

6 WORLD

8 NATION

6 Trump says India kills us with tariffs, claims Delhi now offers 'no tariffs' to America

8 China unveils a range of new weapons systems at its massive military parade

8 तीय नता RATIYA JANATA P

8 Khera's wife also has 2 voter IDs: BJP

8 BSF launches drone warfare school to train troops for future battles

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THE HILLS TIMES

Voice of the hills people

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

Vol .No. XXVI Issue No. 231 RNI-ASSENG/2000/12862 DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2025 PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8

NEW KHADI OF NEW INDIA

In 2024-25, Khadi and Village Industries achieved record sales of ₹1.70 lakh crore - a 450% increase compared to 2013-14

KHADI FOR NATION

Khadi India

VOCAL FOR LOCAL

13 Bangladeshis trying to enter India pushed back



GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said 13 Bangladeshi nationals were nabbed and pushed back after apprehending them in Barpeta district.

"While some deal with Kangaroos, we have to deal with... Anyway, our vigil remains strong as we have pushed back another 13 illegal infiltrators, who were apprehended in Barpeta, back to Bangladesh," Sarma said in a post on X. Out of 13 foreign nationals, three were women and seven were children, according to the picture shared with the post.

"We will keep a strong eye and ensure every illegal infiltrator is pushed back," Sarma said.

Assam's Sribhumi, Cachar, Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts share 267.5 km of international border with Bangladesh.

There is an Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Sutarkandi in Sribhumi. Northeast has a total of three ICPs along the India-Bangladesh border, and the other two are at Dawki in Meghalaya and Akhaura in Tripura. There is another ICP in the region at Darranga in Assam along the India-Bhutan border.

Assam Police had earlier said that the state force and BSF would do everything possible to prevent any attempt by non-Indians to enter the country from Bangladesh as per the law after a political turmoil hit the neighbouring nation last year.

However, all Indian passport holders would be allowed to return from trouble-hit Bangladesh through the entry point in the state. (PTI)

Foreigners Tribunals in Assam can now detain illegal immigrants

MHA widens protection for migrants fleeing persecution, 2024 new relief cutoff

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The Foreigners Tribunal, a quasi-judicial body that determines if an individual is an illegal immigrant or a foreigner in Assam, has been given the power to detain a suspected non-citizen in a designated camp, according to the Union Home Ministry.

So far, detention of an illegal immigrant was done through executive orders.

The home ministry granted the power to Foreigners Tribunals through The Immigration and Foreigners Order, 2025.

The order, issued on Monday, replaces the Foreigners (Tribunal) Order, 1964, and empowers Foreigners Tribunals to issue a detention order if a person whose nationality has been contested fails to appear in person.

Initially, 11 Illegal Migrant Determination Tribunals were established in Assam and these were later converted into tribunals after the Supreme Court scrapped the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983, in 2005.

Around 100 Foreigners Tri-



butals are currently operational in Assam.

Meanwhile, the Union Home Ministry on Wednesday said that members of minority communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan -- Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians -- who came to India till December 31, 2024, to escape religious persecution will be allowed to stay in the country without passport or other travel documents.

According to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), which

came into force last year, members of these persecuted minorities who came to India on or before December 31, 2014, will be granted Indian citizenship.

The significant order, issued under the just-implemented Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, will come as a relief to a large number of people, especially Hindus from Pakistan, who crossed over to India after 2014 and were worried about their fate. "A person belonging to a minority community (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam to support Centre's proposal of two GST slabs: CM

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said the state will support the Centre's proposal to have only two slabs in the Goods and Services Tax - 5 per cent and 18 per cent.

The 56th meeting of the GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising state ministers, on Wednesday started deliberations on "next-gen GST" reforms, which

will lower tax rates on items of mass consumption, remove duty inversion in sectors, like textiles, and ease compliance burden for MSMEs

"We are supporting the move of the prime minister. Assam's position will be to lower the GST to two slabs of 5 per cent and 18 per cent," Sarma told reporters here.

Assam Finance Minister Ajanta Neog is attending the meeting in the national capital, he said.

"We are going to support the initiative of the central government completely. Whatever the PM has said should be implemented," Sarma said.

The Council, over the next two days, will discuss reducing the number of slabs in GST to just two, and removing the 12 per cent and 28 per cent slabs. Also, a special 40 per cent tax has been proposed on a select few items, including tobacco and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP sets peaceful, secure BTR goal

Saffron party banks on record of accords, reforms, and infrastructure push to seek mandate

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 3: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has set "peace, security, and accelerated development" as its core agenda in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections of 2025, with the state unit declaring its intent to ensure equal progress for all communities and ethnic groups across the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

According to an official press statement, BJP spokesperson Jayanta Kumar Goswami said the party has ceremoniously filed nomination papers for candidates in 30 constituencies and launched an extensive outreach campaign with lakhs of karyakartas engaging with the electorate across the region.



Recalling the milestones of peace in Bodoland, Goswami said that in 2003, under the leadership of former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee and then Union Home Minister LK Advani, the Bodo Accord was signed with the Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF), leading to the cre-

ation of the BTC under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

He added that a second breakthrough came in 2020 under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, when a comprehensive BTR Accord was signed, uniting various Bodo organisations.

"Through the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the relentless efforts of the BJP government and its allies, an atmosphere of peace has been created in the BTR where all communities are now working together to build a prosperous Bodoland," Goswami said.

The spokesperson underlined that wide-ranging administrative reforms have been introduced to ensure (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM claims drop in crime against women

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said that crimes against women in Assam have significantly come down in the last four years as women are becoming more empowered through self-help groups (SHGs).

Speaking at a function held at Kahikuchi in Azara, where he distributed cheques of ₹ 10,000 each to 5,791 women from SHGs under the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA), Sarma said financial self-sufficiency of women has brought positive changes in families and society.

The beneficiaries belonged to his Jalukuchi constituency.

He informed that around 40 lakh women in the state are linked with SHGs, of which 8 lakh have already earned more than ₹ 1 lakh.

"Some members are earning over ₹ 10 lakh annually. This shows the potential of SHGs," the chief minister said.

Sarma recalled that under the

Shillong Medical College gets NMC nod



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: In a landmark achievement for healthcare in the Northeast, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has granted the crucial Letter of Permission (LoP) to the Shillong Medical College, officially paving the way for Meghalaya's first state-run medical institution.

Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma announced the development on social media platform X on Wednesday, calling it a "historic day" and the realization of a "long-cherished dream."

According to the announcement, the college has been approved for an intake of 50 MBBS seats. The admission process will be integrated into the national schedule, with counselling set to commence on September 4, 2025, and the first academic session beginning on September 27, 2025, in line with the NEET-UG calendar.

The establishment of a government medical college has been a persistent goal for Meghalaya, a state that has historically faced a shortage of doctors and relied on medical institutions in other states. The project represents a significant step towards addressing the critical gap in tertiary healthcare infrastructure and medical education within the state.

The LoP is the first and most essential regulatory green light from the NMC. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

3 foreigners got Indian citizenship in Assam under CAA: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Only three foreigners have received citizenship of India in Assam under the CAA against 12 applications, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an official function here, he said it is futile to discuss the CAA on the backdrop of such a low number of applications against the apprehension that lakhs of foreigners would get citizenship in Assam.

"In Assam, only three people have got citizenship under the

CAA so far," he said.

The CM, however, did not share the details related to the origin of the new Indian citizen.

"We have received only 12 applications so far. The remaining nine applications are under consideration," he said.

Talking about the opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, he said, "There was a hue-and-cry that 20-25 lakh people would get citizenship in Assam. Now, you yourself decided whether it is relevant to discuss the CAA when we received only 12

applications."

A 50-year-old man, Dulon Das, was the first person in Assam to receive citizenship under the CAA in August 2024.

The CAA seeks to provide Indian citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Parsis entering India on or before December 31, 2014, from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, after five years of residence here.

The Centre, on March 11 last year, had implemented the CAA by notifying the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Thadou community stages protest over killing of literature body chairman

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Sept 3: Anger and grief spilled onto the streets of Manja in Karbi Anglong on Wednesday as members of the Thadou community, joined by several civil society groups, staged a sit-in demonstration at Chonghang Veng to protest the killing of Thadou Literature Society (TLS), Assam chairman Nehkam Jomhao.

Jomhao, 59, was gunned down at his residence in Chonghang Veng, Manja, on the evening of August 30 by suspected armed miscreants.

Four days later, his body is yet to be recovered, leaving the community deeply shaken and demanding answers.

At the protest site, community representative Boicy Thadou described Jomhao as an influential leader and a respected figure in Thadou society.

"The police have identified the accused as cadres of the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA). But questions remain unanswered. Why was Jomhao murdered? Who gave the orders? And what are Manipur-based KRA cadres doing in Karbi

Anglong?" she asked.

She further alleged that such an attack could not have been carried out by just a handful of men. "Definitely 12 to 15 people were involved. Without the approval of higher ranks in the KRA, no cadre can execute such a crime. The masterminds must be brought before the law," she said.

The protestors recalled that Jomhao had travelled to Imphal on August 6 to take part in the "Road to Peace - Covenant of Community Understanding," a dialogue aimed at (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assamese will be the 10th language on BharatGen

Assamese language enters IIT Bombay's AI platform BharatGen

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Two Guwahati-based NGOs and IIT Bombay's AI initiative BharatGen have joined hands to include Assamese language in the database of artificial intelligence, an official said on Wednesday.

The three organisations signed an agreement on Tuesday for including two million pages with Assamese content into BharatGen, Assam Jatiya Bidyalay Educational and Socio-Economic Trust secretary Narayan Sharma said in a statement.

"For Assamese, long considered a 'low-resource' language in the digital ecosystem, this partnership is historic. With the inclusion of



two million Assamese pages into BharatGen, the language has reached this scale of AI readiness for the first time," he said.

The association is the outcome of 'Digitising Assam', a community-driven project spearheaded by Nanda Talukdar Foundation

(NTF), which, in 40 months, digitised and preserved more than two million pages of Assamese books, journals, manuscripts and ancient Sachipats.

"It is one of the largest citizen-led digital preservation efforts in the whole country," the statement said.

The BharatGen is the Centre's flagship AI initiative, led by IIT Bombay to build a sovereign, indigenous large model for Indian languages.

Its mission is to develop AI agents fluent in all of India's 22 scheduled languages, grounded in Indian cultural and linguistic data, and available (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Bhupen Hazarika's creations showcased at World Expo in Japan

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: At the ongoing World Expo in Japan, the immortal works of Assam's icon Bhupen Hazarika were presented before a global audience, according to an official statement.

To commemorate the birth centenary of the legendary artiste, a special event was organised at the multi-purpose hall in the India Pavilion, it added.

The event showcased Hazarika's creative legacy and artistic journey, bringing his contributions to the international stage during this centenary year.



Cultural artistes from Assam highlighted the depth of his songs, the distinctive style of his compositions, and his artistic vision, reflecting the state's natural beauty, cultural vibrancy, and universal

humanism, the statement said. The cultural troupe presented dance (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Stock markets bounce back amid volatility

Sensex closes higher 410 pts

MUMBAI, Sept 3: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher in a volatile session on Wednesday, driven by a rally in metal stocks and optimism related to the GST Council meeting.

After oscillating between highs and lows, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 409.83 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 80,567.71. During the day, the benchmark hit a high of 80,671.28 and a low of 80,004.60, gyrating 666.68 points.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 135.45 points or 0.55 per cent to 24,715.05.

The GST Council is meeting in New Delhi for two days to discuss the proposed pruning of tax rates to 5 per cent and 18 per cent.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Steel jumped the most by 5.90 per cent. Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, ITC, Eternal, State Bank of India, and Trent were among the other gainers.

However, Infosys, NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, TCS, Adani Ports and Bharti Airtel were among the laggards.

Indian equities closed higher after a mixed start to the session,



buoyed by expectations of a consumption-led stimulus from the potential GST slab rationalisation.

"In the near term, market sentiment hinges on the outcome of the GST Council meeting with traction on consumption-oriented stocks and sectors," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 0.90 per cent and midcap index climbed 0.63 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, metal surged the most by 3.08 per cent, followed by commodities

(1.53 per cent), healthcare (1.20 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.80 per cent), financial services (0.73 per cent), bankex (0.71 per cent) and auto (0.71 per cent).

IT, tech, BSE Focused IT and utilities were the laggards.

As many as 2,624 stocks advanced while 1,484 declined and 162 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"Markets staged a sharp recovery with the Sensex rebounding from day's lows and Nifty reclaiming 24,700, powered by a strong rally in metal stocks. Tata

Steel, SAIL, Jindal Steel and Hindustan Copper led the charge as China's supply curbs and a weaker dollar boosted sentiment.

"Optimism around GST Council deliberations on consumption-boosting tax cuts also lifted FMCG, autos and durables, while easing India VIX signalled lower volatility," Gaurav Garg, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

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

Equity markets in Europe were trading higher.

US markets ended lower on Tuesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,159.48 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dropped 1.52 per cent to USD 68.09 a barrel.

On Tuesday, the Sensex declined 206.61 points or 0.26 per cent to settle at 80,157.88. The Nifty dipped 45.45 points or 0.18 per cent to 24,579.60. (PTI)

Renault launches New Kiger

Refined turbocharged engine, 35+ enhancements, and upgraded safety define Renault's latest compact SUV



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Renault India, a wholly owned subsidiary of the French automotive major Renault Group, has launched the New Kiger, positioning it as a bold evolution under the company's "rethink performance" philosophy.

The compact SUV arrives with a host of upgrades, including a refined 100 PS turbocharged engine, more than 35 enhancements across design, technology, and safety, and a wider trim line-up aimed at meeting diverse customer needs.

Priced between ₹6.29 lakh and ₹11.29 lakh (ex-showroom), the New Kiger offers both accessibility and premium performance.

The naturally aspirated engine variants fall in the range of ₹6.29 lakh to ₹9.14 lakh, while the turbocharged Techno and Emotion variants are priced between ₹9.99 lakh and ₹11.29 lakh.

Renault has introduced a distinct TURBO badge for its top variants, symbolising enhanced driving dynamics and aligning with the SUV's refreshed design language.

Customers can choose from seven colour palettes, including two new additions — Oasis Yellow and Shadow Grey.

At its core, the New Kiger is powered by a spirited turbocharged petrol engine delivering 100 PS and 160 Nm of torque with an ARAI-rated fuel efficiency of 20.38 kmpl.

The naturally aspirated engine offers 72 PS and 96 Nm of torque while maintaining an impressive 19.83 kmpl efficiency.

Enhancements such as Mirror Bore Coating technology—a feature inspired by

racing cars—reduce engine friction, improve fuel economy, increase power output, and boost long-term durability.

The SUV provides multiple transmission choices tailored to different driving styles: a standard 5-speed manual for enthusiasts, an Easy-R AMT for hassle-free city commutes, and an advanced X-Tronic CVT for seamless, refined performance.

Renault claims the Kiger offers a best-in-segment torque-to-weight ratio, ensuring swift acceleration and dynamic handling.

On the comfort front, the SUV now comes with ventilated front seats, light leatherette upholstery, and a redesigned interior focused on convenience.

A new multi-view camera system offers enhanced visibility during manoeuvres, complemented by automatic headlights and rain-sensing wipers for stress-free driving in varied conditions.

The infotainment system has also been upgraded to a 20.32 cm floating touchscreen with wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, paired with 3D ARKAMYS® surround sound delivered through six speakers.

Additional features like a cooled glove box, multiple USB charging points, and a Belongings Take Away alert strengthen the SUV's day-to-day usability.

Safety has been significantly reinforced under Renault's Human First Program.

The New Kiger now offers six airbags (front, side, and curtain) along with 21 standard safety features across all variants.

These include Electronic Stability Program (ESP), Traction Control System (TCS), Hill Start Assist (HSA), 3-point seatbelts for all passengers, ISOFIX child seat anchorage, tyre pressure monitoring, and pedestrian protection.

The SUV continues to be built on the robust CMFA+ platform engineered for maximum crash safety.

With this launch, Renault India has completed two major product rollouts in just two months, signalling its aggressive push to consolidate market share in the competitive sub-four metre SUV segment.

Gold prices storm past ₹ 1.07 lakh per 10 g in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Gold prices rallied ₹ 1,000 to touch a fresh record high of ₹ 1,07,070 per 10 grams in the local markets on Wednesday amid hopes of Fed easing rates, mounting geopolitical tensions and growing worries around the US economy.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹ 1,06,070 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

In the Delhi market, gold of 99.5 per cent purity extended the gains for the eighth consecutive session, appreciating ₹ 1,000, to hit a fresh record high of ₹ 1,06,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. It had settled at ₹ 1,05,200 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

Meanwhile, silver prices traded flat at ₹ 1,26,100 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday, its all-time high level, as per the association.

In the international markets, spot gold climbed to hit an all-time high of USD 3,547.09 per ounce.

"Gold continues to rise higher as safe-haven demand stayed strong amid hopes of Fed easing rates, mounting geopolitical tensions and growing worries around the US economy," Chintan Mehta, CEO, Abans Financial Services, said.

"Later this week, OPEC+ will hold a meeting, while Russia supplies concerns persist as a recent Ukrainian attack hurt 17 per cent of Russian oil processing capacity, due to which oil prices have bounced back from recent lows," Mehta said, adding that "this could weigh in inflation number, weakening dollar and supporting gold".

N S Ramaswamy, Head of Commodity and CRM, Ventura, said, "The upside march of the precious metal extends beyond being only a hedge against inflation, as the US Fed is on the stage to start cutting interest rates with hotter inflation."

"Expectations of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve rate cut this month and lingering uncertainty over President Donald Trump's tariff policies continue to support the yellow metal," Ramaswamy said.

However, spot silver traded 0.11 per cent lower to trade at USD 40.84 per ounce in New York.

"The market focus has shifted to the this week's US unemployment data and non-farm payrolls due to released on Friday, which, along with expectations of a rate cut, are likely to keep gold supported. In this hot gold rally, profit booking wouldn't come up soon," he added. (PTI)

All Sector Leaders, One Fund: Bandhan Mutual Fund launches industry-first offering

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Bandhan Mutual Fund has announced the launch of the Bandhan BSE India Sector Leaders Index Fund, described as India's first index fund to provide investors exclusive access to leading companies across the breadth of the economy.

According to an official statement, the open-ended scheme will track the BSE India Sector Leaders Index, which identifies the top three companies by total market capitalisation from each of the 21 sectors represented within the BSE 500 Index. The New Fund Offer (NFO) of the scheme will open on September 3 and remain available until September 17. Investors can participate in the offering through licensed mutual fund distributors, financial advisors, online investment platforms, or directly at Bandhan Mutual Fund's official website.

Commenting on the launch, Vishal Kapoor, CEO of Bandhan Asset Management Company, said the product comes at a time when India's capital markets are undergoing rapid transformation.

"Established sectors are evolving and newer industries are emerging as growth drivers. In this backdrop, sector leaders have shown resilience

through cycles, lower risk of disruption, and an ability to drive long-term value. With this fund, we are proud to introduce India's first offering that gives investors simple, broad-based access to proven leaders powering the country's growth story," he stated.

The BSE India Sector Leaders Index has been designed as a thematic index capturing the top three sector leaders from the BSE 500 universe. While the selection pool is wide, the portfolio is expected to remain predominantly large-cap in composition. Industry data indicates that historically, this strategy has delivered returns comparable to the broader market, but with lower volatility.

The index structure—diversified across 21 sectors and weighted by market capitalisation—reduces concentration risk and prevents extreme exposure to single stocks. This, according to Bandhan Mutual Fund, can enable greater stability for investors seeking exposure to high-quality companies across the Indian economy.

With this launch, Bandhan Mutual Fund seeks to carve out a niche in India's mutual fund industry by offering investors a straightforward, sector-balanced option to participate in the country's long-term growth trajectory

GST Council begins work to rejig tax rates; opposition states seek revenue protection

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The work to overhaul the tangled goods and services tax (GST) began on Wednesday as the government looks to cut the tax rate on common-use items, ranging from butter to certain footwear and apparel, in an attempt to boost domestic spending and cushion the economic blow of US tariffs.

The marathon 56th meeting of the GST Council, the apex decision-making body on indirect taxes, headed by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising representatives of all states, discussed reducing GST on life and health insurance premiums and easing compliance rules for business on the first day of the two-day meeting.

According to sources, the panel is likely to have discussed a three-way registration process for non-risky business and issuance of refunds, in case of exports, in seven days, among a host of measures to ease compliance burden.

It also reviewed the final blueprint of simplifying the GST from the current four slabs - 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent, to a two-rate structure - 5 and 18 per cent. A special 40 per cent slab is also proposed for a select few items, such as high-end cars, tobacco and cigarettes.

The decisions taken at the meeting are likely to be made public on Thursday.

While daily use unpacked food items will continue to attract nil tax rate, common use food and beverages, ranging from butter and ghee to dry nuts, condensed milk, sausages and meat, jam and fruit jellies, tender coconut water, namkeen, drinking water packed in 20-litre bottles, fruit pulp or fruit juice, beverages containing milk, ice cream, pastry and biscuits, corn flakes and cereals, are likely to see a cut in tax rate to 5 per cent from current 18 per cent.

The GST Council is likely to have approved lowering the GST rate on footwear and apparel priced up to ₹ 2,500 to 5 per cent, according to sources.

Currently, footwear and apparel priced up to ₹ 1,000 are taxed at 5 per cent.

Beyond the threshold, 12 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) is levied.

The 56th GST Council decided to raise the threshold for footwear and apparel in the 5 per cent slab to ₹ 2,500 a piece from ₹ 1,000.

Consumer goods, such as tooth powder, feeding bottles, tableware, kitchenware, umbrellas, utensils, bicycles, bamboo furniture and combs, may see tax rate cut from 12 per cent to 5 per cent.

Similarly, the tax rate on shampoo, talcum powder, toothpaste, toothbrushes, face powder, soap and hair oil is likely to come down from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.

Cement is likely to cost less, with the tax rate coming down from 28 per cent to 18 per cent.

Reducing GST on Petrol, LPG and CNG vehicles of less than 1,200 cc and not more than 4,000 mm length and diesel vehicles of up to 1,500 cc and 4,000 mm length to an 18 per cent rate from 28 per cent is being discussed by the council.

Discussions are also ongoing on cutting taxes on Motorcycles of up to 350 cc, consumer electronics like ACs, dishwashers, and TVs to 18 per cent against 28 per cent currently.

Items that may cost more include readymade garments and footwear priced above ₹ 2,500, as the tax incidence rises from 12 per cent to 18 per cent.

Discussions are underway on taxation of all petrol and diesel automobiles above 1,200 cc and 1,500 cc, and longer than 4,000 mm, as well as motorcycles above 350 cc, yachts and aircraft for personal use, station wagons, racing cars and smoking pipes. They may be put in the 40 per cent rate.

The move to simplify the tax regime - first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech - comes as India's exports to the US face a 50 per cent tariff - the highest in the world.

The Indian economy is heavily reliant on consumption, with the private sector accounting for 61.4 per cent of the nominal GDP last fiscal. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Foreigners Tribunals in Assam

in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan -- Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians -- who were compelled to seek shelter in India due to religious persecution or fear of religious persecution and entered the country on or before December 31, 2024 without valid documents, including a passport or other travel documents, or with valid documents, including a passport or other travel documents, and the validity of such documents have expired" will be exempted from the rule of possessing a valid passport and visa, according to an order issued by the Home Ministry. (PTI)

BJP sets peaceful

equitable development in all five districts of the BTR. Highlighting infrastructure improvements, he pointed to new roads, bridges, hospitals, and medical colleges, along with Central and State interventions in large-scale projects.

"The BJP government has been able to transform Bodoland by eliminating past ethnic conflicts and unrest, and ushering in a new era of peace and progress," he said.

Spread over 8,970 sq km with a population of more than 31.5 lakh, the BTR comprises 2,272 villages within the Tribal Belt & Block, 618 villages outside the belt, and 189 forest villages.

Goswami said the BJP is committed to ensuring balanced progress across all these settlements through inclusive development.

While stressing the promotion of Bodo language and culture, the BJP also pledged equal advancement of the traditions, economy, and development of other communities residing in the region.

"With this vision of inclusive growth and the goal of forming the BTC, BJP has entered the election," the statement concluded.

CM claims drop

crimes against women have come down and their social status has improved. We will continue to bring new initiatives to empower women further," Sarma said.

The event was attended by MP Bijuli Kalita Medhi, MLA Ramendra Narayan Kalita, Additional Chief Secretary B Kalyan Chakravarty, Mission Director ASRLM Kuntal Moni Sarma Bordoloi, and other dignitaries.

Assam to support Centre's

ultra-luxury goods. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day speech on August 15, unveiled the plan for GST reforms. Shortly thereafter, the central government shared a blueprint of the planned reform with a Group of Ministers (GoM) from different states for initial vetting. (PTI)

Shillong Medical College

permitting a new institution to admit its inaugural batch of students. This approval follows rigorous inspections of the college's infrastructure, including its teaching hospital, faculty recruitment, and laboratory facilities.

The college is expected to have a transformative impact. It will not only create opportunities for local students to pursue medical education without leaving the state but also, in the long run, augment the number of healthcare professionals serving in Meghalaya's rural and underserved areas. The attached teaching hospital will elevate the standard of specialized medical care available to the region's citizens.

Chief Minister Sangma's government has prioritized this project, and its fruition is being hailed as a major developmental milestone that will boost the state's public health landscape for generations to come.

Thadou community stages

ending the long-running conflict between Kuki and Meitei communities. His participation had drawn the ire of Kuki armed groups and organisations, who reportedly demanded explanations from him.

Even as SDRF teams continue their operations, the protesters expressed frustration that Jomhao's body has not been recovered.

"If it was thrown into the river, why has it not been found even after five days? It may have been buried elsewhere," Boicy Thadou suggested.

Throughout the demonstration, speakers stressed that the Thadou community rejects violence and believes that dialogue and understanding are the only ways to resolve grievances.

"Killing our leaders will not solve problems. It will only deepen wounds," one protester said.

The sit-in ended with a strong call to the district administration and law enforcement agencies to act swiftly, identify all those responsible, and ensure justice for Nehkam Jomhao.

3 foreigners got Indian

rules, four years after the law was passed by Parliament to fast-track citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants.

In July last year, the Assam government had asked its border police wing not to forward the cases of non-Muslim illegal immigrants entering the state before 2015 to Foreigners Tribunals (FTs) and instead advise them to apply for citizenship through CAA.

Last month, the state government instructed all districts to drop ongoing cases of suspected non-Muslim illegal foreigners entering the state before 2015 from the FTs following implementation of the CAA. (PTI)

Assamese language enters

as open-source resources. BharatGen currently supports nine Indian languages -- Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Malayalam, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Telugu and Kannada. Assamese will be the 10th language on BharatGen.

Launched in June 2025, BharatGen is being developed as an alternative to global platforms like ChatGPT. Led by IIT Bombay with a consortium of other IITs, IIITs and leading institutions, BharatGen is the world's first government-funded multi-modal large language model (LLM) initiative. (PTI)

Bhupen Hazarika's creations

interpretations of some of his most iconic songs, including 'Mahabahu Brahmaputra', 'Moi Eti Zazor' and 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe'.

The programme drew participation from the audience in Japan as well as other parts of the world, the statement said.

Hazarika, a Bharat Ratna awardee, had shared a close bond with Japan, visiting the country on multiple occasions and fostering warm relations with its people, it said.

A presentation on Hazarika's musical journey with specific mention of his close ties with Japan, his contribution in the field of art, culture and society and the Assam government's initiatives on the birth centenary celebration of the legend was made. (PTI)

DC urges unity and cooperation Emergency peace meeting held in Diphu

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 3: An emergency peace meeting was held today at 2.00 pm at the Circuit House, Diphu, in connection with the incident of a missing person reported on August 30 in Manja area. The meeting was presided over by District Commissioner of Karbi Anglong, Nirola Phangchopi.

Present in the meeting were Superintendent of Police Sanjib Kr. Saikia, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, DIPRO, representatives from KAAC, and leaders of the two community organisations concerned.

The District Commissioner urged all community organisations to maintain peace and harmony, stressing that only with mutual cooperation can the administration and police reach the root cause of the incident. She appealed to the participants to avoid any third-party interference and assured that the administration is committed to a fair and thorough investigation.

Community leaders expressed solidarity with the district administration, agreeing that outside elements must not be allowed to disturb the brotherhood and unity of the district. They pledged their cooperation to ensure peace.

Superintendent of Police, Sanjib Kr. Saikia informed that the police had registered a case on the very day of the incident. Five suspects are currently in custody, and around 25 to 30 personnel are working day and night in the affected area to trace the missing person.



He appealed to all not to spread rumours or make provocative statements on social media, underlining that matters from outside the district would not be allowed to affect local peace.

The meeting concluded with a joint resolve to safeguard harmony and progress in Karbi Anglong, with the Deputy Commissioner once again urging all to directly approach the administration for any concern.

Present in the meeting were Superintendent of Police, Sanjib Kr. Saikia, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, DIPRO, representatives from KAAC, and leaders of the two community organisations concerned.

ASDC observes black day to commemorate Sept 2, 1986 police firing

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 3: The Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) observed the 'Black Day' to commemorate the September 2, 1986 incident, where several ASDC leaders and members were lathi charged and received bullet injuries from police firing at Cement Corporation of India Limited (CCI) cement factory, Bokajan.

It was the first year of the launch of the Autonomous State movement by ASDC in 1986, and on September 2 and 3 in that year the ASDC has called for a 36 hour Karbi Anglong bandh to pressure the Central government for implementation of Article 244(A) of the Indian constitution.

During that bandh period large numbers of ASDC leaders and members including Karbi Nimso Chingthur Amei (KNCA) and KSA took a march to close the CCI cement factory of Bokajan. To prevent the agitators from reaching the cement factory, police personnel lathi charged and opened fire at them as a result several leaders and members received bullet injuries.

Participating in the Black Day, the ASDC president, Sonasing Terang said the ASDC was formed on May 17, 1986 to launch a mass movement for Autonomous State. In Karbi Anglong the movement was jointly carried out by ASDC and frontal organisations. The ASDC as its movement called for a 12 hour Karbi Anglong bandh on June 2, 1986.

On September 2 and 3 of the same year (1986) the ASDC had called for a 36 hour bandh pressurising the Central government for implementation of Article 244 (A). In that bandh, strong protesters of ASDC, KSA



and KNCA tried to close the CCI cement factory at Bokajan. In confrontation with the police personnel several ASDC leaders and members were lathi charged by the police. Several leaders like Merina Beypi, Basapi Beypi, David Ronghang, Sing Killing received bullet injuries in police firing, Terang said.

In commemoration of the September 3, 1986 incident, the ASDC makes it a point to observe the Black Day on September 3 every year.

Today, while observing the Black Day, the ASDC paid homage to the deceased leaders and members of the party. On this day the ASDC leaders and members pledged to carry forward the movement launched for the attainment of an Autonomous State, Terang said.

Participating in the observation was party general secretary, Jotson Bey; assistant general secretary Sonjoy Killing; secretary publicity Daniel Teron and leaders from KSA and KNCA.

Tezpur University opens admissions for distance and online programs

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Sept 3: Designed for working professionals, students in remote areas, and lifelong learners, Tezpur University's Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) has opened online applications for its Autumn 2025 session. The programs have been updated to align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, featuring new credit structures and multiple entry and exit options for greater academic flexibility.

"The University ensures that every learner receives constant academic monitoring and dedicated support throughout their studies, making the learning experience both flexible and guided," said Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, Vice-Chancellor of the University.

The following programs are available through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. Post Graduate Programs-MA in Sociology, MA in English, and MA in Mass Communication and Journalism. Diploma Programs include Diploma in Child Rights and Governance, Diploma in Human Resource Management, and Diploma in Environmental and Disaster Management.

Asom Xahitya Xabha organises a memorial meeting on late Narendra Nath Keot a noted educationist

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Sept 3: In memory of noted educationist, literaturist and helmsman late Narendra Nath Keot a meeting was organized by Morigaon Zila Xahitya Xabha at its office today. Former general secretary of Asom Xahitya Xabha Debajit Bora attended the programme.

Speaking on the occasion he said if we learn to respect adorable person, society will embrace us, speaking on the occasion he recalled his past rapport with late Narendra Nath Keot. He praised the district literary body for taking good initiative towards organizational works.

The secretary of district literary body Kushal Bora moderated the meeting under the presidency of the president of the district literary body Dr. Harmuhan Kalita. The meeting was attended by former Presidents of district literary body Mileswar Patar, Bubumoni Goswami, former

Vice-President Birinchi Kumar Sharma, District Journalists Association President Ajit Sharma, Assam Xauahitya Xabha's steering committee member Dhiren Sharma, Central Executive President Dr. Deepajyoti Barua (Translate sub committee). The event was attended by former President of the District Xahitya Xabha Mahendra Saikia who paid floral tribute at the portrait of late Narendra Nath Keot.

The event was attended by Morigaon College Principal Dr. Lilakanta Barthakur, retired Vice-Principal Ami Barthakur, Kabi Sammin Sub-Committee Convener of Assam Xahitya Xabha Naba Rajan, District Xahitya Xabha Assistant Secretary Mun Thakuria, Organizing Secretary Pranjal Bora, Office Secretary Jasuwant Nath, Treasurer Bhupen Bora, Central Executive Members Manindra Bangthai and Pramod Das and Minmoy Barua (elder son of Narendra Nath Keot). Dr. Pradeep Deka.

All Party Hills Leaders Conference protest at Kheroni Daily Market, demand immediate eviction

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Sept 3: The All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC) held a protest at Kheroni Daily Market in West Karbi Anglong demanding immediate eviction of encroachers from Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR) and Village Grazing Reserve (VGR) land in Karbi Anglong.

The protesters at Kheroni protested with slogans "6th schedule Zindabad", "RSS go back", "Bonge Sena Go Back".

President of APHLC, Jones Ingti Kathar addressing the gathering said, "they have uprooted us they know things very well that's why they say whatever they want. It is now like the state of Tripura."

Ingti also said the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang cannot do eviction, Munna Chouhan has verbally abused Tuliram Ronghang and he can do nothing about it. Bonge Sena said they can put Tuliram Ronghang in power or remove him. Encroachers are in the majority that is why they dare to say what they want. CEM Ronghang is useless, he

should resign, dissolve the Council and election should be held.

President, APHLC, West Karbi Anglong District Committee and Public Relation Secretary, Central Committee, Bikram Hanse while interacting with the media said, "Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) promised to carry out eviction within 90 days. In the last one year a drama was done for eviction, even that has stopped now. We are giving an ultimatum to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council that if Council is unable to carry out eviction then it should surrender. There is Supreme Court standing order for eviction. But what Council did is that they have went to Gauhati High Court just to prolonge the process."

Hanse also alleged that the evictions carried out in other parts of the state are done without any order. Chief Executive Member of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang said there is no police personnel to assist in the process but in the rest of Assam it is seen that there is sufficient security personnel.

Hanse further said demand for eviction and protest will go on.

47th Foundation Day of Margherita College celebrated

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Sept 3: The 47th Foundation Day of Margherita College, the only higher education institution in the 83rd Margherita Legislative Assembly constituency in Tinsukia district was celebrated on Monday.

The program began with hoisting of flag by Margherita college principal, Dr. Atanu Kakoty followed by a tribute-paying ceremony led by vice principal Dr. Gautam Purkayastha.

Plantation of saplings programme was inaugurated by Margherita college academic coordinator, Jugen Borah, a newly constructed state-of-the-art seminar hall, built at a cost of over 22 lakh rupees under the initiative of the Margherita College Alumni Association and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Scheme of Hindustan Oil Exploration Company Limited was inaugurated by Dibrugarh University Vice-Chancellor Dr. Jiten Hazarika.

The seminar hall has been designed with advanced technology. A program was held to mark the Foundation Day which was chaired by Dr. Atanu Kakoty, the lecture session featured Professor Dr. Jiten Hazarika as the keynote speaker on the topic "Beyond and Within Reason: Religion, Science, and Technology."

The event was attended by former Vice-Principal of Margherita college, Pranab Gogoi, during which the President of the Margherita College Alumni Association Mullen Baruah and General Secretary Manas Pratim Gogoi were honored with mementos by Margherita college authorities.

In his keynote address, Vice Chancellor of Dibrugarh University Dr. Jiten Hazarika stated, "Religion, science, and technology are the three pillars of human civilization, guided by reason, which together provide meaning and progress to human life. Religion offers guidance through spirituality and morality, helping to discover life's purpose through faith and values. Science unravels the mysteries of nature through reason and experimentation, driven by evidence and facts. Technology transforms scientific knowledge into practical applications, making human life easier and more prosperous. Reason acts as a bridge between these three. In religion, reason tests faith to shape ethical perspectives in science, it paves a systematic path to seek truth and in technology, it solves problems through innovation."

However, reason has its limitations; it sometimes falls short in the face of the profound spirituality of religion or the unknown mysteries of science. The synergy of religion, science, and technology creates a holistic philosophy of life beyond and within reason, where faith, knowledge, and innovation illuminate the path for humanity."

Mumbai's Gamkharu Assamese Women's Organisation celebrates Sacred Bhadra month with humanitarian services

HT Correspondent

MANGALDAI, Sept 3: On August 31, the Mumbai-based Assamese women's organization 'Gamkharu' observed the sacred Bhadra month with a collective celebration of Naam-Prasanga at Mira Road, Mumbai, as they do every year.

Embracing the ideals of the revered Guru, Gamkharu mem-

bers, along with their families, immersed themselves in the devotional service of Harinaam, accompanied by the rhythmic beats of traditional instruments like Khol and Nagara. The organization has been dedicatedly serving the underprivileged during the auspicious Bhadra month for several years.

Continuing their tradition, this

year, Gamkharu donated the entire amount of ₹70,000 collected during Rongali Bihu through Husori performances to support the medical treatment of two young girls from Assam: 18-year-old Avantika Sandilya from Mangaldai and six-and-a-half-year-old Dwiti Morang from Golaghat, both undergoing treatment at Mumbai's Tata Memorial Hospital.

Guv attends 12th Convocation of Assam Down Town University

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya addressed the 12th convocation of Assam Down Town University at its Panikhaiti campus today. The Governor congratulated the graduating students, praising their hard work and dedication that had culminated in this momentous occasion.

The Governor said that Convocation Day is a sacred moment for educational institutions, teachers, and students alike, marking the fruition of relentless efforts, discipline, and commitment. He extended his heartfelt congratulations to the students and expressed gratitude to their parents, teachers, and research supervisors for their guidance and support.

Governor urged the students to become innovative and venture into scientific discovery meet societal needs.

He called upon educational institutions to help build character of the students through a balance of modern knowledge and traditional values.

The Governor highlighted that the institutes 278 MoUs signed at national and international levels. He noted that excellence is a result of collective efforts, and the university's stature today is a testament to the combined efforts of its fraternity.

The Governor also acknowledged the rapid expansion and development of higher education institutions across the country under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He emphasized

that Indian institutions are now finding their rightful place in global rankings, and Indian graduates are excelling in renowned academic, research, and commercial arenas.

As the graduates embark on their new journey, the Governor urged them to expand their potential and talent on national and global platforms through hard work and commitment. He also encouraged faculty members to innovate in teaching-learning practices and inspire students toward innovation and venture into scientific discovery that meets societal needs.

The Governor highlighted the importance of experiential learning, emphasizing that at least 20 per cent of the teaching should be imparted outside the classroom in project mode. He stressed the significance of youth power, skill development, and technology in shaping the nation's future, while also emphasizing the need for ethics, discipline, and a spirit of service.

As the graduates step into a new world full of opportunities and challenges, the Governor expressed confidence that the education and training they received will empower them to face the challenges successfully and build a character through a balance of modern knowledge and traditional values.

It may be noted that D.Sc. degree was conferred on Dr. Randeep Guleria and D.Lit. degree was conferred on Dr. Sri Sri Pitambar Dev Goswami. A total of 1417 undergraduates, 419 post graduate and PhD 22 students received degrees at the convocation.



CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mitara Rangpi, DOB-01/01/1983, W/O Hemanta Rangpi, Village- Belguri, P.O.- Solmari, P.S.- Morigaon, District- Morigaon, Assam, has corrected my name from Maitara Bordaloi to Mitara Rangpi through a notary public at Morigaon court. Mitara Rangpi and Maitara Bordaloi is the same and one person.

PUBLIC NOTICE	
[Under Section 102 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016]	
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF Ms. APARAJITA BARUAH	
(Personal Guarantor of Hi Rise Infotech Private Limited bearing CIN: U70109DL2006PTC154701 and having registered office at 79, Paratap Nagar, Jail Road, New Delhi - 110064)	
Notice is hereby given that the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Guwahati Bench, by Order dated 28.08.2025 passed in CP(B)/19/GB/2023 (Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank) vs- Aparajita Baruah (PG)) filed under Section 95 of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, has initiated Insolvency Resolution Process of Ms. Aparajita Baruah and has appointed Ms. Sudha Sarma as the Resolution Professional. Accordingly, the Creditors of Ms. Aparajita Baruah are hereby called upon to submit their claim in Form B of IBSI (Insolvency Resolution Process for Personal Guarantors to Corporate Debtors) Regulations, 2019 along with proof thereof, to the Resolution Professional on or before 25.09.2025 by email, courier, speed post or registered post at her address stated below.	
Details of Personal Guarantor	
1. Name of Personal Guarantor	Ms. APARAJITA BARUAH
2. Address of Personal Guarantor	Nazir Road, Tarajan, Jorhat, Assam, PIN: 785001
3. PAN of Personal Guarantor	ALUPB7154M
4. Date of Commencement of Insolvency	28.08.2025
5. Estimated Date of Closure of Insolvency	(Order updated on 29.08.2025)
6. Last Date for Submission of Claim	25.09.2025
Details of Resolution Professional	
7. Name of Resolution Professional	Sudha Sarma
8. IBSI Regn Number of Resolution Professional	IBSI/PA-022/IP-N01251/2022/2023/14266
9. AFA Number & Validity of Resolution Professional	Number: A21/4266/02/30626/203808 Valid upto: 30.06.2026
10. Address of Resolution Professional	M/S Sudha & Associates 185, M.R.D. Road, Near SBI, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati, PIN: 781021 EMAIL ID: sudha.sarma@yahoo.com Mobile No: 98640 50249
Claim form is available at https://www.ibsi.gov.in/home/downloads .	
Date: 04.09.2025	Sd/- Sudha Sarma
Place: Guwahati	Resolution Professional

PUBLIC NOTICE	
[Under Section 102 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016]	
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF Mr. GOURI KUMAR PACHANI	
(Personal Guarantor of Hi Rise Infotech Private Limited bearing CIN: U70109DL2006PTC154701 and having registered office at 79, Paratap Nagar, Jail Road, New Delhi - 110064)	
Notice is hereby given that the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Guwahati Bench, by Order dated 28.08.2025 passed in CP(B)/20/GB/2023 (Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank) vs- Gouri Kumar Pachani (PG)) filed under Section 95 of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, has initiated Insolvency Resolution Process of Mr. Gouri Kumar Pachani and has appointed Ms. Sudha Sarma as the Resolution Professional. Accordingly, the Creditors of Mr. Gouri Kumar Pachani are hereby called upon to submit their claim in Form B of IBSI (Insolvency Resolution Process for Personal Guarantors to Corporate Debtors) Regulations, 2019 along with proof thereof, to the Resolution Professional on or before 25.09.2025 by email, courier, speed post or registered post at her address stated below.	
Details of Personal Guarantor	
1. Name of Personal Guarantor	Mr. GOURI KUMAR PACHANI
2. Address of Personal Guarantor	Nazir Road, Tarajan, Jorhat, Assam, PIN: 785001
3. PAN of Personal Guarantor	AJPP9457E
4. Date of Commencement of Insolvency	28.08.2025
5. Estimated Date of Closure of Insolvency	(Order updated on 29.08.2025)
6. Last Date for Submission of Claim	25.09.2025
Details of Resolution Professional	
7. Name of Resolution Professional	Sudha Sarma
8. IBSI Regn Number of Resolution Professional	IBSI/PA-022/IP-N01251/2022/2023/14266
9. AFA Number & Validity of Resolution Professional	Number: A21/4266/02/30626/203808 Valid upto: 30.06.2026
10. Address of Resolution Professional	M/S Sudha & Associates 185, M.R.D. Road, Near SBI, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati, PIN: 781021 EMAIL ID: sudha.sarma@yahoo.com Mobile No: 98640 50249
Claim form is available at https://www.ibsi.gov.in/home/downloads .	
Date: 04.09.2025	Sd/- Sudha Sarma
Place: Guwahati	Resolution Professional

PUBLIC NOTICE	
[Under Section 102 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016]	
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF Mr. KUSHAL KUMAR PACHANI	
(Personal Guarantor of Hi Rise Infotech Private Limited bearing CIN: U70109DL2006PTC154701 and having registered office at 79, Paratap Nagar, Jail Road, New Delhi - 110064)	
Notice is hereby given that the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Guwahati Bench, by Order dated 28.08.2025 passed in CP(B)/20/GB/2023 (Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank) vs- Kushal Kumar Pachani (PG)) filed under Section 95 of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, has initiated Insolvency Resolution Process of Mr. Kushal Kumar Pachani and has appointed Ms. Sudha Sarma as the Resolution Professional. Accordingly, the Creditors of Mr. Kushal Kumar Pachani are hereby called upon to submit their claim in Form B of IBSI (Insolvency Resolution Process for Personal Guarantors to Corporate Debtors) Regulations, 2019 along with proof thereof, to the Resolution Professional on or before 25.09.2025 by email, courier, speed post or registered post at her address stated below.	
Details of Personal Guarantor	
1. Name of Personal Guarantor	Mr. KUSHAL KUMAR PACHANI
2. Address of Personal Guarantor	Shanti Khetra, Katakai Pukhuri, Bye Pass, Bye Lane No. 1, P.O. RRL, District: Jorhat, Assam
3. PAN of Personal Guarantor	ACNPP2030G
4. Date of Commencement of Insolvency	28.08.2025
5. Estimated Date of Closure of Insolvency	(Order updated on 29.08.2025)
6. Last Date for Submission of Claim	25.09.2025
Details of Resolution Professional	
7. Name of Resolution Professional	Sudha Sarma
8. IBSI Regn Number of Resolution Professional	IBSI/PA-022/IP-N01251/2022/2023/14266
9. AFA Number & Validity of Resolution Professional	Number: A21/4266/02/30626/203808 Valid upto: 30.06.2026
10. Address of Resolution Professional	M/S Sudha & Associates 185, M.R.D. Road, Near SBI, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati, PIN: 781021 EMAIL ID: sudha.sarma@yahoo.com Mobile No: 98640 50249
Claim form is available at https://www.ibsi.gov.in/home/downloads .	
Date: 04.09.2025	Sd/- Sudha Sarma
Place: Guwahati	Resolution Professional

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. -Khalil Gibran

Fight against malnutrition

India is fast becoming a nightmare for its children. They are bearing the brunt of extreme poverty and malnutrition. The confession is official. Also it is substantiated with data that are painfully true. Maxim Gorky, the Russian novelist, author of 'Mother', had once said that he would not rest till a single child on this earth goes hungry. That was more than a century back. Today, nearly 37 percent, little less than half, children under five face stunted growth according to government data as all of them are suffering from malnutrition. In response to a question in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Women and Child Development said Uttar Pradesh reported the highest rate of stunting at 48.83 per cent followed closely by Jharkhand (43.26 per cent), Bihar (42.68 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (42.09 per cent). About 37.07 per cent of children under five registered on the Poshan Tracker were found to be stunted, 15.93 per cent under weight and 5.46 per cent wasted, as the official data itself confesses. 'Wasted' is a condition where a person, especially a child, is too thin for her or his height. For the State wise details of Neo-natal mortality, that is deaths of live-born infants within the first 28 completed days of life, national average in India is 19 per cent.

India also suffers from stunting of children. Stunting destroys the quality of life for children that are at the threshold of beginning their life. Their brain does not evolve as compared to those that are leading a normal life. They may never attain their full possible height, and their brains may never develop to their full cognitive potential. Globally in 2024, 6.6 percent of children under 5 suffered from wasting and 1.9 percent from severe wasting, which amounts to 42.8 million and 12.2 million children, respectively. South Asia remains the region with the highest prevalence, underscoring the need for the implementation of earlier and more effective interventions. Children with wasting have weakened immunity, are susceptible to long term developmental delays, and face an increased risk of death, particularly when wasting is severe. Similarly, malnutrition is a violation of children's rights, while good nutrition sets children on the path to grow, develop, learn and reach their full potential.

Despite India's 50 percent increase in GDP since 2013, more than one third of the world's undernourished children live in India. Among these, half of the children under three years old are underweight. The struggle against malnutrition is one of the basics of the fight against inequality in the society. Poverty and starvation are main features of class divided society. Exploitation is the leading cause for the great injustice and leads the greater masses towards hunger, deprivation. Underfed, they all face the challenge the divided society places in front of them.

Gopinath Bordoloi: Savior of Assam's Identity

Gopinath Bordoloi, revered as the creator of modern Assam, stands as a towering figure in the annals of Indian history, particularly in the northeastern region. Born on June 6, 1890, in the small village of Raha in the Nagaon district of Assam, Bordoloi's life was a testament to unwavering dedication, principled leadership, and an unyielding commitment to the welfare of his people. His father, Buddheshwar Bordoloi, served as a junior officer in the government's medical service, instilling in young Gopinath a sense of duty and empathy for the common folk. Tragically, his mother, Praneshwari Bordoloi, passed away when he was just twelve years old, leaving him to be raised by his elder sister, Shashikala Devi. This early loss forged a resilient character in Bordoloi, one that would later define his role in shaping Assam's destiny amid colonial oppression and the turbulent tides of partition.

From his humble beginnings, Bordoloi displayed an academic prowess that set the stage for his future endeavors. He completed his matriculation in 1907 at Cotton Collegiate School in Guwahati, earning a scholarship that allowed him to pursue higher education. He then joined Cotton College, affiliated with the University of Calcutta at the time, where he passed his Intermediate Arts examination in 1909 with first division honors. Drawn to the intellectual vibrancy of Calcutta, he enrolled at the prestigious Scottish Church College, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1911. His thirst for knowledge led him to obtain a Master of Arts degree from Calcutta University in 1914, followed by studies in law. Upon returning to Assam, Bordoloi briefly served as the headmaster of Sonaram High School in Guwahati, a position that exposed him to the educational challenges facing the youth of his state. However, his true calling lay beyond the classroom, in the realm of public service and advocacy for the marginalized.

Bordoloi's foray into politics was marked by a deep-seated admiration for Mahatma Gandhi and the principles of non-violence. Influenced by luminaries such as Rabindranath Tagore, J.C. Bose, and Surendranath Banerjee during his time in Calcutta, he joined the Indian National Congress as a volunteer in 1921. This was a pivotal moment, as Assam at the time had limited organized political activity, primarily through the Assam Association, which was wound up to make way for the Assam Provincial Congress Committee. Bordoloi was elected its first secretary, a role that propelled him into the heart of the independence movement. He actively participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement, boycotting British institutions and promoting swadeshi. His fervor led to his arrest in 1922, and he spent a year in jail, emerging even more resolute. Though he briefly returned to his law practice in Guwahati after the movement was suspended following the Chauri Chaura incident, Bordoloi could not stay away from the political arena for long.

Between 1930 and 1933, Bordoloi stepped back from overt political activism to focus on social work, serving on the Guwahati Municipal Board and local boards. He championed causes like the establishment of a separate university and high court for Assam, recognizing the need for regional autonomy in education and justice. The Government of India Act of 1935 opened the doors for provincial elections in 1936, and the Congress, under Bordoloi's guidance, contested vigorously. Winning 38 seats, they formed the majority but chose to sit in opposition due to restrictive laws that curtailed ministerial powers. Bordoloi was elected Leader of the Opposition, critiquing the Muhammad Sadulla ministry for its indifference to Assam's grassroots issues. His eloquence and integrity garnered widespread support, leading to Sadulla's resignation in September 1938. The Governor invited Bordoloi to form the government, and on September 21, 1938, he took oath as the Premier of undivided Assam, becoming the first Congress-led chief executive in the province.

As Premier, Bordoloi's administration was a beacon of progressive governance. He halted the imposition of land taxes that burdened peasants, protected indigenous land rights by curbing grants to migrant Muslims, and addressed the economic disparities plaguing Assam. His policies aimed at fostering self-reliance and social equity, reflecting Gandhian ideals. However, the outbreak of World War II in 1939 disrupted his tenure. At Gandhi's behest, all Congress ministries resigned in protest against Britain's unilateral involvement of India in the war, and Bordoloi's cabinet followed suit in 1940. Undeterred, he continued his activism, only to be arrested again in December 1940. Released prematurely due to deteriorating health before completing a year in prison, Bordoloi plunged into the Quit India Movement of 1942. The British declared the Congress illegal, and leaders like him were incarcerated once more. He remained in jail until 1944, enduring hardships that tested his resolve but never broke his spirit.

Bordoloi's most defining contributions came during the fraught years leading to India's independence. As the Cabinet Mission arrived in 1946 to negotiate the transfer of power, Assam faced existential threats. The Muslim League, led by figures from Bengal, pushed aggressively to incorporate Assam into East Pakistan, viewing the province's strategic location and resources as vital. The Cabinet Mission's grouping plan proposed placing Assam in Group B with Bengal and other Muslim-majority provinces, effectively ceding it to Pakistan. Bordoloi, re-elected as Premier in the 1946 elections, vehemently opposed this. He mobilized the Assam Congress Committee for mass agitation, organizing rallies and consultations with national leaders. When initial discussions with the Congress high com-

mand yielded no results, Bordoloi orchestrated a unanimous resolution in the Assam Legislative Assembly rejecting the grouping. Ten representatives from Assam were tasked with drafting a separate constitution, ensuring integration with the national framework without subordination.

His persistence paid off when Lord Mountbatten, the new Viceroy, assumed office in 1947. Through separate meetings with the Muslim League, Congress, and Gandhi, Mountbatten opted for direct partition over grouping, averting Assam's absorption into East Pakistan. Bordoloi's role was instrumental; he worked tirelessly alongside Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to safeguard Assam's sovereignty. Patel, India's Iron Man, hailed Bordoloi as the "Sher-e-Assam" or Lion of Assam for his courage. This victory not only preserved Assam's territorial integrity but also protected its Hindu-majority population from potential communal violence.

Bordoloi also thwarted the insidious Coupland Plan, a subsidiary proposal by Oxford historian Reginald Coupland, which envisioned the northeastern tribal areas, including Garo Hills, Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Lushai Hills, Nagaland, and North Cachar Hills, as a self-governing Crown Colony under British protection. Alerting Gandhi to its implications, Bordoloi intensified non-violent protests, ensuring these regions remained part of India.

Post-independence, Bordoloi became the first Chief Minister of Assam on August 15, 1947, a position he held until his death. His vision extended beyond mere survival; he sought to build a modern, inclusive Assam. The partition brought waves of refugees fleeing communal riots in East Pakistan, and Bordoloi organized their rehabilitation with compassion and efficiency, resettling millions while maintaining communal harmony. He collaborated with Patel to fortify Assam's borders against threats from East Pakistan and Communist China, laying the groundwork for regional security. Economically, he promoted agriculture, tea production, and resource utilization, recognizing Assam's potential in oil and minerals—the first oil in Asia was discovered there. Educationally, Bordoloi's legacy shines brightest. He spearheaded the establishment of Gauhati University in 1948, fulfilling a long-standing demand for a local institution of higher learning. The Gauhati High Court was inaugurated in the same year, decentralizing justice. He also founded the Assam Medical College, Assam Veterinary College, and the B. Borooah College, alongside the Kamrup Academy, to nurture talent and address healthcare and agricultural needs. The Gauhati Station of All India Radio was another milestone, connecting Assam to the nation.

Bordoloi's approach to governance was holistic, emphasizing unity among Assam's diverse ethnic groups—Bodos, Nagas, Misings, Karbis,

and others. As chairman of the North-East Frontier Tribal Areas and Assam Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas Sub-Committee in the Constituent Assembly, he advocated for tribal rights, proportional representation, and special financial considerations for Assam's unique challenges, such as migration and population shifts. In debates on August 5, 1949, he highlighted taxation issues, and on September 6, 1949, he detailed the tribal situation, ensuring their voices were heard in the framing of India's Constitution. His interventions on July 18, 1947, addressed demographic changes due to influxes, proposing safeguards for Assamese representation in the Lok Sabha.

Despite his stature, Bordoloi remained a man of simplicity. A devout follower of the Bhagavad Gita, he wore khadi, lived austerely, and was known for his Vaishnava devotional singing. The Governor of Assam, Jayram Das Doulatram, bestowed upon him the title "Lokpriya," meaning "loved by all." In recognition of his selfless service, Bordoloi authored books like Annasaktiyog, Shreeramachandra, Hajrat Mohammad, and Buddhadeb, reflecting his philosophical depth. However, his health, weakened by years of imprisonment and relentless work, began to fail. On August 5, 1950, at the age of 60, he passed away in Guwahati, leaving behind a grieving state and nation.

Bordoloi's legacy endures as the architect of modern Assam. His efforts ensured communal harmony, democratic stability, and progress, shielding the state from ideological invasions and external aggressions until the 1971 war. Posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1999 by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he became the first and only recipient from the Northeast, a fitting tribute delayed by decades due to the region's peripheral status in national consciousness. In 2002, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam unveiled a life-size statue of him in Parliament House. The Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati bears his name, and August 5 is observed as Lok Kalyan Divas in Assam to honor his death anniversary.

In the broader canvas of Indian history, Bordoloi's contributions transcend Assam. He opened the Northeast to the Congress, fostering national integration while preserving regional identity. His non-violent resistance against colonial designs and partition threats exemplified Gandhian ethos, inspiring generations. Today, as Assam grapples with issues like illegal migration, a concern Bordoloi foresaw and addressed, his vision remains relevant. He united diverse communities, promoted education and infrastructure, and laid the foundation for a progressive state. Gopinath Bordoloi was not just a politician; he was a guardian of Assam's soul, a builder of its future, and a symbol of integrity in public life. His life story reminds us that true leadership lies in selfless service, and his indelible mark on modern Assam ensures his place as an eternal icon of resilience and foresight.

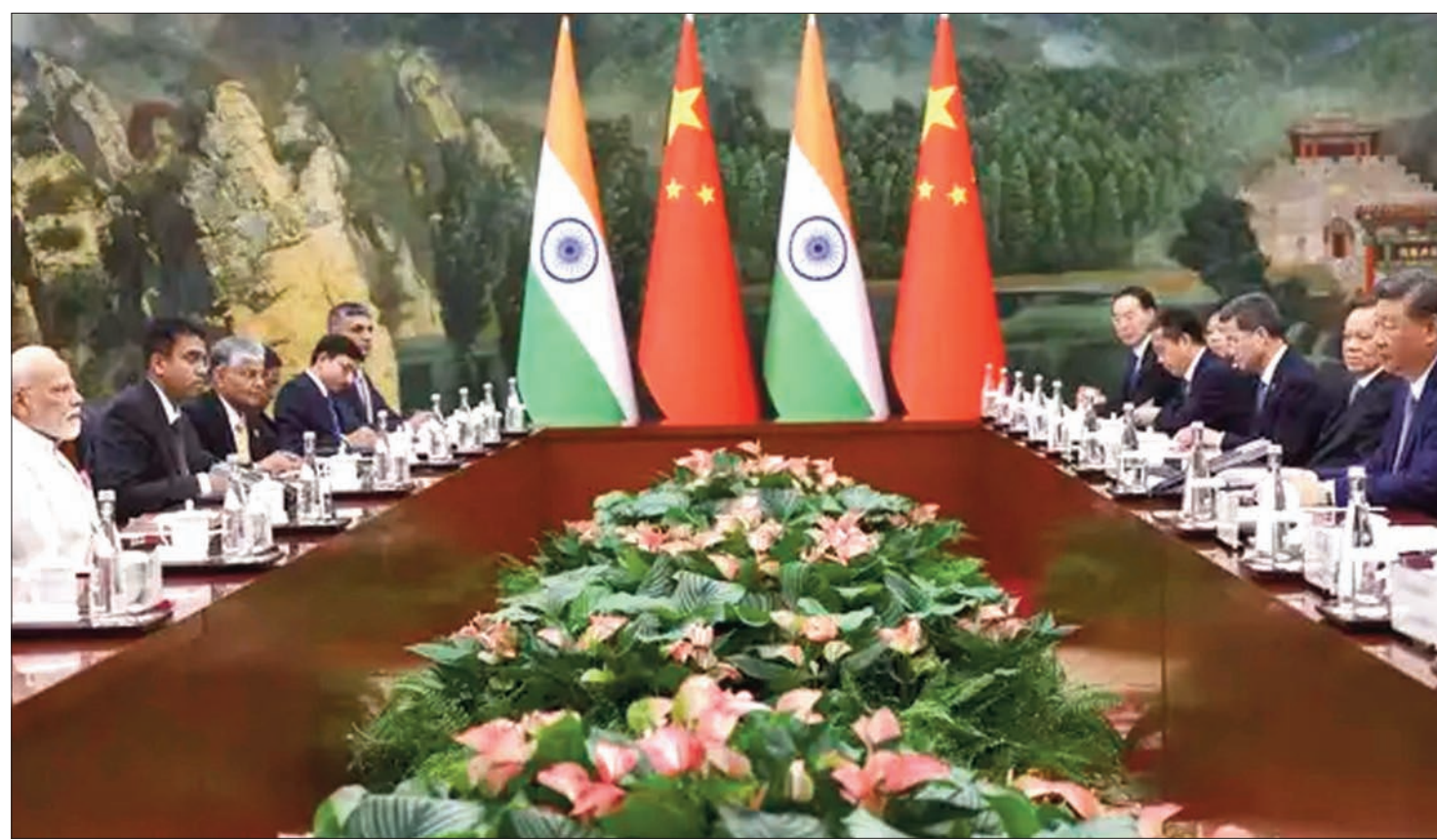
PM Modi's recent visit to China and the future of India-China relations

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The relationship between India and China is considered a delicate and profoundly influential issue in global politics. The dynamics of this relationship not only impact bilateral ties but also play a significant role in shaping Asia's regional balance and the broader strategic environment of the world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to China has been marked as a landmark step in shaping the future of this relationship. Through this visit, extensive discussions have taken place regarding the restoration of mutual trust, exploration of new possibilities for cooperation, and paving the way for peaceful coexistence. Despite the complexities of the longstanding relationship between the two nations, Modi's visit has created a positive atmosphere, indicating the potential to take India-China relations in a new direction.

In the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in China on August 30. This visit marked his first successful trip to China in seven years. He was warmly welcomed in the city of Tianjin, reflecting the importance of diplomatic ties between the two countries. During the visit, Modi held a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The discussions covered critical issues such as maintaining peace along the border, economic cooperation, combating terrorism, and ensuring regional stability. The primary objective of this visit was to strengthen the foundation of mutual trust and cooperation between the two nations. Modi explicitly stated during the meeting that India-China relations should not be judged from the perspective of a third country but should be built on the basis of mutual interests and strategic autonomy. Through this statement, he reaffirmed India's commitment to an independent foreign policy. The visit expressed India's keenness to improve relations with China, signaling the beginning of a new chapter in bilateral ties. During the meeting, the leaders of both countries expressed their commitment to fostering relations based on mutual sensitivity and respect, paving the way for future cooperation. This visit has created a positive environment amidst the complexities of India-China relations, which is significant for Asia's future. Based on the outcomes of this visit, an optimistic outlook has emerged regarding the potential to shape the future of India-China relations. However, there is a need to carefully consider the challenges in this relationship to realize the full potential of this cooperation.

The history of India-China relations is ancient and multifaceted. Since ancient times, trade, culture, and religious exchanges have fostered deep ties between the two nations. The spread of Buddhism significantly contributed to India's cultural influence in China. The ancient Silk Road established a robust medium for trade, strengthening the economic and cultural ties between the two countries. However, in modern times, particularly after India's independence, the trajectory of this relationship has become more complex. In the 1950s, under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, India and China sought to establish a foundation for peaceful coexistence through the Panchsheel principles. These principles emphasized mutual respect and sovereignty as the basis for their relationship. However, the 1962 India-China war dealt a severe blow to these ties.



Since then, border disputes, mutual distrust, and diplomatic tensions have dominated the relationship. Controversies over the McMahon Line and China's claims over parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh have further complicated matters. Efforts to normalize relations began with then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988. Since then, leaders of both countries have continued efforts to improve ties through regular meetings and discussions. During Prime Minister Modi's tenure, these efforts have gained momentum, although border tensions remain unresolved. Against this historical backdrop, Modi's recent visit to China has sparked new hope, creating possibilities for overcoming past bitterness and forging new avenues for cooperation. The visit underscores that both nations can learn from past experiences and move toward a brighter future.

Economic cooperation was a key focus of Prime Minister Modi's visit to China. Both India and China are recognized as among the world's fastest-growing economies. China currently holds the position of the world's second-largest economy, while India ranks fifth. Modi has announced his goal of making India the world's third-largest economy during his third term, and economic cooperation with China is crucial to achieving this objective. The trade volume between India and China is substantial, but the trade balance is currently tilted in China's favor. India relies heavily on imports from China, including electronics, machinery, and chemicals, leading to a significant trade deficit. During Modi's visit, discussions were held on strategic measures to reduce this trade deficit. Topics included greater market access for Indian goods in China and the potential for Chinese investments in India. These discussions have enhanced the prospects for mutual economic benefits. Additionally, cooperation in technology and in-

novation was explored. Through initiatives like "Make in India" and "Digital India," India aims to attract technological expertise and investments from China. Such economic collaboration could accelerate the economic development of both nations. However, challenges remain, including the trade deficit, concerns over India's security, and transparency issues regarding Chinese investments. During the visit, efforts were made to address these concerns through mutual understanding, fostering a new environment for economic cooperation that could significantly contribute to the prosperity of both countries.

A sensitive and widely discussed issue in India-China relations is border tensions. Since the 2020 Galwan Valley clash, border tensions have escalated, with the loss of Indian soldiers sparking widespread resentment in India. Since then, multiple rounds of talks have been held to maintain peace along the border. During Modi's recent visit, this issue was discussed in depth, with both nations' leaders reaffirming their commitment to peace and stability. Practical steps were discussed to regulate troop movements near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and reduce tensions. These discussions aimed to strengthen mutual understanding. However, fully resolving the border dispute remains a complex challenge. Controversies over the McMahon Line and China's claims over parts of Arunachal Pradesh continue to complicate matters. Nonetheless, during the visit, both leaders expressed their commitment to addressing the issue with restraint and diplomatic measures, creating possibilities for reducing future tensions. A new environment for maintaining border peace has been established, which could pave the way for long-term stability. The resolution of this issue will depend on the leadership's willpower and diplomatic acumen. Peace along the border could en-

hance other aspects of India-China relations, significantly benefiting both nations.

As major powers in Asia, cooperation between India and China could play a pivotal role in ensuring the region's stability and prosperity. During Modi's visit, this was discussed extensively within the SCO framework. Topics included regional security, counter-terrorism, and economic cooperation. Collaboration on climate change, environmental protection, and renewable energy was also emphasized. Such cooperation could enhance the global influence of both nations. However, challenges remain, including India's reservations about China's Belt and Road Initiative and concerns over China's close ties with some of India's neighbors. Efforts were made during the visit to address these issues through mutual understanding, fostering a positive outlook for collaboration on regional and global platforms. This cooperation could significantly shape Asia's future, though its success will depend on the strategic vision and mutual trust of both nations' leadership.

Another critical aspect of Modi's visit was cooperation in combating terrorism. India has long faced the challenge of terrorism, and securing China's support in this fight is a key component of India's foreign policy. During the visit, President Xi Jinping expressed China's commitment to supporting India's efforts against terrorism. However, complexities persist, particularly due to China's close ties with Pakistan, which pose challenges to India's counter-terrorism efforts. Both leaders committed to advancing cooperation based on mutual sensitivity and trust, creating possibilities for future collaboration. The success of this cooperation will depend on the leadership's willpower and diplomatic expertise. Strengthening security cooperation could significantly contribute to regional stability, contingent on

mutual trust and transparency.

Cultural exchanges between India and China have a rich historical legacy, from Buddhism to yoga and ancient trade. During Modi's tenure, efforts to revive these cultural ties have been evident, including facilitating Chinese pilgrims' visits to Indian religious sites and promoting student exchange programs. These initiatives aim to strengthen people-to-people ties. Discussions during the visit emphasized cultural events, films, and art exchanges to foster mutual understanding. Such cultural cooperation could reduce mistrust among the public. However, challenges like language barriers and historical mistrust persist. The visit created a positive environment for cultural collaboration, which could strengthen long-term relations by fostering mutual respect and understanding.

Modi's visit underscored the potential for resolving complex issues through diplomatic dialogue. Both leaders committed to building relations based on mutual trust and sensitivity, laying a strong foundation for future discussions. India's strategic partnerships with countries like the United States, Japan, and Australia provide a balanced approach to its relations with China, though they may add complexity. The visit reaffirmed a commitment to restraint and diplomatic skill, creating a positive environment for future relations. The success of this approach will depend on mutual respect and cooperation.

In the technological domain, both nations have made rapid strides. China's advancements in artificial intelligence and 5G, and India's progress in IT and software development, were discussed during the visit, with emphasis on collaboration in renewable energy and joint research. Challenges include India's reliance on Chinese technology and security concerns. Commitments to transparency and trust were made to foster technological cooperation, which could create a new environment for economic and strategic interests. Both nations face the challenges of climate change, and discussions during the visit focused on joint efforts in environmental protection and sustainable development. Commitments to renewable energy projects and eco-friendly technologies were made, though balancing economic growth and environmental goals remains a challenge. This cooperation could enhance both nations' global influence.

In the current global political landscape, India and China play significant roles. Modi's visit addressed cooperation in the context of international dynamics, with leaders emphasizing that their relations should not be judged from a third country's perspective. Despite external influences, such as U.S.-China tensions and India's U.S. ties, a positive environment for cooperation was created, strengthening both nations' global roles.

In conclusion, Prime Minister Modi's recent visit to China has undoubtedly created a positive environment for the future of India-China relations. Efforts were made to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation. The future of this relationship depends on the leadership's willpower, diplomatic skill, and mutual sensitivity. Despite challenges like border tensions, economic competition, and international dynamics, the potential for cooperation is significant. Modi's visit is a crucial step toward realizing this potential, with further dialogue and collaboration likely to elevate this relationship to new heights. The success of this relationship will not only benefit India and China but also contribute to the stability and prosperity of Asia and the world, fostering a peaceful, secure, and prosperous global order.

How India helped scuttle the global plastics treaty

By: Sherley Hepsiba Dokiburra

India has opposed limits on the production of primary virgin plastic in the name of development and industrialization. It thus became a party to scuttling the proposed United Nations Global Plastics Treaty (INC 5.2), for which negotiations were held in Geneva from August 4-14, 2025.

These talks are part of a process set in motion by the 2022 United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution, which gave negotiators the mandate to craft a legally binding treaty that addresses plastics across their entire life-cycle, from production through to disposal. The latest draft placed before the countries in Geneva in the sixth round of negotiations proposed stronger measures for waste management, better recycling systems, and tightened controls on hazardous additives.

However, it did not include limits on the production of virgin plastics or tighter regulation of chemicals used in their production. The inability of the 180 participating countries to agree on imposing limits on the production of new plastics emerged as the main stumbling block to reaching a consensus. The disagreement hardened into a clear divide between two negotiating blocs.

The High Ambition Coalition (HAC), a group of around 100 countries including the European Union, argued that production caps are essential to avert worsening ecological and public health risks.

Opposing them, the Like Minded Countries (LMC) – made up of petrochemical producers such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, China, and Cuba – rejected restrictions on production.

India's Stance: The Development Argument and its Limits

India sided with the LMC bloc voicing opposition to limits on plastic production. India justified this stance by invoking developmental imperatives. Its position is that restricting primary or virgin plastic production would constrain economic growth and industrialization, particularly in a country where

millions still lack secure livelihoods and basic services. This framing resonates with the long-standing Global South demand for "common but differentiated responsibilities" in environmental governance.

However, India's opposition to limits on plastic production may turn out to be more damaging than beneficial.

India's own record with development when viewed through the lens of environmental change reveals a history that is far more conflicted than celebratory. Decades of scholarship and activism have shown how the pursuit of growth in the country has often produced deeper dispossession rather than reducing poverty. For example, large infrastructure projects have displaced communities on a massive scale, while the benefits of economic growth are captured by a narrow section of society. Marginalized groups are frequently left out of the gains from development, and the gap between the wealthy and the poor continues to widen.

Against this backdrop, India's defense of plastics is a defense of accumulation that shifts ecological burdens onto the poor while reinforcing the very inequalities that development was supposed to undo. Plastics may create short-term industrial profits, but they also worsen pollution, health burdens, and ecological crises that disproportionately harm the poor.

Plastic, Petrochemicals, and Neocolonial Dependence

Adam Hanieh's "Petrochemical Empire" highlighted how plastics are inseparable from the global oil and petrochemical complex. Far from being a neutral material serving development, plastic production sustains a political economy that concentrates wealth and power in the hands of a few transnational corporations and petrostates.

In this sense, defending plastic production in the name of "development" entrenches dependency on fossil fuels and ties India's trajectory to a reimagined neocolonial petrochemical regime.

The historical linkages between the plastics industry and colonialism show



how patterns of extraction and exploitation are reconfigured through modern petrochemical expansion. The petrochemical regime is not only an economic system but also a continuation of colonial logics, where control over resources and production reinforces global hierarchies at the expense of ecological and social justice.

By presenting its opposition to production limits as a defense of the right to development, India risks legitimizing continued petrochemical expansion while avoiding the harder questions of justice and equity. Such a position sustains inequalities by concentrating the benefits of growth among powerful actors, while leaving marginalized groups outside both the gains of development and the protections of environmental governance.

This contradiction is evident in the country's petrochemical growth. Industrial zones such as Dahej in Gujarat, Paradeep in Odisha and Kochi in

Kerala have driven rapid increases in plastic and chemical output, but reports have also documented polluted waters, stressed ecosystems, and declining fish catches in surrounding regions. The burden falls most heavily on coastal and small-scale communities, while investors and export markets capture the benefits.

Yet the problem is not confined to the coasts. Rising plastic production shapes consumption patterns across the country, deepening waste and health challenges that sit uneasily with India's own Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE) Mission, which calls for sustainable practices and responsible consumption.

Against this backdrop, resisting production limits at the global stage ties India's diplomatic position to a development path that is increasingly difficult to defend on grounds of equity or environmental responsibility.

Environmental Justice Dimension

Environmental degradation caused by plastics is staggering. Microplastics infiltrate soil, water, and even human bloodstreams. Marine ecosystems are suffocating under the weight of plastic debris. Communities living near landfills and incineration sites, often poor, Dalit, or Adivasi, bear disproportionate health costs. To oppose production caps while conceding only to waste management provisions, as India currently does, is to address symptoms while ignoring causes. Research on the decolonization of environmentalism offers a useful lens here. Environmental justice requires confronting global power asymmetries and ensuring that ecological protection does not reproduce colonial hierarchies.

India could have articulated a genuinely decolonial stance by demanding that the Global North curb its overconsumption while supporting just transitions in the South. Instead, by aligning with petrochemical exporters, India

risks reinforcing neocolonial dependencies while sacrificing vulnerable communities at home.

Trade Risks and the Global South's Vulnerability

Opposing limits on plastic production carries significant trade risks for India and other countries in the Global South. By siding with petrochemical exporters and resisting production caps, these economies may secure short-term industrial gains, but they expose themselves to punitive trade measures from major markets such as the European Union, where environmental compliance is increasingly tied to market access.

Just as carbon border adjustments are reshaping trade in steel and cement, similar mechanisms could emerge for plastic-intensive goods, placing exporters from the South at a disadvantage. In this scenario, the very strategy framed as defending the right to development could leave countries vulnerable to economic isolation while the environmental burdens of unchecked plastic production continue to fall disproportionately on their own populations.

Toward a Just Position

The stalemate at Geneva is a symptom of deeper global rifts. Plastics are not merely a technical issue but a window into the contradictions of contemporary capitalism, development, and environmentalism.

India faces a choice. It could continue to weaken the treaty by defending petrochemical interests under the guise of development. Or, it could reclaim a genuinely decolonial and justice-oriented stance: demanding ambitious production cuts from the Global North, while pursuing equitable transitions at home that prioritize the well-being of the poor and the sustainability of ecosystems.

To insist that "development" requires endless plastic is not only ecologically unsound but also historically dishonest. A just future would mean confronting petrochemical dependency, rejecting neocolonial logic, and embracing pathways that strengthen rather than weaken global environmental governance. (Courtesy: thediplomat.com)

World's smallest wild cat spotted on camera traps in Bengal district

By: Nabarun Guha

The sighting of rusty-spotted cats (*Prionailurus rubiginosus*), considered one of the world's smallest wild cat species, in the Purulia district of West Bengal earlier this year has excited both forest officials and environmentalists alike. It is the ninth wild cat species identified in the state.

In January 2025, the cats were photographed by camera traps set up by the Kolkata-based NGO Human and Environment Alliance League, or HEAL, as part of another project, supported by the Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust.

"The project, initiated in June last year [2024], is an exploratory study to understand the conservation status and threats faced by pangolins in Purulia district. Initially, we installed six camera traps but now we have 17-18 camera traps which we are trying to deploy phase wise in different forest patches of the district," ecologist Vasudha Mishra of HEAL told Mongabay India.

HEAL shared on social media that the presence of the rusty-spotted cat had not been detected in previous surveys or in British archival data from the region. "The forests of Purulia, where this remarkable sighting took place, fall within the Chotanagpur Plateau ecoregion, which shares ecological characteristics with Jharkhand and Odisha – both states where the rusty-spotted cat has been previously recorded," stated the post.

Speaking to Mongabay India, Anjan Guha, divisional forest officer of Purulia, said, "An entire family, including kittens, was spotted by the camera traps which is a very good indicator. We believe that there may be more such cats present in the forests of Purulia."

Significant discovery

Rusty-spotted cats are found in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal with India harbouring around 80% of the global population of this species. They have been located in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand (Uttaranchal), Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha with West Bengal becoming the new entrant in the list.

An adult rusty-spotted cat weighs between 0.9 and 1.6 kilograms and is lighter than a domestic cat, while a newborn kitten is smaller than a poultry egg.

"Rusty-spotted cats can actually kill animals three times their body weight. They have sharp teeth which can cause deep tissue injury. They are known to raid bird nests and also kill rodents, insects, young hares and snakes," said Guha.

Shomita Mukherjee, Senior Principal Scientist, Salim Ali Centre for

Ornithology and Natural History and a global expert on small cat species, confirmed the images were of rusty-spotted cats.

In an email interview with Mongabay India, Mukherjee said that while the discovery of these cats is great news, it is not entirely unexpected. "This species has shown up in so many new locations that were not believed to harbour them. Even today, there are little or no focussed surveys for this cat. But the catch data from camera trap surveys for other species, especially tigers, has provided a lot of information on new presence locations. The species is widely distributed in deciduous and scrub forests in the country," she said.

She explained that the capture rates on camera traps for this cat are very low, as most camera traps target the larger tiger. "The design of the study (grid size, where the cameras are placed, and so on) influences the success of detection," she noted.

She said that rusty-spotted cats are found in forests of intermediate canopy cover – dry and wet deciduous forests and also in thorn scrub habitats in Kachchh and other places. "They are also found in agricultural fields adjoining their habitats," she added.

As per the IUCN, the rusty-spotted cat is near threatened and the population is showing a decreasing trend. "Habitat loss and road kills are a major issue. This is a result of habitat fragmentation by large scale linear developments. Other threats could include indiscriminate use of pesticides in agricultural fields," said Mukherjee.

Safe forest spaces

Purulia Divisional Forest Officer Guha said that the presence of rusty-spotted cats in Purulia indicates robust health of the forest in this district.

"The presence of smaller cats like the rusty-spotted cat suggests that there is a food chain which is being maintained here. This indicates that the jungles in Purulia are in good condition and this might support the presence of big cats like tigers and leopards. We have found the presence of almost half a dozen leopards in Purulia while tigers have come from Simlipal hills in Odisha or from Jharkhand, which shares a border with Purulia," he says.

Besides the small cats, honey badgers were also spotted for the first time in this district recently. "We have got canid species like hyenas, wolves and jackals," he noted. "To negate the threat towards these wild carnivores, we are sensitising local people which has brought down incidents of revenge killing in the district while we are also trying to bring down the number of forest fires in Purulia." (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Climate Extremes and the Development Dilemma in the Himalayas

By: Soma Sarkar

The ongoing trail of disasters in the Himalayas, including in Uttarakashi, Kishtwar, and various parts of Himachal Pradesh, is neither an aberration nor isolated acts of nature. They reflect a larger systemic failure in treating the Himalayas as an inexhaustible resource base and a tourist frontier rather than an environmentally sensitive ecosystem.

The Himalayas, also known as the Third Pole, are young fold mountains that continue to grow at a rate of 10 mm per year, with the Indian subcontinent subsiding northwards at a rate of 5 cm per year. As one of the most seismically active areas in the world, the region is prone to earthquakes, slope failures, landslides, and mass movements. These render the environmental baseline of the Himalayas naturally unstable, even before factoring in the anthropogenic imprint. Over the past decades, the Himalayas have witnessed massive urbanisation and development, often at the cost of the environment. The sobering

number of disasters in the Himalayan states and the subsequent loss of lives and resources is unprecedented. Over the past three years, the Himalayas have witnessed some form of extreme weather event every seven out of ten days.

The political economy of Himalayan development must urgently reconcile extractivist, revenue-driven growth strategies with the need for environmental and ecological stewardship.

Increasingly catastrophic events, such as the Uttarakashi flash floods or the Kedarnath Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), necessitate an urgent, paradigmatic shift in how India and its Himalayan states approach this eco-sensitive region. The political economy of Himalayan development must urgently reconcile extractivist, revenue-driven growth strategies with the need for environmental and ecological stewardship.

Climate Extremes and Environmental Risks

The Indian Himalayan Region comprises 13 states, including Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal, as well as the Union Territories (UTs) of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Over the past three years (January 2022-March 2025), these states experienced extreme weather events on 822 of 1,186 days, resulting in the deaths of 2,863 people. Globally, landslides are the third deadliest natural hazard, with Colombia, Tajikistan, India, and Nepal among the countries facing the highest risk. The slope instabilities caused by mega infrastructure projects have made the Himalayas particularly vulnerable. The Landslide Atlas of India highlighted that between 1988 and 2022, Mizoram witnessed the highest number of landslides at 12,385, followed by Uttarakhand at 11,219, and Tripura at 8,070. Figure 1 shows landslide occurrences in Uttarakhand between 1988 and 2022. Landslide exposure analysis indicates that Rudrapur and Tehri Garhwal are the most landslide-prone districts in the country.

The region's location in a high-seismic zone further contributes to its hazard profile. It also houses the Tehri Dam, India's highest, which was arguably built on an active fault line, raising concerns about the potential for compounding disaster vulnerability. In 2021, a massive rock and ice avalanche in the upper

catchment of the Rishiganga river in Chamoli, Uttarakhand, caused widespread devastation, killing more than 200 people and damaging two hydropower projects. The floods washed away the 13.2 MW Rishiganga hydropower project and damaged the under-construction 520 MW NTPC hydropower project at Tapovan on the Dhauliganga river.

With climate change exacerbating the melting of glaciers, the Himalayas are at a higher risk of GLOF. Studies have indicated that glacier melt in the Himalayas has created more than 5,000 glacier lakes that are naturally dammed by potentially unstable moraines. The collapse of these dams would cause catastrophic GLOFs, as witnessed in Kedarnath in 2013 with the bursting of Chorabari Tal lake. In 2023, the South Lhonak GLOF in Sikkim released 50 million cubic metres of water, leading to a multi-hazard cascade and causing transboundary impacts along the Teesta river, hundreds of kilometres downstream, in Bangladesh. Mapping 3,624 glacial lakes in the Koshi, Gandaki, and Karnali river basins of Nepal, China,

significant land-use changes, leading to water scarcity due to the drying of natural water flows and springs. Communities living around hydropower project areas are the most vulnerable to land acquisition, displacement, and livelihood disruption.

The unregulated growth of tourism has led to the proliferation of tourist infrastructure, such as hotels, homestays, tourist vehicles, and parking lots, often resulting in encroachment on ecologically sensitive areas. The total number of tourist arrivals in the state of Himachal Pradesh in 2024 alone was 18,124,694. The seasonal surge in tourist influx further strains the delivery of basic services and challenges waste management in the mountains. The increase in water consumption patterns associated with tourism has also led to a water crisis in many mountain cities. Traffic congestion has cascading ecological impacts, with increased vehicular emissions degrading air quality and contributing to early snowmelt.

In Himachal Pradesh, the Supreme Court of India recently attributed anthropogenic activities, including

hydroelectric power projects, four-lane roads, deforestation, and the proliferation of multi-storey buildings, to ecological destruction and an increasing disaster risk. Unscientific cutting or blasting of hill slopes for infrastructure projects is destabilising the slopes, altering local hydrology, and making the slopes vulnerable to landslides and flash floods. The apex court warned that revenue "cannot be earned at the cost of the environment and ecology."

Considerations for a Resilient Future

Development projects in the mountains are often justified under the rhetoric of strategic requirements and national development. However, the distribution of benefits is usually asymmetric, with the local communities bearing a disproportionate risk of ecological and livelihood disruptions, as well as disaster vulnerabilities. The Himalayan region is currently at the convergence of climate extremes, geomorphic fragility, and a high anthropogenic footprint. It risks being locked in a vicious cycle if development planning is not reoriented to account for ecological thresholds. This requires deeper introspection of whether environmental degradation is an inadvertent byproduct of the current growth model or an embedded feature that externalises ecological costs.

The Himalayan region is currently at the convergence of climate extremes, geomorphic fragility, and a high anthropogenic footprint. It risks being locked in a vicious cycle if development planning is not reoriented to account for ecological thresholds.

Development in the Himalayas must, therefore, be reimagined from the ground up, taking into account environmental concerns, ecological awareness, and community resilience. Hazards mapping and demarcation of high-risk zones must be at the core of land-use planning to prevent construction in vulnerable areas. Indigenous knowledge systems, along with community-focused participatory planning, must inform disaster preparedness, early warning systems and monitoring. Technological innovations for low-impact and climate-resilient infrastructure must be considered in conjunction with tourism policies that regulate tourist footfall, calibrated to the region's carrying capacity. An integrated, equity- and justice-oriented framework specifically curated to the needs and challenges of the Himalayas can help secure a resilient future. (Courtesy: ORF)



and India revealed that 47 of the 1,410 lakes with an area of 0.02 square kilometres or larger are critically hazardous. This could cause GLOFs in Nepal, China, and India. Warming temperatures that allow moisture-laden air to condense rapidly over elevations lead to frequent cloudbursts and flash floods, indicating an increased climate vulnerability of the Himalayas. The Uttarakashi flash floods produced torrents that obliterated settlements and commercial establishments within moments, bringing into question the violations caused by human activity in the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone (BESZ) and the ecological impacts of the Char Dham highway project.

Deconstructing the Development Dilemma

The Himalayan ecological crisis is emblematic of a political economy of resource dependency and extractivism, where the mountains are metamorphosed into the circuits of capital. The central and state governments have increasingly treated them as peripheral resource repositories, harnessed for the core's capital accumulation through hydropower, timber, water, and tourism. The Himalayan Region has enormous hydropower potential with an estimated installed capacity of 46,850 MW and the potential to generate an additional 115,550 MW of power. Already, the governments have planned several large hydropower projects to harness this potential, largely overlooking the significant ecological, social, and geological consequences. In addition to geological and tectonic instabilities, the conversion of agricultural lands and forests to roads, tunnels, and buildings has caused sig-

China unveils a range of new weapons systems at its massive military parade



BELJING, Sept 3: China on Wednesday for the first time displayed a range of new weapons at a massive military parade, which included laser weapons, nuclear ballistic missiles, giant underwater drones, besides fifth-generation aircraft, flaunting its military might.

One much-talked-about new weapon, displayed at the People's Liberation Army (PLA) parade to commemorate the 80th anniversary of China's victory against Japanese aggression in World War II, was the giant LY-1 laser weapon. The laser weapon, mounted on top of an eight-wheeled HZ-155 armoured truck, can effectively damage the optical sensors of enemy weapons and equipment.

Chinese defence analysts say it will truly change the rules of maritime warfare.

Laser warfare was regarded as the new military domain. India last month successfully test-fired an integrated air defence weapon system (IADWS), especially the high-power laser-based Directed-Energy Weapons (DEW) system, which invited praise from a Chinese military expert who said it should be considered as a "significant advancement".

Also, China for the first time displayed a new type of DF-5C liquid-fuelled intercontinental strategic nuclear missiles.

State-run Global Times reported that the missile has an estimated range of more than 20,000 kms and has advantages in defence penetration and precision. It can cover the entire globe under its strike range, an expert was quoted as saying.

Also, the PLA's first air-launched nuclear missile, the JL-1, has been unveiled atop a military truck. This model is significantly smaller than the JL-3 submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile, which is on show.

Official media says that these two missiles, along with the DF-61 and DF-31, represent the "first concentrated display" of the PLA's "land, sea and air triad strategic nuclear forces", constituting a "strategic ace for safeguarding national sovereignty and defending national dignity".

Military blogger Ma Yan told the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post that the upgraded intercontinental ballistic missile DF-5C sends the message that "China's strategic deterrence is credible, reliable and sufficient".

The DF-5C can reportedly carry up to 10 multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle warheads, "meaning that a single missile can target 10 different locations at the same time", she said.

The missile can target "the enemy's military

bases and critical facilities", and adjust the order of strikes.

"Its existence strengthens our nuclear deterrent strategy, ensuring effective retaliatory strikes, even under the harshest war conditions," she said.

The PLA Rocket Force has displayed its new DF-26D, a variant of the DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile. It can carry both nuclear and conventional warheads and reportedly has a range of up to 5,000km.

Also, China has unveiled its fifth-generation combat planes on active duty for the first time in the grand parade. All five models -- the J-20, J-20A, J-20S and J-35A of the PLA Air Force, as well as the PLA Navy's J-35 flew in several arrowhead-shaped groups.

This is the first time in the world that five models of cutting-edge stealth fighter jets have appeared in one parade, state-run China Daily reported.

It also marked the maiden public performance of the J-20S, the world's first and only model of twin-seat stealth jet; the J-20A, an upgraded single-seat variant of the J-20 baseline configuration; and the J-35, the first radar-evading combat plane in the Navy, the report said.(PTI)

Trump says India kills us with tariffs, claims Delhi now offers 'no tariffs' to America

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, Sept 3: India kills the US with tariffs and the country has now offered "no tariffs" to America, President Donald Trump has said, amid New Delhi's escalating tensions with Washington over his administration's policies on trade and tariffs.

"They have tariffs against us, China, which kills us with tariffs. India kills us with tariffs. Brazil kills us" with tariffs, Trump said in a telephone interview with The Scott Jennings Radio Show on Tuesday.

Trump added that he understands tariffs better than other countries.

"I understood tariffs better than any human being in the world. And now with my tariffs, they were all dropping them. India was the most highly tariffed nation... And you know what, they've offered me no tariffs in India anymore. No tariffs," Trump said.

"If I didn't have tariffs, they would never make that offer. They would never make that offer. So you have to have tariffs. We're going to be economically strong," he added.

With a federal appeals court ruling that most of Trump's tariffs imposed on countries around the world are illegal, Trump said that the court case is sponsored by other nations because they're taking advantage of us.

"...they're not going to take advantage anymore," he added.

Later, speaking at the White House, Trump said that America gets along with India very well, but the relationship was one-sided for



many years since Delhi was charging Washington "tremendous tariffs".

"No, we get along with India very well," Trump said in response to a question on whether he is considering taking away some of the tariffs imposed on India.

He said that for many years, the relationship between India and the US was "one-sided" and that changed when he assumed office.

"India was charging us tremendous tariffs, about the highest in the world," Trump said, adding that the US was therefore not doing much business with India.

"But they were doing business with us because we weren't charging them, foolishly, we weren't charging them," he said, adding that India was pouring its products into the US.

"They'd send it in, pour it into our country. Therefore, it wouldn't be made here, which is a negative, but we would not send in anything because they were charging us 100 per cent tariffs," Trump said.

The US president cited the ex-

ample of Harley Davidson motorcycles, saying the company couldn't sell into India because there was a 200 per cent tariff on a motorcycle.

"So what happens? Harley Davidson went to India and built a motorcycle plant, and now they don't have to pay tariffs, same thing as us," he said.

On Monday, Trump claimed that India has now "offered" to cut its tariffs to nothing, "but it's getting late", as he said that India buys most of its oil and military products from Russia and very little from the US. The Trump administration has imposed 25 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India and an additional 25 per cent levies for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, bringing the total duties imposed on India to 50 per cent, with effect from August 27.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asserted he can't compromise on the interests of farmers, cattle-rearers, small-scale industries, cautioning "pressure on us may increase, but we will bear it"(PTI)

Sri Lankan ex-Prez Wickremesinghe's health concerns postpones party rally

COLOMBO, Sept 3: Former president Ranil Wickremesinghe's health concerns have prompted his United National Party to postpone a convention scheduled for this weekend, it was announced here on Wednesday.

The event marking the United National Party's (UNP) 79th anniversary was to be the 76-year-old veteran leader's first public appearance since his arrest on August 22 and subsequent bail four days later.

"In consideration of president Wickremesinghe's personal health condition, a decision has been made to postpone the party convention. It will be held on another date within this month," party general secretary Thalatha Athukorale said in a statement.

The September 6 convention was seen as a move by Wickremesinghe to unify the fractured party.

Wickremesinghe was arrested in a case of alleged misappropriation of 16.6 million rupees for a private visit to the UK to attend a university convocation of his wife Prof Maithree Wickremesinghe in 2023.

Pleading bail his lawyers argued that Wickremesinghe had complicated heart conditions including blocked arteries.

Ahead of his remand, Wickremesinghe was visited by his arch political foes, including the leader of the UNP breakaway Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) leader Sajith Premadasa.

Wickremesinghe's arrest by the current ruling National People's Power (NPP) government led by President Anura Kumara Disanayake was condemned by the rest of the opposition parties who called it a grave political witch hunt.

All opposition parties were to be invited as guests to the UNP convention now postponed. (PTI)

14 killed, 35 injured in suicide bombing after BNP rally in Pak's Balochistan



KARACHI, Sept 3: At least 14 people have been killed and 35 others injured in a suicide bombing shortly after the conclusion of a public rally organised by the Balochistan National Party (BNP) in Quetta, according to media reports.

The explosion occurred close to Shahwali Stadium in the Sariab area on Tuesday night after the rally held to mark the fourth death anniversary of Sardar Attaullah Mengal ended. The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar con-

firmed the casualties, the newspaper said.

Officials confirmed it was a suicide attack, the Dawn reported. According to police, the explosion occurred about 15 minutes after the meeting ended.

The bomber allegedly detonated his explosives-laden jacket in the parking area as participants were leaving the meeting.

BNP chief Akhtar Mengal, who presided over the gathering, remained unhurt as the blast occurred when he was leaving for home, according to The Dawn.

Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai, Asghar Khan Achakzai of the Awami National Party, and former senator Mir Kabeer Muhammad Shai of the National Party were also present at the rally, but escaped unhurt, it added.

However, former BNP member of provincial assembly (MPA) Mir

Ahmed Nawaz Baloch and the party's central labour secretary Musa Jan were among those injured along with several party workers and supporters.

BNP chief Mengal confirmed in a social media post that he was safe but "deeply heartbroken at the loss of our workers". He claimed 15 BNP workers lost their lives in the explosion.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti condemned the attack, calling it a "cowardly act by the enemies of humanity".

"Such acts of terrorism are meant to destabilise the province and spread fear among innocent citizens," he said.

A special investigation committee has been formed and security has been beefed up in and around Quetta in the aftermath of the explosion.

No group has claimed responsibility for the bombing so far. (PTI)

Asian benchmarks slip after US stocks sink, Japan faces political uncertainty



TOKYO, Sept 3: Asian shares mostly declined Wednesday, echoing a fall on Wall Street, as political uncertainty took centre stage in Japan, making for cautious trading on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 shed nearly 1 per cent in afternoon trading to 41,894.70.

The fate of Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has been uncertain for weeks, with calls growing both for him to resign and to remain, after a recent election defeat and the rise of fringe parties have shaken public faith in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Confidence was rocked further by a recent comment from Ishiba's ally, Hiroshi Moriyama, who said he was stepping down as party secretary general.

"The political tremor is domestic, with Prime Minister Ishiba's key power broker signalling his resignation, shaking the foundations of the ruling party," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management.

Australia's S&P/ASX200 slipped 1.8 per cent to 8,737.40.

South Korea's Kospi edged up 0.2 per cent to 3,177.87. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.6 per cent to 25,337.95. The Shanghai Composite shed 0.8 per cent to 3,826.05.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 fell 0.7 per cent for its worst day in a month after paring a loss that earlier reached 1.5 per cent. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 249 points, or 0.5 per cent, and the Nasdaq composite lost 0.8 per cent. All three are still relatively close to their recently set all-time highs.

Big Tech companies led the market lower. They've been soaring for years on expectations that they'll continue to dominate the economy, but they have also shot so high that critics say their prices have become too expensive.

Nvidia, whose chips are powering much of the world's move into artificial-intelligence technology, fell 2 per cent and was the single strongest force pulling the S&P 500 downward. Amazon sank 1.6 per cent, and Apple dropped 1 per cent.

The overall stock market felt

pressure from rising yields in the bond market, where the 10-year Treasury yield climbed to 4.27 per cent from 4.23 per cent late Friday. When bonds are paying more in interest, investors are less willing to pay high prices for stocks.

Longer-term bond yields are on the rise around the world, in part because of worries about how difficult it will be for governments to repay their growing mountains of debt.

In the United States, longer-term Treasury yields are feeling additional pressure from President Donald Trump's attacks on the Federal Reserve for not cutting interest rates sooner. The fear is that a less independent Fed will be less likely to make the unpopular decisions needed to keep inflation under control over the long term, such as keeping short-term rates higher than investors would like.

Tuesday was also the first opportunity for trading after a federal appeals court ruled late Friday that Trump overstepped his legal authority when announcing sweeping tariffs on almost every country, though it left the tariffs in place for now.

Trump's tariffs have created confusion across the global economy and may have hurt the US job market. But less income from them could also force the US government to borrow more to pay its bills, according to Scott Wren, senior global market strategist at Wells Fargo Investment Institute.

In another signal of increasing worries in financial markets, the price of gold rose to touch another record. The metal has often pro-

vided a haven for investors in times of uncertainty.

Treasury yields briefly trimmed their gains after a report on Tuesday said US manufacturing shrank by more last month than economists expected. Many companies told the Institute for Supply Management that tariffs are continuing to make conditions chaotic.

"Too much uncertainty for us and our customers regarding tariffs and the US/global economy," one company in the chemical products industry said, while noting that orders across most product lines have weakened.

The worse-than-expected data on manufacturing could give the Federal Reserve more leeway to cut its main interest rate for the first time this year at its next meeting in a couple of weeks. That's the widespread expectation among traders, though economic reports coming later this week could change things.

The highlight for the week is coming on Friday, when economists expect a report to show that US employers upped their hiring by a bit last month. Last month's weaker-than-expected jobs report raised worries about the economy and cranked up expectations for coming rate cuts by the Fed.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 44.72 points to 6,415.54. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 249.07 to 45,295.81, and the Nasdaq composite sank 175.92 to 21,279.63.

In energy trading, benchmark US crude fell 15 cents to USD 65.44 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, fell 18 cents to USD 68.96 a barrel.(AP)

WASHINGTON, Sept 3: A bitcoin treasury and mining company linked to the Trump family began trading Wednesday on the Nasdaq stock market. American Bitcoin's listing follows a completed merger with Gryphon Digital Mining. The company is backed by President Donald Trump's sons, Donald Trump Jr and Eric Trump.

"Our Nasdaq debut marks a historic milestone in bringing bitcoin into the core of US capital markets," Eric Trump said in a statement. He is a co-founder and chief strategy officer of American Bitcoin. Public companies accumulating bitcoin as a corporate treasury has become a popular trend in crypto as the world's most popular digital asset is priced near an all-time high. The parent company of Trump's Truth Social has also moved to accumulate bitcoin. American Bitcoin said it plans to use "self-mining op-

erations and opportunistic bitcoin purchases" to stand out in a growing field. Wednesday's listing gives investors yet another chance to put money in a Trump-linked crypto project. The Trump family has made a heavy pivot from real estate into crypto in the last year with projects ranging from a US dollar-backed stablecoin to the president hawking his own meme coin. On Monday, another Trump-family backed crypto project, World Liberty Financial, launched public trading of its tokens. The popularity of such projects has put the value of the Trump family's crypto holdings at several billion dollars, at least on paper.

Democrats have blasted the president for trying to monetize his popularity with crypto investors while also pushing for pro-crypto legislation and regulations. Trump has denied any improper conflicts of interest. (AP)

UN ups number of staff detained by Yemen's Houthis to 19

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 3: At least 19 UN employees were detained by Iranian-backed Houthis during raids on UN offices in Yemen's capital, the United Nations said Tuesday, a higher number than originally reported.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said 18 of those being held are Yemeni staffers and one is an international employee. He called for all to be released immediately.

Sunday's raids on offices of the United Nations' food, health and children's agencies in Sanaa fol-

lowed Israel's killing of Houthi Prime Minister Ahmed al-Rahawi and several Cabinet ministers in an airstrike on Thursday.

The Houthis have been engaged in a civil war with Yemen's internationally recognized government, backed by a Saudi-led coalition, since 2014, when they took control of Sanaa and most of northern Yemen.

Hopes for peace talks vanished after the Hamas-led attack in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, which led to Israel's retaliatory war

in Hamas-run Gaza. The Houthis started attacking ships in the Red Sea in support of Palestinians in Gaza. That sparked US and Israeli retaliatory strikes in areas the rebels control in Yemen.

The raids were the latest in a long-running Houthi crackdown on the UN and other international organizations as well as diplomats working in rebel-held areas. Dujarric said the Houthis previously had detained 23 UN employees, holding some since 2021.(AP)

Israel launches satellite to expand its surveillance capability throughout Middle East



JERUSALEM, Sept 3: Israel has launched a new spy satellite that defence officials described as a strategic cornerstone, saying it will strengthen their surveillance capacity across the Middle East in the years ahead.

Military officials and Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday that the satellite, launched on late Tuesday, will enhance Israel's ability to collect in-

ages like the 12,000 gathered over Iran during a 12-day war earlier this year.

"This is also a message to all our enemies, wherever they may be - we are keeping an eye on you at all times and in all situations," Katz said in a post on X.

In addition to monitoring Iran, Israel gains reconnaissance capabilities in other parts of the Middle East as it conducts what Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called a "seven-front war," with Israeli forces striking targets in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq throughout the 23 months of war in Gaza.

Maj. Gen. Amir Baram said the satellite, called Ofek 19, was part of a broader effort "to maintain persistent, simultaneous surveillance of any point throughout the Middle East."

Israel's decades-old space program has expanded its fleet with several satellite launches in recent years and is one of the few nations globally with high-resolution monitoring and intelligence gathering capabilities.

The aerospace and defence industry is a pillar of Israel's economy, and the satellite manufacturer, Israel Aerospace Industries, builds and sells satellites, missile systems, drones and aircraft to Israel as well as countries in Europe, Asia and North America.

Israel's military did not say from where the satellite was launched on Tuesday evening. (AP)

Tarh Johny will continue to function as the State President of the Arunachal Pradesh Youth Congress Tarh Johny assigned in-charge of four north eastern states by Indian Youth Congress

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Sept 3: In a significant development for the Indian Youth Congress (IYC), Arunachal Pradesh Youth Congress State President Tarh Johny has been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing organisational affairs in four North Eastern states.

According to an official notification issued from the National Headquarters of the Indian Youth Congress, Johny has been appointed National General Secretary of IYC and made in-charge of Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

The appointment holds historic importance for Arunachal Pradesh, as this is the first time that a youth leader from the state has been elevated to the position of National General Secretary at the central level of the organisation.

Johny's elevation has been made under the leadership of IYC National President Shri Uday Bhanu Chib and AICC in-charge of the Indian Youth Congress, Krishna Allavaru.

The official communication also named Janhewe Konwar from Assam as the new National Secretary of the organisation.

She has been entrusted with the charge of Arunachal Pradesh, thereby taking over as in-charge



for the state unit of the Youth Congress.

Despite his new assignment, Tarh Johny will continue to function as the State President of the Arunachal Pradesh Youth Congress until a successor is formally appointed or elected by the National leadership, under the supervision of the new in-charge,

Konwar.

Party leaders described the move as an important step towards strengthening the Youth Congress in the North Eastern region. Johny's appointment is expected to bring fresh energy into the party's outreach across the four tribal-dominated states, while his continued leadership in

Arunachal Pradesh is likely to ensure a smooth transition in the state unit.

The announcement has been widely welcomed by members of the Arunachal Pradesh Youth Congress, who termed it a recognition of Johny's contribution to the organisation and his growing role in national politics.

APBRDA chairman urges students and youth to become leaders

HT Correspondent

POMA, Sept 3: Arunachal Pradesh Bamboo Resource Development Agency (APBRDA) Chairman and former Minister Tatar Kipa on Wednesday called upon students and youths to prepare themselves to lead their families, communities, society, state, and the nation in the right direction for overall development.

He was addressing the reception ceremony of BSc (Forestry) students from various states and universities at the Bamboo Technology Park (BTP), Poma, in Sangdupota circle of Papum Pare district.

Tatar Kipa said students have a greater role to play in today's world and must equip themselves with modern skills and knowledge.

While stressing on academic focus, he also highlighted the importance of practical exposure, hands-on training, and field visits.

"Bookish knowledge alone is not enough. Practical training is essential for your life and career. Wherever you go after graduation, be a good human being, work for environmental conservation, and raise awareness on global warming," he told the students.

Acknowledging that not all students may get desired employment, he encouraged them to look towards self-employment and leadership in whichever profession they choose.

"Everyone may not become a



government employee, but everyone can become a leader — in family, in community, in society, and in their own profession," he added. He further said that both the state government under chief minister Pema Khandu and the central government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi are working for all-round development, and appealed to all to contribute towards making the state and country self-sufficient. APBRDA Vice Chairman Techu Nisha, in his address, said that the Bamboo Technology Park near the Capital Complex would be highly beneficial for artisans and farmers of the state.

"Bamboo is an integral part of tribal life. From root to leaf, every part is useful. Our farmers should adopt bamboo farming commercially for large-scale production and marketing," he said.

APBRDA Managing Director Dr G Murtem said the park is now equipped with modern tools, plants, and machinery and has already started mandatory hands-on training for BSc (Forestry) students. "Infrastructure and technology are being steadily upgraded, and we are preparing for the formal inauguration of the park soon," he informed.

On the occasion, APBRDA officials led by the Chairman and Vice Chairman inspected the facilities, interacted with technical staff, and witnessed demonstrations of bamboo products including toys, household items, and furniture. The programme was attended by APBRDA MD Dr G Murtem, Course Director and Scientist RK Taj, Head of BSI, APBRDA officers, technical staff, and other officials.

AAPYO, BWS demand action on irregularities in NH-415 Package-B Project



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Sept 3: The All Arunachal Pradesh Youth Organization (AAPYO), in collaboration with the Bazar Welfare Society (BWS), Naharlagun, on Wednesday intensified demands for accountability in the construction of National Highway-415 (Package-B), alleging serious irregularities and misuse of sub-standard materials.

Addressing reporters at Tennis Court, IG Park, AAPYO president Kipa Kanam accused the contractor of compromising structural safety by using inferior construction materials.

"At least 18 piers built with sub-standard TMT bars and 13 girders made with 43-grade cement must be dismantled immediately. We also demand Ultrasonic Pulse Velocity (UPV)

tests on all piers to ascertain quality and ensure public safety," Kanam stated.

The organisations also expressed discontent over the prolonged delay of the project, claiming that incomplete work has caused significant losses to local traders in Naharlagun.

"Shops and business establishments have been suffering for years due to the stalled work. The government must provide adequate compensation to the affected traders," Kanam added.

To curb corruption in future projects, AAPYO and BWS urged the state government to adopt systemic reforms by introducing a Tripartite Integrity Pact for all projects above Rs 10 crore, in line with Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) guidelines.

They also demanded suspension of officials linked to NH-415 (Package-B), alleging negligence and irregularities in execution.

The NH-415 four-lane project, designed to decongest the Itanagar-Naharlagun stretch, has been plagued with controversies and delays since its inception.

While Package-A (Chandranagar to Papu Nallah) was completed after multiple extensions, Package-B (Papu Nallah to Nirjuli) continues to draw criticism over quality, transparency, and cost overruns.

Earlier this year, several traders' associations and civil society groups had also voiced concerns over the slow progress of the project, citing worsening traffic bottlenecks and mounting economic hardship in the capital region.

Community initiative strengthens healthcare infrastructure with new facility for laboratory services

Tangyom Tsogpa NGO hands over building to Khandro Drowa Sangmo District Hospital in Tawang

HT Correspondent

TAWANG, Sept 3: In a significant act of community service, the Tangyom Tsogpa NGO has formally handed over a building under its possession to the Khandro Drowa Sangmo (KDS) District Hospital in Tawang on Tuesday.

The official handing and taking over ceremony was held in the Conference Hall of the hospital on Tuesday, attended by senior officials, health professionals, and members of Tangyom Tsogpa.

The programme was graced by In-charge Additional Deputy Commissioner and Estate Officer, Tawang, Sangey Wangmu Mosobi; District Medical Officer Dr Thutan Lhamu; Medical Superintendent Dr Tenzin Kunga; District Reproductive and Child Health Officer Dr Rinchin Neema; President of Tangyom Tsogpa, Ngawang Norbu; along with other active members of the NGO, health officials, and paramedics.

Welcoming the gathering, Medical Superintendent Dr Tenzin Kunga expressed heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the medical fraternity and the people of Tawang for the NGO's compassionate gesture.

He said the building would have far-reaching benefits for public health services in the district.

Echoing this sentiment, Dr Rinchin Neema acknowledged the role of Tawang MLA in helping facilitate an amicable resolution of the matter, which had earlier faced delays due to communication gaps.

ADC and Estate Officer Sangey Wangmu Mosobi described the handover as a "historic and exem-



plary act" and urged other organisations to emulate the initiative by contributing assets for the good of society.

Speaking on behalf of Tangyom Tsogpa, President Ngawang Norbu shared the history of the building, explaining that it had earlier housed a pharmacy run by the NGO to provide medicines at discounted rates to the needy.

He added that proceeds from the pharmacy had supported various charitable activities. Praising the dedication of the medical fraternity, he urged health officials to continue working with compassion, calling them embodiments of the "Medicine Buddha."

District Medical Officer Dr Thutan Lhamu, in her address, thanked Tangyom Tsogpa for the generous contribution.

While noting that health workers are remunerated for their service, she emphasised that kindness and empathy remain vital for patient recovery.

She called upon the medical community to renew its dedication to the service of humanity and congratulated the people of Tawang for gaining a facility that would strengthen their hospital infrastructure.

The building, which will now function as the hospital's laboratory facility, will continue to retain its original name — Kundu Legpa Building.

It will stand as a symbol of collaboration between community organisations and the healthcare system, dedicated to improving healthcare services for the people of Tawang.

Heavy rain forecast for several districts from today

ITANAGAR, Sept 3: The India Meteorological Department has forecast heavy to widespread rainfall across the central and western districts of Arunachal Pradesh from Thursday.

According to the district-wise forecast released by the meteorological centre here, Thursday marks the beginning of a wet spell, with scattered to fairly widespread rainfall and thunderstorms expected in West Kameng, East Kameng, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Lower Siang, Siang, Lohit, Changlang, Longding and Tirap.

On Friday, the intensity of rainfall is expected to increase, with showers expected in several places, including Papum Pare, West Kameng, Lower Subansiri, East Kameng, Kamle and Kurung Kumey, it said. (PTI)

Sagalee ADC issues prohibitory order against stray animals

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Sept 3: The Sagalee Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) and Additional District Magistrate, Yame Higio, has issued a prohibitory order restricting the movement of stray animals in public places, citing inconvenience, health hazards, and risks of accidents.

The order (No. SGL/9JUD-13(PT)/2027, dated September 3, 2025) noted that stray domestic animals such as cows, goats, pigs, and mithuns were frequently seen loitering in market areas, school and office campuses, colony roads, and streets.

Their presence, it stated, not only obstructed free vehicular movement and caused accidents but also posed health risks to the public.

DEWA felicitates NEET 2025 Qualifiers in Lungla

HT Correspondent

LUNGLA, Sept 3: The Dhakpa Pangchen Employee Welfare Association (DEWA) on Wednesday, organised a felicitation ceremony at the Government Higher Secondary School, Lungla, to honour three meritorious students from the Dhakpa-Pangchen area who cleared the prestigious National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) 2025.

According to an official statement issued by DEWA, the event was aimed at celebrating the achievements of young aspirants from the region who have excelled in one of the toughest medical entrance examinations of the country.

The association expressed pride in their success and reaffirmed its continued support towards promoting education among the youth.

The achievers felicitated at the ceremony were Tashi Yangke, daughter of Dorjee Khandu from Ramyang village; Tenzin Choyang, daughter of Phuntso Dondup from Sakyu village; and Phuntso Tashi Gyamo, son of Dr Lobsang Tempa from Shoktsen village.

All three students were congratulated for their exceptional hard work, perseverance and determination, which have brought laurels to their families and the community.

The felicitation program witnessed the participation of students, senior members of DEWA, as well as representatives from Tawang Headquarters and Lungla.

The presence of a large gathering re-



flected the enthusiasm of the community in recognising and encouraging academic excellence.

Speaking on the occasion, DEWA Secretary General Kesang Dondup lauded the achievers and urged them to continue excelling in their future pursuits.

"This achievement is a source of pride for the Dhakpa-Pangchen area. We hope our young achievers inspire many more students

to strive for excellence," he said.

He further emphasised the importance of education in building a stronger society and highlighted the role of role models in motivating the next generation of learners.

DEWA reiterated its commitment to supporting educational advancement by encouraging initiatives that foster academic growth, skill development and holistic progress of the youth.

The association underlined that such recognitions not only boost the morale of students but also help strengthen the educational fabric of the region.

The ceremony concluded with a message of unity and encouragement, as the community collectively expressed hope that more students from the area would follow the path of dedication and success set by the NEET qualifiers.

Woman held for duping students on pretext of providing jobs

ITANAGAR, Sept 3: The Arunachal Pradesh Police on Wednesday arrested a woman for allegedly duping students by collecting money on the pretext of providing jobs.

Acting on a written complaint, a police team apprehended the accused from Naharlagun, SP Nyelam Nega said.

During investigation, the woman disclosed that she collected money ranging from Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000 from around 66 students, Nega said.

A case has been registered against her under Section 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the SP said, adding, the accused was produced before a local court.

Further investigation is underway. (PTI)

Mob vandalises police station after man found hanging in lock-up

ITANAGAR, Sept 3: A man detained for questioning in a rape case was found hanging in police lock-up in Arunachal Pradesh's West Siang district, following which local people stormed the Aalo women's police station and vandalised it, an officer said on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Nyummar Bagra (48), a resident of Higi Bagra village in the district and was found hanging in lock-up on Tuesday night. Bagra was detained by the Aalo women's police station for questioning in a rape case on Tuesday.

During initial interrogation, the victim claimed that he was innocent and that he was being framed. When contacted, West Siang Superintendent of Police Kardak Riba said an inquest and post-mortem have been performed, without divulging further details.

The incident has sparked outrage with family and well-wishers suspecting foul play in Bagra's death. Hundreds of people on Wednesday morning stormed the women's police station and vandalised it.

A police vehicle was also damaged by the mob. (PTI)

KHERA'S WIFE ALSO HAS 2 VOTER IDS: BJP

Rahul can't extricate himself from 'criminality' in his ranks, says Malviya

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The BJP on Wednesday alleged that Congress leader Pawan Khera's wife also has two active voter ID cards, and said party leader Rahul Gandhi cannot extricate himself from such "acts of criminality within his own ranks".

This comes a day after the ruling BJP alleged that Khera had two voter IDs and Gandhi was running a campaign against voter-roll revision in Bihar to "protect and hide" his party's theft of votes.

There was no immediate response from the Congress, Khera or his wife Kota Neelima, who is also a party leader in Telangana, to the BJP charge.

"Kota Neelima, another Congress leader, candidate from the Khairatabad (60) Assembly segment in Telangana, and wife of Pawan Khera, also holds two active EPICs (Electors Photo Identity Cards) - one registered in Khairatabad (Assembly constituency in Telangana) and another in New Delhi," BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said on X.

"It is now quite obvious that Congress leaders hold multiple EPIC numbers and are registered voters in more than one place. This is no coincidence.

"Those indulging in 'Vote Chori'



are the very ones maligning common citizens for exercising their democratic rights and weakening our institutions," he charged.

Gandhi cannot "extricate" himself from "these acts of criminality" within his own ranks, particularly involving people aspiring for public

office and members of his "inner coterie", the BJP leader said, and demanded a response from the Congress leader, who is also the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Malviya also demanded that the Election Commission launch a probe into the matter.

Attacking Gandhi over Khera and his wife allegedly possessing two voter ID cards, BJP national spokesperson Shazia Ilmi said the Congress, which calls itself a 'mohabbat ki dukan', is actually running "farziwada aur fareb ka bazaar" (a market of fraud and de-

ceit). "While the Congress' CWC member and media head Pawan Khera has two EPICs, it turns out that his wife Kota Neelam, who was the party's candidate for the Khairatabad Assembly seat in Telangana in 2023 state polls, also possesses two EPICs," Ilmi said during a press conference at the BJP headquarters.

The Congress has once again proved it has nothing to do with democracy, she charged, slamming Gandhi for his "silence" on the issue. "It is only interested in vote fraud and deceit," she said and demanded a high-level probe by the Election Commission into Khera and his wife allegedly possessing two voter ID cards.

Ilmi alleged the Congress, which is making "baseless allegations of vote chori" and insulting the common people of the country, is "known for (indulging in) vote dacoity." "The entire country knows how this vote dacoity used to happen in Kashmir and Bihar before the EVMS came. In 1980, Sonia Gandhi got her name added in the voter list even though she was an Italian citizen then," she said.

The BJP has launched a counter-attack on the Congress after Gandhi asserted on Monday his party will

soon come out with a "hydrogen bomb" of revelations about "vote chori" and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not be able to "show his face" to the country afterwards.

Gandhi made the remarks at the concluding event of his 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar, days after he claimed that an analysis of the voter data pertaining to a Lok Sabha constituency in Karnataka showed that elections were "rigged" by the poll panel allegedly at the behest of the BJP to help the saffron party "steal" votes and win the seat in the 2024 general elections.

Slamming the Congress leader over his 'vote chori' charge, Malviya said, "Rahul Gandhi held a press conference and, without adequate due diligence, targeted and tarnished honest voters - even putting them at risk by revealing their identities without consent.

"He doxxed young, upwardly mobile professionals and poor daily wagers who had moved cities in search of better opportunities."

Malviya alleged that the "rot" wasn't limited to "Khera and family". "It goes back to the top - when Sonia Gandhi, an Italian, managed to get her name included in the voter list in 1980," he said. (PTI)

BSF launches drone warfare school to train troops for future battles

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The BSF, which guards India's borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh, is training special units of "drone commandos" and "drone warriors" for modern warfare involving remote-controlled aerial platforms, with plans to deploy them in missions such as Operation Sindoor.

A 'School of Drone Warfare' was inaugurated by Border Security Force (BSF) director general Daljit Singh Chaudhary at the officers' training academy of the force in Tezpur, Madhya Pradesh, on Tuesday.

PTI had reported in July that the about 2.65 lakh personnel strong force was raising its maiden "drone squadron" following the lessons learnt after Operation Sindoor.

"The School of Drone Warfare will provide special training to the border guarding troops of the force in combating modern strategic challenges," a force spokesperson said.

"The institute will prepare drone commandos and drone warriors through five special courses that include unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations, anti-drone warfare and surveillance and intelligence gathering," he said.

The school has simulators and live drone flying zones, facilities for payload integration in the UAVs and night operations, tools for radio frequency (RF) jammers and kinetic interceptors, apart from linked hardware and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools.

The BSF DG, after the inauguration of the school, addressed the trainee officers and spoke about the ongoing three-year-long Russia-Ukraine war, where drones have played an important role apart from some other battles and the strategic takeaways from Operation Sindoor conducted by India against Pakistan in response to the Pahalgaon terrorist attack, a senior officer said.

Chaudhary also spoke about the role of AI and machine learning (ML) in combat, proactive and weaponised drone use for decisive outcomes, the importance of FPV (first person view related to remote piloting of kamikaze drones) and strategic changes in national policies, the official said.

Eighteen BSF troops, during the Independence Day in August, were awarded gallantry medals for displaying "conspicuous bravery" and "unmatched valour" during Operation Sindoor.

These included two personnel who were decorated with the military-issued Vir Chakra posthumously.

The force also tackles Chinese-made Pakistani drones that smuggle drugs, weapons and ammunition into India from across the international border on the country's western side every day.

The BSF is tasked with guarding the 2,290-km India-Pakistan International Border (IB) apart from the Line of Control (LoC) under the Army's operational command, and the 4,096-km front with Bangladesh on the eastern side. (PTI)

Jarange expresses confidence about Marathas getting quota; OBC leaders unhappy

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, Sept 3: Activist Manoj Jarange on Wednesday said the Maratha community in Maharashtra and western Maharashtra will now get reservation, even as OBC leaders expressed unhappiness over the government's decision and warned of agitation.

Maharashtra minister Chhagan Bhujbal, who is a prominent leader from the Other Backward Classes (OBC), skipped the state cabinet meeting, indicating all was not well.

"We have scored a victory, and the credit goes to the Maratha community. Maratha people from Maharashtra and western Maharashtra will now get quota," Jarange told reporters from a hospital in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, appealing to his supporters to maintain calm and have faith in his decision.

The 43-year-old activist, who returned from Mumbai after ending his hunger strike, is receiving medical care in a private hospital here for dehydration and low blood sugar.

"Not a single line had been written by the state government in our favour till now. People should not believe in the 'joker-type' individuals (who have criticised his move). Those speaking against the decision have done nothing for the Maratha community," Jarange said.

The Bombay High Court, however, sought a response from the activist to allegations made in petitions opposing his five-day agitation, noting that large scale damage was caused to property in Mumbai. Civic personnel worked through the night to remove heaps of garbage, food items and mineral

water bottles left behind on roads and Azad Maidan in south Mumbai after Jarange ended his fast.

More than 125 metric tonnes of garbage was lifted from Azad Maidan and surrounding areas during the five-day-long Maratha quota agitation, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday said the government found a solution in the interest of the Maratha community.

Jarange called off the protest after the government accepted most of his demands, including granting eligible Marathas Kunbi caste certificates, which will make them eligible for reservation benefits available to the OBCs.

The government has announced forming a committee to issue

Kunbi caste certificates to Maratha community members with historical evidence of their Kunbi heritage, a social group classified as an OBC in the state.

The Kunbi is a traditional farming community in the state and they have been included in the list of OBC category in Maharashtra in order to make them eligible for government reservations in jobs and education.

The government resolution (GR) issued by the social justice and special assistance department also mentioned about implementing the Hyderabad gazetteer.

Jarange said members of his community will eventually understand his decision to call off the agitation.

"No Maratha in the Maharashtra region will be left out of quota," he said, adding village-level committees will be made to help Marathas establish their Kunbi lineage. (PTI)



SCHOOLS, COLLEGES TO REMAIN SHUT TILL SEPT 7

Fresh rains spell trouble in Punjab

CHANDIGARH, Sept 3: A fresh spell of heavy rains compounded the flood situation in Punjab, which is battling its worst deluge since 1988, as all 23 districts of the state have been hit and 30 lives lost so far.

Rescue and relief operations are underway on a war footing as help poured in from several quarters for over 3.50 lakh people desperately looking for succour.

Following heavy rains, an alert has been sounded in Rupnagar and Patiala districts, urging people to remain vigilant, while all schools, colleges and universities have been closed till September 7. With rains refusing to relent in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, the already swollen Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers originating in the Himalayas and seasonal rivulets inundated towns, villages and agricultural lands, upending normal life.

Rains in Punjab have aggravated the flood situation.

The water level in the Bhakra dam at 6 am was 1,677.84 feet, against its maximum capacity of 1,680 feet. The inflow in the dam



was 86,822 cusecs while the out-flow was 65,042 cusecs.

In view of heavy rains in Himachal Pradesh, the water discharge from the dam was being increased from 65,000 cusecs to 75,000 cusecs, officials said and warned that Nangal's villages may be inundated.

Rupnagar district administration asked people living near the Sutlej river to stay on alert in the wake of an increase in the discharge of water from the Bhakra dam. AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal will visit the flood-affected areas

along with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday.

He will take stock of the relief work being carried out in the state and interact with the affected people, said the party.

Manish Sisodia visited the flood-hit areas in Tarn Taran district while AAP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha announced providing ₹ 3.25 crore from his Local Area Development Scheme fund for relief work.

Relief and rescue operations by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Army, Border Se-

curity Force, Punjab Police and district authorities are underway in the affected areas, officials said. Punjab Cabinet Minister Harjot Bains appealed to Sri Anandpur Sahib residents living on riverbanks and low-lying areas to shift to safer places or relief camps. He assured them that all arrangements have been made for them, and the Punjab government stands firmly with them in this time of crisis.

Meanwhile, the Patiala district administration also issued an alert for villages near the Ghaggar river in the Rajpura sub-division in the wake of heavy rains in the catchment areas.

According to officials, the water level of the Tangri river has risen close to the danger mark in Ambala and is expected to rise in Patiala following heavy rains in Ambala and Kala Amb.

In Mohali district, Khudda Lahora-Nada Road across Patiala Ki Rao in Nayagaon has been damaged by the deluge. Deputy commissioner Komal Mittal, along with Anandpur Sahib MP Malvinder Singh, supervised the repair of the damaged portion. (PTI)

Torrential rains across J-K; two killed in house collapse, major roads closed

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, Sept 3: Heavy rains across Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday left a woman and her daughter dead while 40 persons were trapped in a flooded village in Akhnoor, officials said.

In Anantnag district, police rescued 25 nomadic families stranded under a bridge due to rise in the water level following heavy rains. The rains led to increase in the water level in rivers, streams and rivulets which are already flowing close or above danger mark, while major roads, including all-weather Srinagar-Jammu national highway, remained closed for the second day owing to multiple landslides and

landslips between Udhampur and Banihal, they said.

Educational institutions in the valley and Jammu region remained closed in view of the inclement weather.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reviewed the situation arising from the incessant rains at a meeting, the CM's office said in a post on X. Abdullah directed the administration to intensify the ground response, ensure clearance of waterlogged areas, safeguard essential services, carry out timely evacuations in critical zones, and provide immediate relief.

Officials said the incessant rains claimed the life of a mother-daugh-

ter in Kangri village of Sunderbani in Rajouri district early Wednesday. The two died after the roof of their house collapsed.

At least 40 persons were trapped in Garkhal village of Akhnoor due to overflowing of river Chenab which was flowing four feet above the evacuation level of 42 feet this morning, the officials said, adding State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and police teams have been rushed to the village for shifting them to safety. Heavy rains over the past 24 hours have resulted in flooding of many areas in south Kashmir, including Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam.

"Anantnag Police carried out a

swift rescue operation at Aang Anzwalla, safely evacuating 25 nomadic families stranded due to a sudden rise in Lidder Nalla," a spokesman of Anantnag district police said in a post on X.

He said immediate relief was provided to the evacuated families. In neighbouring Kulgam district, five nomadic families were rescued by police from Brazloo village after the water level rose in the Vaishov Nalla on Tuesday night, officials said.

Emergency helplines have been established in various police station areas of south Kashmir where the water level is rising significantly in the water bodies. (PTI)

Kerala doctors treat world's first dual case of amoebic meningitis, fungal infection

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Sept 3: Kerala's health sector has achieved a rare feat by successfully treating a 17-year-old boy who was simultaneously infected with amoebic meningitis and Aspergillus flavus, Health Minister Veena George said on Wednesday.

She said this was the first known case in the world where a patient with both infections had been treated successfully and made a full recovery.

"The boy was under treatment at Alappuzha Medical College Hospital for three weeks and was then shifted to Thiruvananthapuram Medical College. The neurosurgery team conducted surgeries on the patient, and he has now completely recovered after three months of treatment," George told reporters. The microbiology lab at Alappuzha identified the disease-causing amoeba and fungus from the patient's spinal fluid, following which treatment was initiated in line with government guidelines, she said.

An MRI scan showed pus in the brain, and the patient was shifted to Thiruvananthapuram, where a neurosurgery team operated. As his condition worsened, a second surgery was performed, after which the boy began to recover.

"We also used five drugs for the treatment as both infections are fatal. We reviewed the patient three weeks after discharge, and he is perfectly normal now," said Dr Aravind, Associate Professor, Department of Infectious Diseases, Thiruvananthapuram Medical College. George said that while several cases of patients with both amoebic meningitis and Aspergillus flavus infections had been reported worldwide, none had survived. "This is the first time such a patient has been brought back to life. I would like to congratulate the medical teams in both Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram medical colleges for this achievement," she added.

She credited treatment guidelines



formulated by the government three years ago for helping save the boy's life.

"Such cases—either amoebic meningitis or Aspergillus flavus infections—carry around 99 per cent mortality worldwide. In Kerala, in the past two years, 86 cases of amoebic meningitis have been reported, with 21 deaths. This is a mortality rate of around 23 to 24 per cent," the minister said.

On whether such infections were rising in Kerala, she said: "The answer is that we have been able to identify the cases early. In post-mortem studies of meningitis deaths where the cause of infection was not identified earlier, about 11 per cent were due to amoeba."

She said Kerala has responded effectively to such cases, undertaking preventive measures with the help of other departments and local

bodies, including chlorination of wells. The health department has also issued advisories and run awareness campaigns on preventing amoebic infections.

"At present, two districts—Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode—have active amoebic meningitis cases, with 11 each. All microbiology labs in medical colleges are now equipped to detect the infection. We have also developed the capacity to carry out PCR tests to identify the type of amoeba, and this facility is now available at our Public Health Lab," George said.

The extremely lethal central nervous system infection, amoebic meningitis, is caused by free-living amoebae. This deadly infection is typically contracted from freshwater sources such as lakes, rivers, and streams.

Aspergillus infection is an illness caused by a common fungus called Aspergillus, which is commonly found in the environment. (PTI)

Suspended BRS leader Kavitha announces resignation from party, MLC post

HYDERABAD, Sept 3: A day after her suspension from KCR-led BRS, senior leader K Kavitha on Wednesday announced her resignation from the party and trained her guns against cousin and former minister T Harish Rao. Kavitha, daughter of party founder and former Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu (KCR), also announced quitting as Member of the Legislative Council and indicated there was "pressure" on her father to act against her.

She accused Harish Rao of "conspiring" against the KCR family. Addressing a press conference here, the 47-year-old former MP charged Harish Rao with having a "tacit understanding" with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. "I never aspired for any posts. I am sending a resignation letter to (Legislative Council) chairman... I am also sending the resignation from primary membership of BRS to KCR," she said.

Kavitha said her brother and BRS Working President K T Rama Rao should be "careful" about the alleged conspiracies by Harish Rao.

She claimed that her brother did not back her when a "malicious campaign" was launched against her. In the 2018 assembly elections, Harish Rao gave additional funding to 20-25 MLAs in addition to the funding provided by party, she alleged. "How did Harish Rao get so much money? 100 per cent, it was money that came from the corruption in the Kaleshwaram project. His idea was that he should have his MLAs if the result is not clear," Kavitha said.

Drawing an analogy from the popular film 'Bahubali', she said Harish Rao claims to be like 'Katappa' and loyal to KCR, but why should he provide separate funding to the MLAs. She further alleged that Harish Rao sent money to defeat K T Rama Rao in Siricilla constituency in the 2009 assembly polls.

"(Intentions) are to defeat KCR, KTR and to manage all MLAs in my Nizamabad MP segment (where she lost in Lok Sabha polls). It (intention) is to defeat all and divide all in KCR family." (PTI)

Ruling party says zero tolerance for crime after Tipra Motha MLA alleges threats at MLA Hostel

Law will take its course: BJP on Telangana Guv's son allegedly threatening Tripura MLA

AGARTALA, Sept 3: The ruling BJP in Tripura on Wednesday said the law will take its course after Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma's son Pathik allegedly threatened Tipra Motha Party legislator Philip Kumar Reang at the MLA Hostel in Agartala.



Pathik was among the four youths who allegedly threatened Reang on Monday night. They were granted bail after surrendering before the New Capital Complex police station on Tuesday night.

Speaking to reporters, state BJP president Rajib Bhattacharjee said, "Soon after the incident, necessary steps were taken. DGP Anurag Dhanekar, West Tripura's SP Namit Pathak and Deputy Speaker Ramprasad Paul visited the MLA Hostel in Khejur Bagan and spoke to the legislator."

Asserting that the police will take appropriate action against those who are trying to disrupt the

law and order situation, he said the BJP doesn't promote or support such acts.

"The law will take its own course in the incident to ensure justice because the government has zero tolerance for any kind of

crime," he said.

In his police complaint, Reang claimed he was engaged in a discussion with his family when some persons, including Pathik Dev Varma, started interfering. He alleged that when he asked

them to leave, "they became more aggressive and started uttering violent, abusive words targeting me, threatening to slit my throat".

"They said that they would bring 400 to 500 BJP workers to kill me and my family members," alleged the legislator.

Meanwhile, Bhattacharjee said the law and order situation was fine, and the large turnout during Ganesh Puja showed that people were confident about their safety.

State Congress president Asish Kumar Saha alleged that the situation in the state was such that even the MLA Hostel was not safe.

"The state government must secure the MLA Hostel and ensure the arrest of all the accused persons," he said.

Jishnu Dev Varma, a senior BJP leader, was the deputy chief minister of Tripura. He became the governor of Telangana in July last year. (PTI)

Manipur BJP lodges police complaints over 'abusive language' hurled against PM, Shah

IMPHAL, Sept 3: The BJP's Manipur unit on Tuesday said the party lodged a police complaint over alleged "abusive language" used against Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Congress' Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar last week.

The saffron party's state unit also filed a separate complaint against TMC MP Mahua Moitra for her alleged derogatory comment on Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Addressing a press conference, Manipur BJP general secretary K Saratkumar said, "We have lodged a complaint against a leader who abused the deceased mother of the Prime Minister, who had no relations with politics. Such a remark against the mother of a country's prime minister is unheard of in any civilised country."

A purported video showed a person using a Hindi expletive against Modi's mother from a dais raised during the yatra in Darbhanga town, from where Rahul Gandhi, her sister Priyanka Vadra and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav had left for Muzaffarpur on motorcycles on August 27. The accused was arrested two days later.

Saratkumar said the party has also filed a police complaint against the TMC's Krishnanagar MP. "Mittra's statements against a country's home minister are condemnable and uncalled for. It has



the potential to trigger violence anywhere in the country. We have lodged an FIR against her for her remarks," he said.

Moitra recently sparked a political firestorm after allegedly saying that if Amit Shah fails to stop infiltration from Bangladesh, "the first thing you should do is cut Amit Shah's head and put it on your table."

Saratkumar also said a separate complaint was lodged against the state Congress' OBC department chairperson, Sakir Ahmed, for a social media post in which he allegedly said the BJP-RSS is trying to create communal riots between Meiteis and Muslims in the state as the election is nearing.

"We strongly condemn such statements from the Congress. We

are more eager than the Congress to form a government (in the state)," the BJP leader said.

The Centre has imposed President's Rule in Manipur after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned in February. At least 260 people have been killed and thousands have become homeless in ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities since May 2023 in the state.

"The Congress does not want a solution to the conflict in the state. They want chaos and unrest to continue and get into the elections," Saratkumar alleged.

To a query on media reports over the Prime Minister's visit to Manipur, he said, "We are yet to receive any official directive on that." (PTI)

NSF opposes contractual health workers' regularisation without due process

DIMAPUR, Sept 3: The Naga Students' Federation (NSF) on Wednesday raised strong objection to the Nagaland health and family welfare department's August 18 notification, which seeks to regularise 280 contractual workers appointed during the COVID-19 pandemic through a mere departmental screening process.

These contractual workers included 98 medical officers/junior specialists and other health workers. In a letter to the chief secretary, the NSF demanded immediate revocation of the notification no. HFW(A)/10/34/2024/145 dated August 28, 2025, and requisition of all 280 posts to the Nagaland Public Service Commission (NPSC) and Nagaland Staff Selection Board (NSSB) for recruitment through open competitive examinations.

The student body also called for implementation of special provisions such as grace marks and one-time age relaxation for COVID-19 appointees, as earlier recommended by it.

The NSF reiterated that any attempt to bypass due process will be met with strong democratic resistance.

It urged the chief secretary's office to intervene and ensure that the health and family welfare department adheres to the legal framework of recruitment without further delay.

In the letter, the NSF recalled its earlier representation dated September 4, 2024, categorically opposing any form of regularisation outside the purview of the NPSC and the NSSB.

"Despite our firm stance and recommendations, the department has gone against the same and issued the present notification in blatant disregard of established recruitment rules and procedures," it stated.

Tripura sets target to generate 150 MW solar power in next two years

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Sept 3: In the last seven years since 2018, the Tripura Power Department has generated 29 megawatts of power using solar energy and has decided that all government offices will be covered under solar power.

This was informed by Tripura Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath on Wednesday after inaugurating a 132 kV substation at Manu in Dhalai District.

The Minister said that people may belong to various political parties but development must be for everyone.

He added that without power people cannot live, and if the demand for power is increasing, it signifies that the state is developing.

The Minister informed that before 2018 there were 7.21 lakh consumers, and now the number has increased to 10.38 lakh.

"Demand is increasing. Earlier, there were 12 substations of 132 kV and now there are 20, with work for two more underway. The 132 kV line was 485 km long before 2018, and now it is 986 km. There were 44 substations of 33 kV earlier, and now there are 75, with work for 18 more underway. Underground cable length was 95 km and now 571 km has been laid. Power is very essential for everyone," said the Power Minister.

He further informed that due to the inauguration of the 132 kV substation, areas like Manu, Chailengta, SK Para, Dhumachara, Machli, 82 Miles, Nepal Tilla, Chamanu, Bagchara Manikpur, Thaalchara, etc., around 21,554 families will be benefited.

He also said the public should inform TSECL about new electronic items they are using in their locality so that power is not disrupted and transformer capacity can be increased.

"Power is generally generated from air, coal, water, gas, and the sun. In our state, power is mostly generated from gas; however, it will slowly finish in the coming days. In Rukhia, 63 MW was supposed to be generated, but due to less gas, it is generating 19 MW. In Palatana, Ramchandra Nagar, and everywhere, the same situation persists. Now we have to depend on solar power. PM Modi said if we have to live, then we have to use solar power. Before 2018, only 3 MW power was generated from solar, but after our government was formed, we have generated 29 MW in the last seven years. We have set a target to install solar plates in 50,000 houses and for 10 lakh consumers in the next two years so that we can generate 150 MW," said the Minister.

He informed that all government offices will be covered under solar power and work will start in the next two months.

PAC backs 'Ungama Statement' on Naga issue

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Sept 3: The Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of Nagaland, at a meeting in Kohima, unanimously resolved to endorse the Ungama Statement of August 23, which upholds the unity, courage, and enduring pursuit of a shared future for the Naga people, an official statement said on Wednesday.

The meeting, held under the chairmanship of chief minister Neiphiu Rio on September 1, was attended by deputy chief ministers TR Zeliang and Y Patton, other ministers, members of parliament, advisers, and MLAs.

Representatives of 16 Naga Political Groups (NPGs), 14 tribal hohos (bodies) from all Naga areas and the Forum for Naga Reconciliation met at Ungama village in Mokkokchung district on August 23 and resolved to converge at a common ground to articulate and pursue a shared political vision based on the Naga people's historical and political rights.

The PAC further expressed its support for the call that all NPGs, with the clear and collective support of the tribe hohos, to converge at a common ground to pursue a shared political vision. The committee resolved that the peace talks be resumed at the political level in order to expedite the negotiation process. It also reiterated the resolutions adopted during the Consultative meeting held on September 12, 2024, in Kohima, with the participation of all stakeholders, including tribal hohos, representatives of civil society, mass-based organisations, church bodies, NGOs, gazetted officers' unions, student bodies, and political parties.

The committee appreciated the negotiating parties - the Government of India and the NPGs - of the ongoing Indo-Naga political dialogue for continuing to uphold the principles of the ceasefire agreements and ensuring that there is no breakdown of the talks despite facing several challenges and hurdles in the past two decades.

Zomi Council opposes reopening on NH-2 without action against extortionists

CHURACHANDPUR, Sept 3: The Zomi Council, a tribal outfit, said the NH-2 should not be reopened till extortion rackets operating along the highway are dismantled.

It alleged any decision to reopen the Dimapur-Imphal section of NH-2 is solely to serve the Meitei community, while the people of Churachandpur "continue to suffer shortages and hunger".

The NH-2 is considered the lifeline of Manipur, and since the ethnic clashes broke out in the state in May 2023, access to the highway has been used by both communities to cut off supplies for the other side.

While people of other communities can travel between Imphal and Dimapur, Meiteis cannot, as the highway passes through the Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district. Kukis living in Churachandpur cannot travel to Imphal as Meiteis live there. Additionally, the trucks operating on the highway are protected by heavy security to prevent any untoward incidents.

The government has been working to make the highway accessible for people of both communities as part of its efforts to bring back peace in the state, where over 260 people have been killed and thousands left homeless.

Cong accuses BJP of 'manipulating' EC

AIZAWL, Sept 3: Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) on Wednesday accused the BJP-led NDA government of "manipulating" the Election Commission of India.

Speaking to reporters at a press conference here, state Congress treasurer Lalmsalsama Nghaka alleged that over 1 lakh voter irregularities or 'vote chori' unearthed recently by Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi have exposed "serious discrepancies" in the electoral process in the country under the BJP regime.

He claimed that Gandhi also "uncovered irregularities" in Maharashtra assembly polls held in November last year. He also claimed that the total voters in that state "increased" by over 50 lakh in the assembly polls in just a six-month gap from the Lok Sabha polls, raising suspicion.

Nghaka alleged that even though Congress has requested polling booth CCTV footage and voters' enrollment digital data of the recent elections, the Election Commission refused to provide them, making lame excuses.

The Congress leader alleged that there was a discrepancy in the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, as the BJP government appointed him by "violating" the existing norms.

"Opposition parties firmly believe that the Election Commission is being controlled and manipulated by the BJP government due to several discrepancies in the electoral process these days," Nghaka said. (PTI)

Tripura BJP prepared for upcoming District Council polls: CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Sept 3: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Wednesday said that the Pradesh BJP is fully prepared for the upcoming Village Council and Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAAD) elections.

Saha said this while chairing an organisational meeting of the BJP Janajati Morcha at the Pradesh BJP office today. He said that a special organisational meeting had been arranged with the Janajati Morcha leaders of BJP Tripura Pradesh.

"The main aim is to discuss the problems faced by the Janajati community and to explore how our party and the government can jointly work to resolve these issues in the coming days, sending a strong message to all Janajatis in the state. We have been planning this meeting for several days, and today we finally decided to hold it," said Saha.

Saha further stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always emphasised the importance of the development of the Janajati community, which was not adequately addressed in the past.

"But since 2014, when PM Modi assumed office, many initiatives have been undertaken for the welfare of the Janajatis. Following his vision, the Tripura government is also working tirelessly. We want to reach every corner of the Janajati society and ensure their development," he added.

He also highlighted the upcoming elections, saying, "Whether it is the Village Council or TTAADC polls, we are fully prepared. However, this meeting is not being held in the context of elections. Its primary focus is on serving the people and addressing their issues."

Dr Bibhab Talukdar urges Shillong students to focus on northeast's biodiversity

Conservation scientist highlights research avenues, training, and volunteering opportunities for youth in Northeast India

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 3: Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak, interacted with college students in Shillong on September 2, encouraging them to actively engage in conservation and research to safeguard the unique biodiversity of Northeast India.



According to an official communication from Aaranyak, the eminent conservation scientist was invited as a resource person at programmes hosted by St Edmund's College and Shillong College.

The Department of Zoology of St. Edmund's College, in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the institution, organised an awareness programme titled "Wildlife Conservation: A Shared Responsibility" in the forenoon of September 2.

More than 200 students and faculty members participated in the event.

In his address, Dr Talukdar underlined the ecological sig-

nificance of Northeast India as a biodiversity-rich region of global importance.

He highlighted the multiple avenues available for students to contribute to conservation, not only through academic research but also by directly engaging in grassroots conservation initiatives that require expertise from a variety of disciplines. He urged students to take advantage of opportunities offered by Aaranyak, including internships and volunteering programmes, to work collectively for biodiversity conservation. Dr Talukdar also stressed

the need for collaborative training programmes that enhance student capacities, both in biodiversity conservation and in promoting human well-being.

He noted that such skill-building initiatives could prepare students to take up leadership roles in conservation science and practice.

The Principal-in-charge of St. Edmund's College, Br Sunil Britto, attended the programme and felicitated Dr Talukdar before his lecture.

On the same afternoon, Dr Talukdar delivered another invited talk at Shillong College

on the theme "Research Opportunities in the Field of Bioresource Conservation in Northeast India."

Addressing students of Zoology, he spoke at length about the wide scope of research in the region and encouraged them to dedicate time to learning from nature.

He once again reiterated Aaranyak's role in providing internships and collaborative training platforms for aspiring conservationists.

Faculty members of both colleges expressed keen interest in forging partnerships with Aaranyak to facilitate skill development initiatives.

They underlined the importance of creating a pool of conservation-minded and research-oriented students who could contribute to both academic progress and practical conservation in Northeast India.

The day-long interactions reflected Aaranyak's consistent efforts to connect with young people and inspire them to become stakeholders in the conservation of the region's natural heritage.

No. AAP/State Award/1/2024/136				
NOTICE				
On recommendation of the State Level Selection Committee and as per the Govt. approval accorded in the file No.E-696746, dtd. 29-08-2025, the following Teachers have been selected for "State Award to Teachers, 2025" for their commendable contribution in the field of Education.				
SL NO	DISTRICT	NAME OF CANDIDATE	NAME OF SCHOOL	CATEGORY OF SCHOOL
1	DIBRUGARH	NGI YOT WEINGKEN	TAIPHAKH HIGH M.P SCHOOL	SECONDARY
2	DIBRUGARH	LILADHAR UPADHYAY	RASHTRA BHASHAVIDYALAYA HES, DULIAJAN	SECONDARY
3	TINSUKIA	RANJIT BIKASH CHETIA	G.B.CHOWKHANI'S SCHOOL	SECONDARY
4	DIBRUGARH	SWAPNALI GOGOI	MORAN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL	SECONDARY
5	LAKHIMPUR	BHRIGU PROSAD SARMAH	PANIGAON HS SCHOOL	SECONDARY
6	JORHAT	RAJESH BORDOLOI	ADARSHA TRIBAL HS SCHOOL	SECONDARY
7	LAKHIMPUR	DAMBARU DHAR NEWAR	PM SHRI TARIANI BORBIL HS	SECONDARY
8	HAILAKANDI	SUFIAN SIDDIQUEE	PM SHRI JAMIRA HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY
9	DIBRUGARH	NIJU RAVA	PUB ZALONI L.P SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY
10	DIBRUGARH	GUNINDRA GOHAIN	DANGARCHUK L.P. SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY
11	KAMRUP	URBASHI DAS	10 NO. MAZIRGAON KRM LP SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY
12	GOLAGHAT	NOBIN CHANDRA DAS	1 NO. PARANGONIA JYOTI LP SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY
13	GOLAGHAT	NANDITA RAJPUT	SILBHETA LP SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY
14	JORHAT	ANIL CHANDRA HAZARIKA	295 NO. KUHUMJOGANIA LP SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY
15	JORHAT	DIPIKA SABHAPANDIT	BALIGOAN MV SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY

All the above mentioned Teachers are requested to report at Kalaguru Bishnuprasad Rabha Auditorium, Tezpur University, Sonitpur on 5th September, 2025 at 9:00 A.M. positively.

Sd/-
Director,
Secondary Education, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

DIPR /D/HLT/147/4-Sep-25

Shah Rukh Khan, Karan Johar, Alia Bhatt and others stand with flood-hit Punjab

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Shah Rukh Khan, Karan Johar, Alia Bhatt and Randeep Hooda have extended their support to the people of flood-hit Punjab, urging fans, followers and others to join relief efforts.

Punjab is witnessing one of the worst floods in decades, caused by the swollen Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers and seasonal rivulets due to heavy rain in their catchment areas in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. Many places have been affected by the floods, causing huge devastation in the state.

The deluge has claimed 30 lives and affected more than 3.5 lakh people, as per a bulletin issued by the state authorities on the situation from August 1 to September 2.

In a post on X, Shah Rukh said he was sending prayers and strength to the people of Punjab.

"My heart goes out to those in Punjab impacted by these devastating floods. Sending prayers and strength... The spirit of Punjab shall never break... may God bless them all," the 59-year-old actor wrote in the post.

"It's been a tough time for our friends & family in Punjab with the brutality of the floods. Sending my prayers and strength to overcome this adversity. Please do your part in any way possible and share only verified information," Johar shared in his Instagram stories.

Bhatt said her heart goes out to everyone affected by the floods in Punjab. "Sending love, strength, and prayers to all those impacted, and gratitude to the people working tirelessly on ground to help every family find the support they need to heal and rebuild," she added.

Hooda, who is helping people on ground in Gurdaspur district, said, "The water had come down and has gone up again today... The damage is heartbreaking. I am here to help on ground, to create more awareness," he said, adding that he has been helping out through the organisation Global Sikhs.

The actor said while there is a lot of help on ground more is needed and the real work will begin once the water level goes down as many have lost houses, crops and livestock.

Sonu Sood shared a video on his X handle on Wednesday, assuring people in need can reach out to the actor and he will do his best to provide the support.

"I stand with Punjab. Anyone affected by these devastating floods is not alone. Together, we will help every single person get back on their feet. If you need any kind of help, please don't hesitate to message - we will do our best to reach out and support you in any way we can. Punjab is my soul. Even if it takes everything, I will not back down. We are Punjabis - and we do not give up," he said.

Many stars from Punjab have already extended help and support to flood affected people. Diljit Dosanjh has adopted ten of the worst hit villages in Gurdaspur and Amritsar, promising to rehabilitate people.

Other prominent names that had joined in relief measures earlier include actor Gippy Grewal, singers Karan Aujla, Ranjit Bawa, Inderjit Nikku and Sunanda Sharma. Singers Satinder Sartaj and Jasbir Jassi, Ammy Virk have also lent support. Virk and his team have adopted 200 villages. (PTI)

'HUMANS IN THE LOOP' INQUIRES AI BIAS THROUGH EYES OF A TRIBAL GIG WORKER: FILMMAKER ARANYA SAHAY

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: "If AI is going to have an impact on all of humanity, does it represent all of us?" is the question that filmmaker Aranya Sahay wanted to explore in his film "Humans in the Loop", which questions hierarchy in knowledge systems through the eyes of a tribal gig worker.

Set in Jharkhand, the story revolves around Nehma, a tribal woman who finds work at an AI data-labelling centre after her divorce. Initially enthusiastic about her job, Nehma soon finds herself at odds with the data she is given to feed the machine. The film also explores Nehma's strained relationship with her teenage daughter, who longs to go back to the city.

Sahay, who studied political science and history at St Stephen's College and followed it up with a direction course at FTII, said the basic idea of the film came from a news article about Adivasi women interacting with AI in Jharkhand but it soon became an inquiry into how artificial intelligence is "primarily being trained on first-world data".

"As data labellers work with images, they go through thousands of photos and videos to tag objects in a photo. And then the algorithm begins to understand the basic difference between a chair-table, traffic lights and other such objects. It's similar to the act of parenting. As our children are growing up, we teach them the difference between colors, objects, things," Sahay told PTI in an interview.

"And then we force our morality onto our children. So, this opens the film to a much larger conversation: 'If AI is going to have an impact on all of humanity, does it represent all of us or does it only represent a rather Eurocentric worldview?'"

"Humans in the Loop" has travelled around film festivals like MAMI, Cinevesture and won the FIPRESCI India award. "Laapataa Ladies" helmer Kiran Rao and filmmaker Biju Toppo have boarded the film as executive producers. It will next screen at the Jagran Film Festival in Delhi. The film is releasing in select theatres on September 5. The filmmaker said he travelled to Jharkhand and spent almost a year there. The place really informed his theme and the issues he wanted to tackle in the film. "As I was researching and travelling, I would see these old colonial structures pop up. There are single-gauge trains, arches, etc. Almost 300 years ago, there were colonists who came to these parts

and deemed indigenous and tribal ways of life as primitive and tribals as savages.

"That could happen again if we had an AI which was primarily trained on first-world data. So that became the foundation of the film. And it became something more than just a revelation that this work is happening in Jharkhand," he said.

Asked whether he realised that his film was tackling AI at a time when there is a lot of anxiety about its impact on the future, Sahay said he ensured that whatever he was showing in the film was happening in real-time.

"I didn't want to keep the form of the film futuristic because whatever is happening is happening now. So even the data labeling images are from now... I wanted to make this about

knowledge systems are discarded as primitive. So that was interesting to explore. I would chat with a lot of people in Jharkhand and I remember an instance where a woman told me that when they walk on grass, they think it whereas we feel entitled to walk on it.

"We've lost that nuance because we're so far away. So AI is going to be about binaries.

There's a certain nuance when you interact with something closely. And when you are just peripherally dealing with something, you go into binaries. In that sense, we are trying to question the hierarchy of knowledge systems," he said.

Though his film is about how technology is interacting with people, especially gig workers, Sahay wanted his story to be character-driven and told through the eyes of his tribal protagonist.

"Nobody is going to come and watch a film for the theatrics of the technology that I'm using. The emotional hook of the film is the mother-daughter story. And on that string of emotional storytelling, I'm able to hang all the things I want to say about technology, about imperialism, about AI," he said, citing Denis Villeneuve's sci-fi drama "Arrival" and Christopher Nolan's

"Interstellar" as his influences.

The filmmaker, who earlier made award-winning short films and worked as an assistant director, said his parents are sociologists and that has influenced the kind of stories he wants to tell. His father has retired from the government service but his mother is still a practicing sociologist. "That really forms the basis of anything I like doing. I like grappling with how things are. And the not so obvious interplay between different kinds of worlds. But my first love was not cinema, it was music. I learned Hindustani classical for a long time but then I felt I could not do justice to this other side of me which was oriented towards understanding society. That's why I shifted gears." (PTI)



today, and about how these different strands of the Adivasi reality interact with AI as of today," Sahay said.

The filmmaker's central character has a reverence for nature that's inherent to the tribal culture. Early in one of the scenes, Nehma takes her city-bred daughter for a foraging trip to the nearest jungle and tells her to gently pull sweet potatoes from the ground or to look closely at the life around her -- from trees to the tiniest of insects. Sahay said he wanted to contrast Nehma's knowledge about nature to what's happening around to highlight how knowledge is hierarchical and the world is still deeply imperialistic. "Certain knowledge systems are said to be far better and more civilized. And certain

FDCI presents 'Legacy of Craft' celebrating craftsmanship and culture

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) celebrated "craftsmanship and culture" by presenting "Legacy of Craft" at The Kunj, New Delhi's newly inaugurated cultural destination dedicated to celebrating India's artisanal heritage. Designers such as Divyam Mehta, Payal Jain, Samant Chauhan, Suket Dhir, and Upavita, presented their work with "Indian craft legacies into contemporary expressions, bringing heritage techniques like Kantha, Chikankari, hand embroidery on Bhagalpuri silks, hand block print, Ikat, and Chanderi", according to a press release. Karigar Sangam showcased over 100 masterpieces created by National Awardees, Shilp Gurus, and master artisans, where vis-

itors not only admired but also purchased directly from the creators—reflecting a deepening appreciation for India's craft traditions. 'Smt Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, was the chief guest of the event. Other attendees included Smt. Neerja Sekhar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Rohit Kansal, Additional Secretary, MOT, Mugdha Sinha (IAS- MD, ITDC), Smt. Shubhra - trade advisor and Ms. Apoorva Srivastava, Ambassador to the Slovak Republic. Amrit Raj, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, said, "The Kunj has been conceived as both a cultural beacon and a dynamic commercial hub." "The Kunj has been conceived as both

a cultural beacon and a dynamic commercial hub. Through curated exhibitions, retail spaces, live demonstrations, and cultural programming, it will serve as a permanent destination to celebrate the spirit of 'Hand-made in India, Crafted for the World.' 'Legacy of Craft' was a befitting event to this vision, showcasing how India's timeless craft traditions continue to inspire and thrive." Sunil Sethi, Chairman of FDCI, added, "The Kunj is a landmark initiative of DC Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, envisioned to spotlight India's artisanal legacy. FDCI was delighted to curate 'Legacy of Craft' as part of this initiative, bringing together designers, artisans, and performers in one holistic evening of creativity." (PTI)

Dulquer's production house to modify dialogue in 'Lokah' after backlash

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The makers of the Malayalam film "Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra" have issued an apology and promised to remove a dialogue that "unintentionally hurt the sentiments of people from Karnataka".

Starring Kalyani Priyadarshan, Sandy and Naslen, the film has been directed by Dominic Arun and released in theatres on August 28. Dulquer Salmaan has produced it under his production banner Wayfarer Films.

A scene where Sandy's character, Inspector Nachiyappa Gowda, address Bengaluru girls derogatively, has attracted criticism.

Salmaan's banner posted an apology on its official Instagram handle on Tuesday evening, adding the team will ensure to modify the dialogue.

"It has come to our attention that a dialogue delivered by one of the characters in our film Lokah: Chapter One has unintentionally hurt the sentiments of people from Karnataka. At Wayfarer Films, we place people above everything else," it began.

"We deeply regret this oversight and assure you that no offence was intended. The dialogue in question will be removed/edited at the earliest. We sincerely apologise for the hurt caused and humbly request you to accept our apology," the statement read.

"Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra" revolves around a woman, who uncovers mystical skills while facing personal hurdles. As evil surfaces, she must embrace her powers and fate in a shifting world. (PTI)

Anurag Kashyap's 'Nishaanchi' trailer out, Aaishvarya Thackeray debuts in dual role

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap unveiled the trailer of his upcoming film "Nishaanchi" and described it as a story that carries everything he loves about Hindi cinema.

Starring debutant Aaishvarya Thackeray alongside Vedika Pinto, Monika Panwar, Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, and Kumud Mishra, the Amazon MGM Studios India film dives into the gripping lives of twin brothers — Babloo and Dabloo — mirror images yet stark opposites in their beliefs.

The trailer is set in the early 2000s in Uttar Pradesh, where the lives of Babloo Nishaanchi, Rangeeli Rinku, and Dabloo collide in unexpected ways. Thackeray plays a dual role. The film is slated to release

in theatres on September 19. Kashyap, known for films such as "Black Friday", "Gangs of Wasseypur", "Dev D", and "Ugly", called "Nishaanchi" his most cinematic movie.

"Nishaanchi" is a story I've carried with me for years. It's my most cinematic film with a classic story at its center involving emotion, betrayal, action - everything I grew up loving in Hindi films. Working with Amazon MGM Studios India was extremely fruitful as they trusted me completely," he said in a statement. "Aaishvarya, Vedika, Monika, Zeeshan, Kumud and every single actor in the film — they didn't just act, they lived and breathed these characters. Their commitment to the story and the

authenticity of their performances shines in the film. And my crew matched that passion frame by frame, making the film come out so good. And the music — also carries that same emotion that runs through the film, and amplifies the story. I am confident that the audience will really like the music," he added.

Thackeray said the project allowed him to explore different sides of himself. "Nishaanchi" will always be very close to my heart, not just because it's my first film, but because it allowed me to explore so many different sides of myself. Playing twins who are complete opposites challenged me in every way—emotionally, physically, and as an actor... I'm nervous, but also excited, to finally share this world with everyone."

Pinto said she has admired Kashyap's work for years and working with him has been a dream come true.

"What's even more exciting is how different this film is, even for him. He's crafted a world that feels fresh, layered, and so full of surprises. Playing Rangeeli Rinku has been a beautiful challenge. At first glance, she looks like this sweet, innocent girl and my look in the film reflects that but deep down, she's fierce, bold, and full of spirit, which you'll feel the moment you watch the teaser," she said.

Nikhil Madhok, director and head of India Originals, Amazon MGM Studios and Prime Video, added, "We at

Amazon MGM Studios India, are thrilled to collaborate with Anurag Kashyap for this film - a filmmaker whose bold and emotionally charged storytelling has left an indelible mark on Indian cinema. The film's cast led by debutants Aaishvarya and Vedika, have delivered outstanding performances, and we are eager for audiences to experience their magic on the big screen.

Produced by Ajay Rai and Ranjan Singh under Jar Pictures, in association with Flip Films, "Nishaanchi" is written by Praseon Mishra, Ranjan Chandel, and Kashyap.

The film also stars Monika Panwar, Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, and Kumud Mishra in pivotal roles. (PTI)



Carlos Alcaraz beats Jiri Lehecka to reach US Open semifinals



NEW YORK, Sept 3: Carlos Alcaraz finger-wagged the crowd, beat Jiri Lehecka to the net and cruised into the semifinals at the U.S. Open.

The second-seeded Spaniard beat Lehecka 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 in the quarterfinals on Tuesday, making some highlight-reel shots and putting his hand to his ear afterward to encourage more cheers from fans at Arthur Ashe Stadium. It's his first hard-court semifinal ap-

pearance at a major since winning his first Grand Slam title at the U.S. Open in 2023.

"I kind of met the Grand Slam version of Carlos," Lehecka said. "He just showed that he is one of the contenders, for sure. Everyone knew that, and he proved that."

Alcaraz is just 22 years old and is in the semifinals at a major for the ninth time. Only Rafael Nadal with 10 has more before turning 23. Next up for Alcaraz is either

Taylor Fritz or Novak Djokovic, who knocked him out of the Australian Open in the quarterfinals. Alcaraz would supplant Jannik Sinner — whom he lost to in the Wimbledon final and beat in the French Open final — atop the rankings if he wins the U.S. Open for a second time.

"It's really difficult not to think about it," Alcaraz said. "Every time that I step on the court, I am trying not to think about it. If I

think about the No. 1 spot too much, I think I'm going to put pressure on myself and I just don't want to do that. I just want to step on the court, try to do my things, try to follow my goals in the match and try to enjoy as much as I can. The No. 1 is there, but I'm trying not to think so much about it."

Before facing Fritz or Djokovic on Friday night, Alcaraz plans to play golf Wednesday with 2017

Masters champion Sergio Garcia. He thinks his countryman owes him more than a few strokes.

"He has to give me at least between 10 and 15 shots," Alcaraz said. "It's going to be great. I'm not that good, Sergio, come on."

On the women's side, Jessica Pegula broke through her quarterfinal wall again at the U.S. Open, defeating Barbora Krejčíková 6-3, 6-3 to get to the semifinals at a Grand Slam tournament for just the second time in her career.

She failed to advance into the semis in her first 22 main draw appearances at a major before reaching the final at Flushing Meadows a year ago, when she lost to Aryna Sabalenka.

They'll meet again in the semifinals on Thursday after Sabalenka advanced in a walkover when Marketa Vondrousova withdrew because of injury. "My biggest accomplishment last year was just getting past the quarterfinals," Pegula said. "Now I can say I've done it twice."

Pegula, who was eliminated in the fourth round at the Australian Open, the third round at the French Open and the first round at Wimbledon, is the first woman to make back-to-back U.S. Open semifinals without losing a set since Serena Williams from 2011-14. "I've been able to kind of go into those matches and really take care of business," Pegula said. "I've played good players but (got) convincing wins over those players." (AP)

Defending US Open champ Sabalenka returns to semifinals when Vondrousova withdraws with knee injury



NEW YORK, Sept 3: Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka returned to the U.S. Open semifinals without hitting a ball on Tuesday night because the woman she was supposed to face in the quarterfinals, 2023 Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova, pulled out of their match with an injured knee.

According to the U.S. Tennis Association, Vondrousova is the first woman to give her opponent a walkover — the term for when a tennis player withdraws from a match before it begins — at the U.S. Open in the quarterfinals or later since 1988, when Steffi Graf advanced to the final when Chris Evert did not play their semifinal.

"I tried my best to take the court today, but during the warm-up, I felt again my knee, and after consultation with the tournament doctor decided not to risk aggravating the injury," Vondrousova, a 26-year-old left-hander from the Czech Republic, said in a statement released by the USTA. "I appreciate all the support this tournament and apologize to the fans who were looking forward to the match."

She had advanced to the quarterfinals with a three-set victory over 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina on Sunday night.

With one of the two nighttime matches in Ashe scrapped Tuesday, the USTA didn't replace Sabalenka vs. Vondrousova on the program with another contest, but set up the men's quarterfinal between 24-time major champion Novak Djokovic and 2024 runner-up Taylor Fritz to begin at 8 p.m. That was originally supposed to start whenever Sabalenka-Vondrousova ended.

Sabalenka now will meet No. 4 Jessica Pegula in the semifinals on Thursday. That is a rematch of last year's championship match at Flushing Meadows, which Sabalenka won in straight sets.

Vondrousova has been as high as No. 6 in the WTA rankings but a series of injuries over the years kept off the tour for stretches at a time. That included operations on her wrist in 2022 and on her shoulder last year.

She entered the U.S. Open ranked 60th and unseeded.

"So sorry for Marketa after all she's been through," Sabalenka wrote on social media. "She has been playing amazing tennis and I know how badly this must hurt for her."

Pegula moved into her second Grand Slam semifinal by eliminating two-time major champion Barbora Krejčíková 6-3, 6-3 earlier Tuesday.

Pegula had been 0-6 in major quarterfinals until upsetting Iga Swiatek in that round at Flushing Meadows a year ago.

Now the 31-year-old American is the first woman to make the final four at the U.S. Open in consecutive years without losing a set since 23-time major champion Serena Williams did it every year from 2011 to 2014.

"I've been able to kind of go into those matches and really take care of business," Pegula said.

The last two women's quarterfinals are scheduled for Wednesday: No. 2 Swiatek vs. No. 8 Amanda Anisimova — that's a rematch of last month's Wimbledon final, which Swiatek won 6-0, 6-0 — and No. 11 Karolina Muchova vs. No. 23 Naomi Osaka. (AP)

Gundogan joins Galatasaray after 'unforgettable moments' at Man City

MANCHESTER, Sept 3: Ilkay Gundogan completed a move from Manchester City to Galatasaray on Tuesday, bringing an end to his second spell with the Premier League club. The former Germany international signed a two-year contract with Turkish champion Galatasaray and is the Istanbul club's latest high-profile recruit during this transfer window after Victor Osimhen and Leroy Sane.

Gundogan helped City win five Premier League titles, two FA Cups, four English League Cups and the Champions League in his first spell

with the club before leaving to join Barcelona in 2023. He returned a year later, but was unable to prevent City from enduring its first trophyless season in eight years.

"Manchester City will always hold a special place in my heart," Gundogan said in City's announcement. "We have enjoyed so much success in our time together and there have been so unforgettable moments not least being captain for the treble-winning season."

His departure — on a free transfer — comes after Pep Guardiola embarked on an overhaul of his once

dominant squad, with nine players recruited since January.

The 34-year-old Gundogan did not play in any of City's three Premier League matches this season and was pushed down the pecking order following the arrival of midfielders Tijjani Reijnders and Nico Gonzalez in recent months.

During his trophy-laden time at City, Gundogan captained the team that won a treble of trophies in 2023 — the Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League. The previous year, he scored two goals on the final day of the season to secure a

comeback 3-2 win against Aston Villa to clinch the title.

City director of football Hugo Viana hailed Gundogan's time at the Etihad. "Ilkay Gundogan is a name synonymous with success at Manchester City," he said. "He brought trophy upon trophy back to the Etihad and no one will ever forget the huge role he played in those successes. "It may now be time for him to say goodbye," Viana added, "but we will never forget his legacy here at Manchester City. Ilkay has truly cemented his place in the history of Manchester City and we all wish

him well in the next chapter of his career."

Gundogan, who is of Turkish descent, added that "lifting the Champions League trophy for this club for the first time, especially in Istanbul, will live with me forever. I have no doubts Manchester City will enjoy much more success in the future and I will certainly be watching on from afar as I continue my career in Turkey, a country that means ever such a lot to me."

He was Guardiola's first signing at City when he joined from Borussia Dortmund in 2016. (AP)

Josh Sargent hopes to end 6-year international scoring drought, aims for World Cup roster spot



NEW YORK, Sept 3: Josh Sargent could end a 2,118-day international goal drought Saturday when the United States plays South Korea in the first of eight friendly coach Mauricio Pochettino will use to evaluate his player pool before his pre-World Cup training camp.

Rather than dwell on the dry spell, Sargent would rather concentrate on his hot start for Norwich in England's second-tier League Championship. The 25-year-old from O'Fallon, Missouri, has scored six goals in his club's first five games and captained the team in four matches.

"Of course I know it's been a while," he said Tuesday before the Americans' first training session with the full roster. "I'm doing so well at the club level at the moment — I just keep reminding myself how well I'm doing there. I know I can score goals and I know it's a matter of time that I'm going to score for the national team. So just going to put my head down and keep working hard and I know the goals will come."

Sargent joined Werder Bremen at the start of 2018, just before turning 18, and debuted that December. Instantly recognizable because of his bushy red hair, Sargent scored 11 Bundesliga goals in 70 games over three seasons before the team was demoted to the second division for 2021-22, then transferred to Norwich and scored four goals in 2022-23, getting braces against Bournemouth in the

League Cup and Watford in the Premier League.

He remained with the Canaries after they were relegated and made three World Cup appearances for the U.S. that included starts against Wales and Iran. Sargent struggled with ankle injuries that cut short his 2021-22 season and led to surgery that caused a four-month lay-off in the fall of 2023. Last season, he was out 2 1/2 months because of groin surgery and scored 11 goals in his final 20 league matches.

"Been feeling good for a while now," Sargent said. "I think Norwich has done a good job of taking care of me and getting me back to a good spot. Obviously continue to do certain exercises in the gym to keep myself healthy."

His strong start this season led to inquiries for a possible transfer to a first-tier club. Asked whether Sunderland and Wolfsburg had tried to acquire him, Sargent responded: "There were interests from multiple clubs. Obviously in the end didn't work out, but that's football sometimes." Just seven of 21 American goals in 12 matches this year have come from strikers: five by Patrick Agyemang (recovering from hernia surgery) and one each by Haji Wright and Brian White. Sargent and Folarin Balogun, attending his first camp under Pochettino, are competing with them for World Cup roster spots along with Ricardo Pepi and Damion Downs. (AP)

IOC resumes funding to IOA after 'corrective measures' to resolve disputes and governance issues

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has decided to resume its funding to India under the Olympic Solidarity Programme a year after halting it, acknowledging the IOA's "corrective measures" to resolve internal disputes and governance issues.

The Executive Board of the IOC had last year stopped the yearly grant of Rs 15 crore meant for athlete development programmes in the wake of the prolonged infighting during which 12 Executive Council members of the IOA refused to ratify the appointment of Raghuram Iyer as the body's CEO, citing his high salary.

But, following an intervention by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, a truce was called on July 24 this year between IOA President

PT Usha and the revolting EC members who are in majority.

A Special General Body Meeting (SGM) was also held later to formally approve India's bid for 2030 Commonwealth Games.

"We took note of the various steps and corrective measures that have been taken over the past few weeks to resolve the internal disputes and governance issues within your NOC (National Olympic Committee)," stated a letter to Usha from IOC's NOC Relations and Olympic Solidarity Director James Macleod.

"...all outstanding internal issues and misunderstandings were discussed in a constructive and transparent manner within your NOC Executive Committee and it was collectively agreed to move forward and work together in a spirit

of unity and harmony," he noted in the letter which is in PTT's possession. Macleod cited ratification of Iyer's appointment as a positive step. "...the appointment of your NOC CEO, Mr Raghuram Iyer, was formally ratified by decision of your NOC Executive Committee on 24 July 2025; and your NOC General Assembly was held successfully on 13 August 2025, during which the pending reports and audited financial statements were formally approved.

"As a result, we are pleased to confirm that the IOC and Olympic Solidarity are now in a position to progressively resume all payments to your NOC and normalise the working relationship with your NOC," the letter added.

The IOC also hoped that the IOA will uphold the "highest stan-

dards" of good governance and integrity in its daily operations, in accordance with the principles and rules which govern the Olympic Movement.

IOA expressed its happiness at the positive turn of events.

"With the reinstatement of Olympic Solidarity programmes, India's athletes stand to be the greatest beneficiaries. The renewed support will provide direct funding and development opportunities to assist in training, preparation, and participation in the Olympic Games and other major international competitions," the body said in a statement.

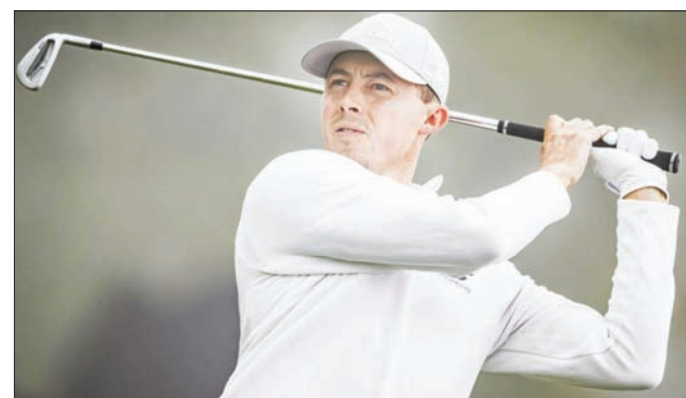
The IOA said the IOC commended the positive measures taken by it and the Government of India to strengthen the sporting ecosystem and support athletes at

every level, from grassroots to elite. In his letter, Macleod also took note of the National Sports Governance Act, which will lead to the institution of a National Sports Board to oversee the funding and affiliation of the national federations.

"We trust that this new Act will, simultaneously, contribute to the implementation of the basic principles of good governance within the Indian sports organisations and ensure full observance of the Olympic Charter and the statutes of the International Sports Federations, including in particular the fundamental principle of responsible autonomy of the Olympic Movement," he said.

Macleod said the IOC will continue to support the drafting of the "specific rules and regulations derived from this new Act." (PTI)

Nelly Korda's statistics indicate a good year: She still hasn't won a tournament



She is 20th in putting, up from 34th a year ago. She has taken a significant dip in strokes gained around the green. (No. 62) this year, down from No. 4 a year ago).

If there was a category called strokes gained patience, Korda might be leading that.

"I've been putting in a lot of work on every part of my game," she said two weeks ago in Canada. "Statistically I saw my stats, and seeing that

I'm always in the top and some of my stats are maybe better than even last year, it's just crazy. That's just golf. "By this time last year I had six wins under my belt and my stats are better and I have zero wins under my belt this year," she said. "I think the most important thing is kind of sticking to your process, always trying to be in contention coming into the weekend, and kind of figuring out your groove, too."

Most alarming of late is getting into contention.

Dating to her runner-up finish in the U.S. Women's Open, Korda has not been closer than seven shots of the winner in seven starts. She was 13 shots (Evian) and 14 shots (Women's British) in the last two majors. She wound up 14 shots behind at the FM Championship last week. Korda is entered in the Kroger Queen City Championship outside Cincinnati next week.

Lost amid the Ryder Cup captain's picks for Europe and the U.S. over the last week were two players who qualified on their own with limited opportunity: Bryson DeChambeau and Tyrrell Hatton, both with LIV Golf.

DeChambeau earned the sixth and final spot by the equivalent of \$300,000 while playing only eight times — all of them majors — during the qualifying period. He won the 2024 U.S. Open, was runner-up in the PGA Championship both years and tied for fifth (2025) and

sixth (2024) in the Masters.

Ultimately, what earned his spot on the team was recovering from a 78 at Royal Portrush with scores of 65-68-64 to tie for 10th in the British Open.

Hatton played in 10 qualifying events. Only this year's majors count toward the European team and he did his best stuff before they started by winning the Dunhill Links Championship and the Dubai Desert Classic. The majors didn't hurt — he tied for fourth in the U.S. Open and had top 20s in the Masters and British Open.

Even then, he likely would have been bumped from the top six — and been a captain's pick, anyway — if Sepp Straka did not withdraw from the BMW Championship because of a family matter.

So for LIV players, it can be done. But it takes good golf. Jon Rahm played eight qualifying events and finished 24th in the Ryder Cup standings. He was a captain's pick. (AP)

Dhruv Jurel might come back to lead them if the India wicketkeeper batter has recovered

Duleep Trophy: Shreyas, Jaiswal, Thakur eye big outing for West against Central; North face South



BENGALURU, Sept 3: The dynamic trio of Shreyas Iyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shardul Thakur will be aiming to make a statement when a star-studded West Zone takes on Central Zone in the Duleep Trophy semifinal here on Thursday.

Iyer, who could not find a place in India's Asia Cup squad, will be keen to begin the season on a bright note here, and keep himself in contention ahead of some crucial assignments such as the home series against the West Indies and the subsequent white ball tour of Australia.

This might be an incredibly frustrating phase for Iyer, whose 604 runs across 17 matches for Punjab Kings at an average of 50.33 and at a strike-rate in excess of 175 did not resonate with the selectors during the Asia Cup selection.

But if he can channelise that frustration and turn it into runs, West Zone may be benefitted.

Jaiswal offers a slightly different case. Having already secured his place in the Test side for the foreseeable future, the young left-hander would want to sustain his red ball game time ahead of the home series against the West Indies and world champions South Africa.

His last competitive outing was the fifth Test against England at the Oval, and since he is yet to crack the white ball code, Jaiswal might have

to wait till the series against the West Indies in October for an international appearance.

On other hand, Thakur, who is set to lead West Zone, will try to push his stocks up after lukewarm outings against England in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy to remain on the selectors' radar.

Other prominent members of the West Zone team like Rituraj Gaikwad and Tanush Kotian will hope for a strong effort to get back into national reckoning.

On paper, West carries far too many guns but Central Zone are no mere pushovers.

Dhruv Jurel might come back to lead them if the India wicketkeeper batter has recovered from a groin niggle that kept him out of the quarterfinals against North East Zone.

Even without Jurel, their batting packed a punch as stand-in skipper Rajat Patidar, Danish Malewar and Shubham Sharma cracked big hundreds last week.

They also have a competent bowling unit in left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey, and pacers Khaleel Ahmed and Deepak Chahar.

They will nonetheless have a job at hand against a strong West Zone batting line-up, which will miss an injured Sarfaraz Khan, on a BCCI Centre of Excellence pitch that looked

slow and smooth during the quarterfinals.

But they will miss the presence of left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who is travelling to Dubai to join India's Asia Cup squad.

Squads: West Zone: Shardul Thakur (c), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Aarya Desai, Harvik Desai (wicket-keeper), Shreyas Iyer, Shivalik Sharma, Rituraj Gaikwad, Jaymeet Patel, Manan Hingraja, Saurabh Nawale (wicket-keeper), Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Dharmdrasinh Jadeja, Tushar Deshpande, Arzan Nagwaswala.

Central Zone: Dhruv Jurel (c/wk), Rajat Patidar (vc), Aryan Juyal, Danish Malewar, Sanjeet Desai, Aditya Thakare, Deepak Chahar, Saransh Jain, Ayush Pandey, Shubham Sharma, Yash Rathod, Harsh Dubey, Manav Suthar, Khaleel Ahmed.

The absence of Tilak Varma, who has left for Dubai to start his preparations for Asia Cup, pacer Vysakh Vijayakumar and left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore, both of whom have been injured, will weaken South Zone.

Therefore they will require some healthy scores from the likes of N Jagadeesan, Devdutt Padikkal and Salman Nizar, who recently slammed 116 runs in 13 balls in the Kerala Cricket League, to tide over North's challenge.

North will also have to contend with the unavailability of pacers Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana, as they are part of the Asia Cup squad. India pacer Anshul Kamboj is likely to step in for this match.

Hence, they will require an encore from the likes of Ayush Badoni, skipper Ankit Kumar and Yash Dhull, who were the centurions in the quarterfinals.

Squads: South Zone: Mohammed Azharuddeen (C), Tanmay Agarwal, Devdutt Padikkal, Mohit Kale, Salman Nizar, Narayan Jagadeesan, Tripurana Vijay, Tanay Thyagarajan, Vasuki Koushik, Nidheesh MD, Ricky Bhui, Basil NP, Gurjapneet Singh, Snehal Kauthankar, Ankit Sharma, Shaikh Rasheed.

North Zone: Ankit Kumar (C), Shubham Khajuria, Ayush Badoni, Yash Dhull, Ankit Kalsi, Nishant Sandhu, Sahil Lotra, Mayank Dagar, Yudhvir Singh Charak, Anshul Kamboj, Auqib Nabi, Kanhaiya Wadhawan. (Standbys: Shubham Arora (wk), Jaskaranvir Singh Paul, Ravi Chauhan, Abid Mushtaq, Nishunk Birla, Umar Nazir, Divesh Sharma).

Matches start at 9.30 a.m. (PTI)

Afghanistan spinners stifle Pakistan for 18-run win in tri-series

SHARJAH, Sept 3: Ibrahim Zadran and Sediqullah Atal smashed successive half-centuries before Afghanistan spinners strangled Pakistan's deep batting lineup to notch an 18-run win in the T20 tri-series Tuesday.

The spin trio of captain Rashid Khan, Mohammad Nabi and left-arm spinner Noor Ahmad, playing his first game of the tournament, snared six wickets between them to limit Pakistan to 151-9. Zadran (65) and Atal (64) followed their half-centuries against United Arab Emirates a day ago with an impressive 113-run stand as Afghanistan posted 169-5 after Khan won the toss and elected field.

It was the fourth straight game in the tri-series in which teams successfully defended totals. UAE lost both its games while chasing against Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Haris Rauf's four-wicket haul had led Pakistan to 39-run in the opening game of the tournament, but on Tuesday the No. 10 batter top-scored with 34 not out off 16 balls. Rauf's blitz came too late as Afghanistan spinners had virtually sealed the game by squeezing Pakistan to 111-9 in 17 overs.

Fast bowler Fazalqar Farooqi set the game for Afghanistan with two wickets inside the powerplay. The left-armed struck off his first ball when Saim Ayub feathered a catch off a mis-timed pull shot to wicketkeeper and was dismissed without scoring.

Sahibzada Farhan (18) struck



two sixes but was clean bowled by Farooqi off a delivery that nipped back into the right-handed batter and hit the off-stump.

Fakhar Zaman couldn't convert a good start of 25 runs off 18 balls once the Afghan spinners bowled from both ends. Zaman sliced an easy catch to short third off Nabi and captain Salman Ali Agha was brilliantly run-out by Khan at the non-striker's end. Hasan Nawaz couldn't clear Ahmad's first ball, a low leg side full toss and was caught at short fine leg before Mohammad Haris' run of poor form continues and he holed out to deep square leg of Nabi as Pakistan stuttered to 82-6 in the 12th over.

Khan then picked the wickets of Mohammad Nawaz off another mistimed shot by a Pakistan batter and rattled the stumps of Shaheen Afridi before Rauf denied Khan the hat trick. Noor then capped a perfect day when he clean bowled Ashraf off his final ball.

Earlier, Zadran and Atal shared a century stand before Ashraf's 4-27 didn't allow Afghanistan to score freely in the death overs.

Both batters joined when Ayub's bowled three economical overs in the powerplay and also accounted for the wicket of Rahmanullah Gurbaz (8) in his first over. Zadran and Atal paced their partnership well soon after the powerplay with Rauf and the two spinners — Nawaz and Sufiyan Mueem — conceding 95 runs off their combined eight wicketless overs.

Ashraf picked all his four wickets in the final three overs with Zadran and Atal getting caught in the outfield while deceiving Omarzai and Nabi with his slower deliveries as Afghanistan couldn't accelerate in the final five overs.

Both Pakistan and Afghanistan have four points each after three games each while UAE, which faces Pakistan on Thursday, has no points. (AP)

Djokovic gets into it with US Open crowd and improves to 11-0 against Fritz to reach semis



NEW YORK, Sept 3: Novak Djokovic took a two-set lead against Taylor Fritz, an opponent he always beats, to close in on the semifinals, a round he often reaches at the U.S. Open, and marked the occasion by blowing kisses to those in Tuesday night's crowd pulling for the last American man in the field.

That was just a taste of the back-and-forth between Djokovic and some of the folks in the Arthur Ashe Stadium seats, and there was still work that remained, but he would finish off a 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 victory. Djokovic improved to 11-0 against 2024 runner-up Fritz and reached a record-extending 53rd Grand Slam semifinal, a total that includes a record-tying 14 at Flushing Meadows.

The match ended anticlimactically with a double-fault by No. 4-seeded Fritz, whose exit means the U.S. drought will continue without a male singles champion at any major since 2003, when Andy Roddick won in New York.

On Friday, Djokovic will play in his fourth Slam semifinal of the season and take on five-time major champion Carlos Alcaraz, who hasn't dropped a set in the tournament. He was a 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 winner against No. 20 Jiri Lehecka earlier Tuesday.

Djokovic leads No. 2 seed Alcaraz 5-3 head-to-head, winning their two most recent matchups — in the Australian Open quarterfinals this January and in the final at the Paris Olympics last year, when the Serbian finally fulfilled his wish to win a gold medal for his country.

The last two men's quarterfinals are Wednesday: Alex de Minaur vs. Felix Auger-Aliassime, and defending champion Janik Sinner vs. Lorenzo Musetti in an all-Italian matchup at night.

On Tuesday night, both men were dressed entirely in black — shirts, shorts, socks and shoes. Even Djokovic's wrist bands were black, as was Fritz's headband, which he had on wrong at the start, so the white lettering of his clothing sponsor's name was upside-down until he made a change after the second set.

If the players' get-ups looked alike, that's where the similarities stopped. Djokovic, who has won four of his 24 major championships at the U.S. Open, most recently in 2023, did what he usually does to Fritz — and, to be fair, nearly everyone else — which is to say:

Mallorca suspends its captain after he complained his kids didn't get to see him play at Madrid

MADRID, Sept 3: Spanish club Mallorca has suspended midfielder Dani Rodríguez without pay and stripped him of his captaincy after the veteran publicly complained that he did not get to play in the team's match against Real Madrid, when his family was in attendance.

Mallorca issued a statement Wednesday saying Rodríguez "has been suspended from duty and pay," and that the club "has stripped him of his captaincy with immediate effect."

Rodríguez was an unused substitute in Mallorca's 2-1 loss to Madrid on Saturday at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. After the match, the 37-year-old player posted on Instagram a photo of his family at the stadium, accompanied by a text in which he complained about not getting any minutes. He said he had traveled to Madrid with his kids being "excited" about the opportunity to see his dad play at the Bernabeu.

"An important lesson and piece of advice for them: Never expect anything from anyone, especially

these days, when meritocracy, culture, and respect for hard work are lacking," Rodríguez wrote.

"Don't do things expecting something in return. Do it for yourself and your passion." He later followed that post with an open letter published by Spanish media, where he said he respected the decisions by coach Jagoba Arrasate, and that he wasn't upset because his kids did not get to watch him play. "What I can't accept is the lack of respect for commitment and dedication," he said.

"It hurts when a player who just arrived, with just one training session, has the opportunity to play ahead of teammates who have spent years defending this jersey with sweat and dedication, always putting the club above all else."

Rodríguez was apparently referring to recently signed forward Jan Vrhilic, who was picked by Arrasate to enter the match in the 87th minute.

"I hope Jan succeeds here and that together we can all help him," Rodríguez said. (AP)

Vinod Tihara wants incumbent Sharma's ouster

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: Former Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) secretary Vinod Tihara has written to the state unit's Apex Council members, urging them to remove the incumbent Ashok Sharma claiming that he has completed nine years in office as per the BCCI constitution framed by Justice Lodha Committee.

However, Sharma vehemently denied Tihara's claims stating that the former secretary is confusing everyone with "wrong technicalities."

As per BCCI constitution (until National Sports Act becomes implementable), any person can stay in office for a cumulative period 18 years -- nine in state and nine in BCCI. At one go, a person may stay in office for six years (state plus BCCI or either) before a mandatory cooling off period of three years.

Tihara in his letter mentioned about the complaint filed by a voter member Praveen Arora.

"It is understood that one of our esteemed members, Sh. Praveen Kumar Arora (LM000878), had written to the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) and the entire Apex council, regarding tenure limits of Mr. Ashok Sharma - and requested the Association to initiate appropriate actions as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's orders and DDCA's constitution documents.

"As a former secretary of our esteemed organization, I urge your good office to take cognizance of the same and undertake appropriate and immediate action without any further time delays. In this regard, my letter is enclosed for your urgent and necessary action."

In his application, Tihara mentioned the tenure of Sharma's two terms constitutes 3288 days which is roughly nine years. In his first term, Sharma was an Apex Council member from December 21, 2012 to January 30, 2017. His second term started on November 10, 2020 and he would complete nine years in a state body by September 30, 2025. (PTI)

Venus' US Open ends with a loss in women's doubles quarterfinals to Taylor Townsend

NEW YORK, Sept 3: Venus Williams' first Grand Slam tournament in two years ended on Tuesday when she and Leylah Fernandez lost in the U.S. Open women's doubles quarterfinals to the top-seeded duo of Taylor Townsend and Katerina Siniakova 6-1, 6-2.

When the match finished after 56 minutes in Louis Armstrong Stadium, Williams smiled as she walked to the net to shake hands with Siniakova, then hug Townsend. Thousands of spectators rose to give Williams a standing ovation; Townsend and Siniakova then joined in, applauding for Williams.

"Growing up watching Venus and (her sister) Serena, for me and my sister, it was an inspiration," Townsend told the crowd. "It was an honor to share the court today."

Siniakova called Williams "a legend" and said it was "a privilege" to play against her.

The 45-year-old Williams earlier exited in the first round of both singles — bowing out against Karolina Muchova in three sets — and mixed doubles. She was out of competition for 16 months until returning to play at a tournament in Washington in July. Her most recent major tournament had been the 2023 U.S. Open.

"What I'm proudest of is it's not easy to come off the bench. It really isn't, and I have never had a layoff that long. It brought new challenges that I wasn't ready for in so many ways. So I'm very proud that I... stayed myself. I didn't try to play another game. I didn't try to play it safe. I went for it, and that's who I am. I go for it. When you go for it, good things happen." Williams said. "Perhaps I didn't get there this time, but I know who I am, and I know that I can work once I have a little chance."

She said she wasn't sure of fu-



ture plans but made it sound as if she plans to play again.

"Seeing Venus playing on court for joy just kind of brought me back as to why I started playing tennis," said Fernandez, a 22-year-

old from Canada who was the 2021 singles runner-up in New York.

Williams and Fernandez received a wild-card entry from the U.S. Tennis Association and had

not lost a set in their first three matches of their debut as a team.

Townsend, who currently is ranked No. 1 in doubles, and Siniakova are an experienced duo who won Wimbledon in 2024 and the Australian Open this year together. Siniakova has won a total of 10 Grand Slam titles in women's doubles.

Williams, of course, is the owner of 14 Grand Slam titles in women's doubles alongside Serena, who left the professional tour in 2022.

The older Williams sibling also has won seven major singles championships and another two in mixed doubles.

She was the oldest player in the singles draw at the U.S. Open since 1981.

Townsend's time in Flushing Meadows continues in women's doubles after she failed to convert eight match points and got knocked out of singles in the

fourth round by Barbora Krejčíková.

"It was a tough match, but ultimately, I left everything out on the court. That was the only thing that me and the team could ask for," Townsend said.

"I really feel like matches like that are defining moments and opportunities. You can either go up or go down."

Townsend also was in the spotlight for a tense postmatch exchange of words with Jelena Ostapenko after a singles match.

In the doubles semifinals, Townsend and Siniakova will meet the No. 4 seeds, Veronika Kudermetova and Elise Mertens. The other semifinal matchup is No. 2 Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini against No. 3 Gabriela Dabrowski and Erin Routliffe.

Kudermetova and Mertens won Wimbledon last month. Errani and Paolini won the French Open in June. (AP)