian Games.

Each defeat added to the agony but Jaismine treated them as learnings.

The Asian Games loss was especially hard. After dominating the opening round, Jaismine suddenly unravelled, when the referee gave her a standing count. "I got the count for the first time in my life and my mind just went blank," she would confess later.

With the Paris Olympics approaching, she realised skill and stamina weren't enough. She had to sharpen her mind.

"I consulted psychologist and motivator Vikrant Mahajan and worked on the mental aspect of the game," the newly crowned featherweight world champion told PTI from Liverpool.

Yet destiny tested her resolve again. Named only as a reserve in the 60kg category, she was given a chance when Parveen Hooda's suspension opened a slot in the featherweight division.

Jaismine seized it, qualified for Paris, but to her disappointment, she crashed out in the very first round in the French

capital last summer.

Boxing runs deep in Jaismine's veins. Her uncles Sandeep and Parvinder are former national champions and international boxers. The legendary Hawa Singh is a distant relative.

Yet it wasn't the family legacy but wrestler Sakshi Malik's bronze medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics that truly inspired a young Jaismine, then in Class 10, to take up sports seriously.

"My chachas (uncles) asked me 'Dekh ladkiya acha kar rahin hain, tujhe sports mein aana hai?' (See women are doing well in sports, you want to try?)," the Bhiwani boxer recalled.

Disheartened but not broken after the Olympic loss, Jaismine returned to the Army Sports Institute (ASI) in Pune after a short break. She had made up her mind to stay in the 57kg division, a category that complemented her rangy frame and natural speed.

"In 60kg you need more power and dominance. But 57 works for me because of my height. The long range and speed helps, and I can manage the weight cut easily," she explained.

Her coaches at ASI Mohammad Aitesam Uddin and Chotte Lal Yadav refused to let her sulk.

"She was very, very disappointed after the Olympics. She didn't want to play tournaments, just wanted to work on her shortcomings. But we forced her to compete at the National Games and Cham-

pionships to assess her progress,"

recalled Aitesam, who is also part of the national camp.

"She was a master at backwards movement, but we wanted her to come forward, to attack. She is soft-natured, so we tried different ways to get her to be angry in the ring," Aitesam said with a laugh. Chotte Lal added, "Aggression is very important. But it doesn't mean you keep hitting without a plan. We taught her to put pressure, to attack, and then to counter." The results soon followed. Jaismine began boxing with intent from the very first second. No longer relying only on her defensive mastery, she pressed forward, dictating the pace, forcing opponents onto the back foot.

This year she has won gold at every competition she has competed in, including the National Games, National Championships and the World Boxing Cup in Astana. "Somewhat the aggression comes now, it didn't happen before but now I'm able to get aggressive in the ring and attack," Jaismine admitted.

At last, the same boxer who once blanked out in a high-stakes Asian Games bout stood tall as a world champion. They say you make your own destiny. For Jaismine Lamboria, destiny may have handed her a legacy, but she has fought, punched, and persevered her way into carving her own niche.

She is only the third Indian boxer behind the great MC Mary Kom and Nikhat Zareen to win a world title outside her country. (PTI)