

6 NATION

- 'Anga, Banga, Kalinga' will have BJP govts next month: Shah
- Infiltration forced Bengalis to leave homes for opportunities: PM

7 NE

- Arunachal Guv completes self-enumeration for Census 2027 urges public participation
- 3 killed in twin firing incidents in Manipur's Ukhrul district

Court announces Abhi - Neel mob lynching case verdict

All 20 convicts awarded lifer; fine imposed

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, April 24: Nagaon District and Session Court finally awarded life imprisonment to 20 convicted accused who were earlier declared guilty by the court, in the sensational Abhi - Neel mob lynching case today here. The court also imposed a fine of ₹ 20,000 to each of the convicted accused.

It's pertinent to mention that the court convicted 20 among 45 accused, acquitting 25 accused due to lack of evidence on April 20 last.

Following the sensational mob lynching of two Guwahati based youth Abhijit Nath and Nilotpal Das who went for a refreshment in nature on June 8, 2018 at Panjuri village under Dokmoka PS in Karbi Anglong district, believing them as child lifters, police immediately arrested 48 persons among those three were later declared Juvenile, in

connection with the gruesome murder. The 20 convicted accused who were sentenced to life are Biswaram Swargiary, Pentheng Basumatary, Alphazaz Timung, Inosen Ingti, Baikom Timung, Ratneswar Terang, Pukan Lekhte, Anos Timung, Pres Timung, Rupsing Kro, Dhanu Mech, Babu Singh Kro, Bikram Hanse, Sikari Rongpi, Bidya Singh Rongpi, Babu Rongpi, Mensing Kro, Dipjiyoti Basumatary, Wares Rongpi and Onda Mech.

The sensational Abhi - Neel mob lynching case was later shifted from Diphu Court to Nagaon court as per directive of the Guwahati High Court and chargesheet was filed in 2024 and the trial was continued for over seven and half years. The families of the two victims were represented by senior advocate Bijan Mahajan (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Pawan Khera suffers High Court setback

Anticipatory bail plea over allegations against Assam CM's wife

GUWAHATI, April 24: The Gauhati High Court on Friday rejected the anticipatory bail petition of Congress leader Pawan Khera in connection with his allegations that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife possessed multiple passports and undisclosed properties abroad.

The judge, in his order, pointed out that the petitioner had claimed that the accusations he had brought are based on certain documents, which he has in his possession, while the police claimed those documents were already proven to be false. After the case was filed, the petitioner had not made any assertion that the police had made fabricated claims, the court said.

BJP hails court's decision

NEW DELHI, April 24: The BJP on Friday welcomed the Gauhati High Court's rejection of the anticipatory bail plea of Congress leader Pawan Khera in a case filed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife over alleged forged documents, and attacked Rahul Gandhi for backing him.

The single bench of Justice Parthiv Jyoti Saikia rejected Khera's application filed on Monday after the Congress leader was asked by the Supreme Court to approach the Gauhati High Court.

Following the allegations made in a press conference, the CM's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, filed criminal cases against Khera at the Guwahati Crime Branch Police Station under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The judge, in his order, pointed out that the petitioner had claimed that the accusations he had brought are based on certain documents, which he has in his possession, while the police claimed those documents were already proven to be false. After the case was filed, the petitioner had not made any assertion that the police had made fabricated claims, the court said.

The claim of the Advocate General that the case of the petitioner falls within the category of the possession of forged documents or electronic records (Section 339 of the BNS) seems to have force in it," the judge said. He further stated that not Riniki Bhuyan Sharma's (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

France effects visa-free transit for Indians: MEA

NEW DELHI, April 24: Indians transiting through France exclusively by air will no longer require a transit visa, as the French government has operationalised an agreement to remove such a requirement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal made the announcement at his weekly media briefing here, saying India welcomes the move.

Later in a statement, the MEA said the visa-free transit for Indian nationals transiting through the European territory of France has now been operationalised by the French government.

ing of people-to-people ties. "The government of France has now operationalised this agreement, and Indian nationals transiting through mainland France exclusively by air will no longer need a transit visa, with effect from 10th April, 2026," Jaiswal said.

"We welcome the announcement on the operationalisation of visa-free transit for Indian nationals transiting through French airports. As you may recall, the removal of the requirement of transit visas for Indian passport holders was agreed between the prime minister and President Macron during their meeting in Mumbai in February this year," he said.

10 Indians died in Russia-Ukraine war: Centre to SC

NEW DELHI, April 24: Ten Indians have died while fighting alongside Russian forces in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Friday.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said the situation requires "tactical handling" as there may be immense difficulty in recovering mortal remains from the war zone.

made by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Centre, before the bench that was hearing a plea seeking directions to the government to take steps to facilitate the safe repatriation of 26 Indians who have allegedly been detained in Russia and forced to fight the ongoing war. The petitioners have alleged that their kin were lured to Russia under the pretext of lucrative job opportunities, only to have their passports confiscated and be coerced into combat.

Of the 26 individuals specifically named in the petition, the ASG confirmed that 10 have died, one is imprisoned on criminal charges and one has chosen to remain in Russia voluntarily.

The Centre said while some individuals were misled by unscrupulous agents, many had entered into "voluntary contracts" with Russian entities.

The ASG further said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has faced logistical hurdles and a lack of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

The decision showcases deep commitment by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Emmanuel Macron to strengthen bilateral relations, the MEA said.

At the media briefing, Jaiswal said the decision reflects the enduring partnership between India and France, elevated to the level of a 'Special Global Strategic Partnership' during the recent visit of President Macron to India, as also further facilitation of smoother movement of people, and enhance

Fresh notice in RS for removal of CEC

Cong leader Jairam Ramesh and Sagarika Ghose of TMC submit notice

NEW DELHI, April 24: Opposition parties on Friday submitted a fresh notice in the Rajya Sabha seeking to move a motion for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, sources said.

The opposition's fresh charges on Kumar's "proved misbehaviour" include "continued partisan asymmetry in the enforcement of Model Code of Conduct", including the poll panel's failure to act on complaints against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "address to the nation" on April 18.

According to sources, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh and TMC leader Sagarika Ghose submitted the notice to the Rajya Sabha Secretary General.

"In the Rajya Sabha, 73 opposition MPs have just submitted a new notice of motion to their Secretary General to present an addressed resolution to the President of India, urging the re-

moval from office of the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar," Ramesh said on X.

"This demand is based on proven misconduct arising from his actions and errors committed on March 15, 2026 and thereafter, which falls under Article 324(5) of the Constitution of India when read with Article 124(4), as well as Section 11(2) of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

SIR: SC asks Bengal tribunals to hold hearing

DELETION FROM VOTER LIST

NEW DELHI, April 24: The Supreme Court on Friday asked the appellate tribunals to give out-of-turn hearing to those who make out a case of urgent hearing against deletion from voter lists after the special intensive revision of rolls in West Bengal.

At the start of the hearing, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant expressed happiness over the high voter turnout in the first phase of West Bengal assembly polls held on Thursday.

West Bengal registered a record voter turnout of 92.72 per cent in the first phase of voting for 152 constituencies.

"As a citizen of India, I was very happy to see the voting percentage. When people exercise the right to vote, this strengthens democratic set up," the CJ said.

Amritpal produced before Dibrugarh court over unauthorised electronic devices' recovery in jail

DIBRUGARH, April 24: Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh was produced before a court in Assam on Friday in connection with a case related to the 2024 recovery of unauthorised electronic devices from his cell in Dibrugarh Central Jail.

A day after the Punjab Police took him into custody following the expiry of his three-year National Security Act (NSA) detention, Singh appeared before First Class Judicial Magistrate Chandan Saikia via video-conferencing from the Dibrugarh Police Station.

pad phone, a TV remote, pen drives, bluetooth headphones, speakers, and a smartwatch from the high-security NSA cell where Singh and his nine aides were imprisoned.

An FIR was registered at Dibrugarh Police Station and subsequently Nipen Das was also arrested on March 8, 2024, in connection with the same case and booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Assam Prisons Act, and criminal conspiracy.

Singh's lawyer Jasbir Kaur said the trial proceeded via video-conferencing as permitted by the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Major blow to AAP as Chadha, 6 other Rajya Sabha MPs quit party to merge with BJP

NEW DELHI, April 24: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) suffered a jolt on Friday as seven of its Rajya Sabha MPs, including Raghav Chadha, Ashok Mittal and Sandeep Pathak, quit the party, with Chadha saying all of them had merged with the BJP, asserting that the Arvind Kejriwal-led party had strayed from its principles, values and core morals.

Harbhajan Singh, Rajendra Gupta, Vikram Sahni and Swati Maliwal were the other four parliamentarians in the group of seven. Their move came as a surprise to many, as the exits were disclosed at a hurriedly called press conference at Constitution Club in central Delhi, after which AAP chief Kejriwal alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had betrayed the people of Punjab while state Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann termed the seven MPs

"gaddar" (traitors).

The BJP extended a warm welcome to the MPs as party president Nitin Nabin offered them traditional sweets.

"Welcomed Raghav Chadha Ji, Sandeep Pathak Ji, and Ashok Mittal Ji to the BJP family at the Party HQ today. Also, best wishes to Harbhajan Singh Ji, Swati Maliwal Ji, Vikram Sahney Ji, and Rajinder Gupta ji to work under the dynamic leadership of PM Narendra Modi towards the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047," Nabin said in a post on X shortly thereafter.

AAP leaders accused the saffron party of launching "Operation Lotus" to break away party MPs and of conspiring to stop the Mann government's good work in Punjab.

Chadha said at the press conference that the seven MPs had merged with the BJP as the AAP was no longer hon-

nouring its founding principles.

"The AAP, that I nurtured with my blood and sweat and to which I gave 15 years of my youth, has completely strayed from its principles, values and core morals," he said.

Chadha was recently removed as the deputy leader of the AAP in the Rajya Sabha and was replaced by Mittal.

"As per the Constitution, two-thirds of the total MPs of a party can merge with another party," Chadha said, referring to the party's strength of 10 MPs.

"They have already signed, and this morning we submitted all the required documentation, including signed letters and other formal paperwork, to the chairman of the Rajya Sabha," Chadha said. Pathak, who held the post of national general secretary in the AAP, also said the party had diverted from the principles (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Census: RGI orders village-wise mapping of vulnerable areas

No house-listing or housing census to be conducted in areas under sole occupation

NEW DELHI, April 24: The Registrar General of India (RGI) has directed district magistrates and municipal commissioners to identify villages, habitations and communities vulnerable to "threats or intimidation" that could hamper the free conduct of the Census and ensure their coverage in the process.

Taking cognisance of the possibility that some areas could be left out of the Census due to inaccessibility or prevailing socio-economic realities, the RGI directed the authorities to do a vulnerability mapping of such areas.

It has asked officials to conduct the exercise village-wise to "identify the villages/hamlets/habitats and segments of people vulnerable to any threat, intimidation or interference" with the free conduct of the Census. The RGI also directed that no house-listing or housing census will be conducted in the areas under the sole occupation and control of Defence Services formations, Central Reserve Police Units, Border Security Force and similar military or paramilitary organisations.

"The PCOs would thereafter make all necessary arrangements for conduct of the 2nd phase of the Census operations (Population Enumeration) in all such special charges. It is to be kept in mind that there shall be no Houselisting and Housing Census in such Special Charges," it said.

A pan-India helpline number -- 1855 -- has also been launched for the Census.

RGI directed the authorities to identify the source of such threat or intimidation and the persons likely to spearhead such an offence of undue influence.

"While doing this exercise they shall take into account both past incidents and current apprehensions," the directive said.

Officials have also been asked to identify a point of contact within vulnerable habitats or communities so that developments can be tracked constantly.

"The Charge Officer and Principal Census Officer (PCO) should compile all such information and finalise the vulnerability mapping for the entire charge/district respectively," it said.

The RGI directed that Charge Officers and PCOs should make special arrangements to ensure a free and fair Census in vulnerable areas. They have been asked to undertake visits to such locations, meet communities and explain the purpose and arrangements of the Census.

"Every District would have people who are difficult to be enumerated. Such groups would include people who are highly mobile/floating population like migrant labour, those engaged in occupations like herding of sheep/ cattle and such other Nomadic Tribes, gatherers of forest produce, seafarers who are likely to be absent during the entire period of enumeration, homeless people, street children, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Perseverance will bring success one day, and students must be willing to work for it'

Assam physicist Atanu Nath wins global Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics

NALBARI, April 24: An assistant professor from Assam, Atanu Nath, is among the winners of the 'Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics 2026', often referred to as the 'Oscars of Science'.

Nath shared the award with 376 scientists, including 11 from India, as part of an international collaboration recognised for their work on the Muon g-2 experiments conducted at CERN, Brookhaven National Laboratory, and Fermilab.

An assistant professor of physics at Tihu College in Nalbari district, Nath expressed delight at the achievement and exhorted youth to pursue research as a career rather than focusing on traditional jobs only. Talking to reporters, Nath said it was a proud moment to be among the winners of one of the most prestigious awards in science.

He said while most students in Assam want to become doctors or engineers, more should pursue



their potential for becoming scientists and researchers, as it also has a lucrative future, and they can contribute meaningfully to society.

"Perseverance will bring success one day, and students must be willing to work for it," the assistant professor added.

Nath, hailing from Hailakandi

district, had completed his graduation at Gurucharan College (now University) in Silchar.

He received his postgraduate degree from SN Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences in Kolkata and conducted advanced studies at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai.

In 2013, he joined the University of Naples Federico II in Italy for doctoral research. He received his PhD in 2016 and then worked as a guest researcher in the Muon-2 laboratory and as a guest professor at US-based Fermilab.

After returning from the United States in 2020, he joined IIT-Guwahati as a postdoctoral researcher and started working in his current position in 2022.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, congratulating Nath, said his achievement is an inspiration for young minds.

"From Hailakandi to the global stage. Congratulations to Dr. Atanu Nath on being awarded the 2026 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics, often called the 'Oscars of Science'," Sarma said in a post on X. "His achievement is a matter of pride for the entire Northeast and an inspiration for young minds," he added. (PTI)

Consumption sustaining growth; predictable support essential for GDP expansion: FM

PUNE, April 24: Domestic consumption is sustaining the growth momentum in the economy, and predictable policy support is essential to ensure that the pace of GDP expansion continues, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday.

Speaking at an event organised by SBI here, Sitharaman also said that a committee of bankers is looking into the issue of whether to allow exclusive distribution tie-ups for selling third-party products by banks or adopt an open architecture approach.

She also urged banks to focus on the physical contact with customers as they go global and digital. The minister further said that the disinvestment process of IDBI Bank will continue going ahead. "...consumption emerging out of its domestic market itself is able to sustain our growth, which is the fastest even now in the world," she said.

The finance minister said that while it is necessary for the consumption for the growth process to continue, it is also pertinent to have predictable policies.

"...unless our domestic manufacturing, agricultural growth, tourism, IT and related services sector are given that constant sup-



port, predictable support, India's growth story will be difficult to keep up," she added.

Stating that exports are also important, Sitharaman appreciated the work of exporters in the last few months amid the setbacks like the US tariffs, wherein they have found newer markets while facing troubles from one.

Replying to a question on policy support to the affected sectors because of the current Middle East crisis, she said the government will see what it can best do and added that things are very dynamic at present, with talks between the US and Iran being on.

She also reminded that the government has responded with a tar-

getted package for the US tariff-impacted entities.

To a question on the asset quality impact at banks because of the Middle East crisis, Sitharaman suggested that there is no need to be concerned, as the non-performing assets are at a multi-decade low.

Answering a query on an open architecture approach when it comes to the sale of third parties' products by banks, she said a committee under the Indian Banks Association is looking into it.

"The IBA chairman with the IBA will be talking to banks to understand how best to go about it, what are the vulnerabilities by keeping one (entity), by keeping several ...all these are going to be

worked upon," she said.

The comments from the finance minister led to a sharp correction in the stock of SBI Life, which depends on its largest Indian bank parent for a bulk of its premiums.

Amid the huge changes in the tech landscape being brought about by Anthropic's AI model Mythos, the FM said a meeting with banks was held in New Delhi on Thursday, and all the lenders have been asked to work together on it under the leadership of SBI chairman C S Setty, who also chairs IBA.

"In the coming weeks, there will be a lot of interaction within the banks, understanding where more investments will have to be made, what kind of technologies can come in, how AI itself can be used for countering this AI challenge," Sitharaman said.

Meanwhile, Sitharaman said that LPG demand is being "largely" attended to by the companies, and everybody is getting the cooking gas, but there were a few instances of challenge.

Stressing the need for banks to have better connect with customers amid the progress on the digital front, Sitharaman said the human element is the spirit of inclusion in banking. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

All 20 convicts awarded lifer

while the accused were represented by Manas Sarania. While interacting with the local media persons here right after the court verdict, Ziaul Kamar, the special public prosecutor said that they are disappointed as the court has not considered the case as the rarest of rare and has not pronounced capital punishment so far. We will challenge the verdict in a higher court soon, Kamar added further.

Pawan Khera suffers High Court

husband is the chief minister of Assam, but she is not. "If Khera had raised those accusations against the chief minister, the matter would have been a political rhetoric. But in order to gain political mileage, he has dragged an innocent lady into the controversy," the order stated.

He has not yet proved beyond doubt that Bhuyan Sharma has passports of three other countries while he has also not yet proved beyond doubt that she had opened a company in the United States of America and invested a huge amount of money, the judge said. The court said that it is of the opinion that under the given circumstances, this case cannot be termed as one of 'defamation simpliciter', a plain claim of defamation without any accompanying factors such as malice or conspiracy.

There are materials for a prima facie case under Section 339 of the BNS, which addresses the possession of forged documents or electronic records, it said adding that the petitioner has been avoiding police investigation.

Custodial interrogation is necessary in this case to find out who his associates are, who had collected those documents for him and how and from where they had collected those documents, the court said.

The judge also pointed out that there are no materials in the case to suggest that the accusations brought against the petitioner are intended to injure and humiliate him by having him arrested.

The court held that the petitioner does not deserve the privilege of anticipatory bail.

The high court had heard Khera's petition on Tuesday and reserved its order.

A team of advocates, led by Abhishek Manu Singhvi, had argued on Khera's behalf while the Assam Advocate General Devajit Saikia had opposed the bail petition. (PTI)

BJP hails court's decision

from the Congress leader. "Rahul Gandhi, who backed Khera, should also apologise," he said. He alleged that Khera is avoiding the investigation and advised him to cooperate with the authorities. "Now, Khera, who was projected as a 'lion' (babbar sher) by Gandhi, is silent like a meek cat (bheegi billi). He is hiding and running away; he should appear before the Assam Police," he said.

The BJP spokesperson also pointed out that Khera failed to secure relief from higher courts.

"He did not get any relief from the Supreme Court either. The Supreme Court reprimanded him and told him to approach the Gauhati High Court. The relief he had obtained from the Telangana High Court on the basis of false documents was not extended," he said. Poonawalla alleged that Khera attempted the "political assassination" of the Assam chief minister with manipulated documents at the behest of Islamabad. "Pawan Khera targeted the Assam chief minister and Assam's daughter -- his wife -- on the basis of fake documents, forged material, and photoshopped documents. (PTI)

10 Indians died in Russia-Ukraine

cooperation from some families regarding the repatriation of mortal remains. "The government is committed to supporting every citizen in distress," she said. "In one instance, we arranged for the return of mortal remains, but the family told us to keep them for three months as they were pursuing legal action. There are complex human angles involved," Bhati said.

The petitioners' counsel refuted the government's claim of "voluntary" service and said this is a clear case of human trafficking. He said the victims were duped by agents and forced onto the frontline after their travel documents were seized. "The MEA has not been forthcoming," he said, adding, "Families have sent 120 representations over the last few months with no response. They have not even collected DNA samples for identification. It is not just inaction, they are not even in contact with us."

He also urged the bench to view the video evidence sent by a victim, detailing his plight from the war zone.

The bench directed the MEA to file a comprehensive status report detailing the specific steps taken to ensure the safety and return of the citizens.

Earlier, the bench took note of the plea and asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was present in the court, to take instructions on the issue. The petitioners' counsel told the bench that these 26 individuals were Indian citizens stuck in Russia. He claimed that they were compelled to take part in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. (PTI)

France effects visa-free

"There are some Indian nationals on board these ships. They are safe. As far as our ships are concerned in the Persian Gulf, we continue to remain in close conversation with Iranian authorities so that they can safely exit the Persian Gulf and reach India," he added.

On a query on whether during the MEA's Secretary (West) visit to the US, the issue of designating TRF outfit was raised, the MEA spokesperson said Secretary (West) travelled to New York, and he made several statements there including, in the ECOSOC.

He also met the Secretary General and several issues that are part of our agenda at the UN were discussed.

"In regard to TRF, I can say that the monitoring team is considering this, and we continue to push hard because we want to strengthen global fight against terrorism and in that regard it's important that UN member states are on board with how we take, how we approach fighting terrorism globally speaking," he added. (PTI)

Fresh notice in RS for

of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, and the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968," he said. The Congress leader said there are now nine specific charges against the CEC, which have been recorded in "extreme detail" and which cannot be "denied or suppressed". "His continued hold on the position is an assault on the Constitution. It is utterly shameful that this individual remains in office, so that he can continue to act on the directions of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister," Ramesh said. The notice calls for an address to the President for Kumar's removal, invoking provisions of the Constitution, the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023, and the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.

The MPs have cited a series of alleged actions and omissions by the CEC, which they claim cumulatively amount to misconduct of a "grave character". These include alleged partisan enforcement of the model code of conduct, public remarks and social media communication targeting a political party, administrative lapses, and conduct deemed "unbecoming" of a constitutional authority. (PTI)

Amritpal produced before Dibrugarh

The Punjab and Haryana High Court had last week permitted the Punjab government to arrest him after the expiry of his NSA term, while allowing all proceedings to be conducted through video-conferencing.

A Punjab Police team from Amritsar (Rural) led by a DSP-rank official, has been camping in Dibrugarh since April 19. Singh was first taken into custody on April 23, 2023, from Punjab's Moga district -- nearly two months after he and his armed supporters allegedly broke through barricades, barged into the Ajnala police station on the outskirts of Amritsar, and clashed with officers to secure the release of an aide.

Charges have already been framed against 41 accused, including Singh, under multiple sections of the Indian Penal Code. Twelve other cases are pending against Singh and his supporters across Amritsar (Rural), Jalandhar, and Moga, linked to incidents of violence and intimidation. (PTI)

Major blow to AAP as Chadha

on which it was founded. Of the seven MPs, six come from Punjab, including Chadha, Pathak, Mittal, Rajinder Gupta, Vikram Sahni, and Harbhajan Singh, while Swati Maliwal is from Delhi. The three Rajya Sabha MPs who still remain with the party are Sanjay Singh, ND Gupta and Balbir Singh Seechewal.

AAP sources said the exits were aimed at destabilising the party before the Assembly elections in Punjab next year and admitted that the party was on guard to keep its flock together in the state. Party insiders said the fear of action by central agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) could have played a part in influencing the decision of some of the MPs who were businessmen from Punjab while the others were unhappy with their shrinking political role within the party.

On April 15, the ED conducted raids at business entities linked to AAP Rajya Sabha MP Ashok Mittal in Punjab as part of a FEMA probe. Pathak, who was national general secretary, was feeling sidelined as his role was restricted to just the day-to-day affairs of the party, they said. (PTI)

SIR: SC asks Bengal tribunals

the state which has a history of violence-hit elections in the past. The top court also asked the persons excluded from the voter lists to approach the court-appointed 19 appellate tribunals for redressal of pending issues, including the deletion of names from the voters list.

It asked the appellate tribunals to give out-of-turn hearing to those who make out a case of urgent hearing for addition in voter lists. On the issue of exclusion or inclusion in the voter lists, the CJI also granted the liberty to aggrieved persons to also approach the Calcutta High Court Chief Justice on the administrative as well as judicial side for redressal of grievances.

"Most issues have been comprehensively answered by our April 13 order. However we can understand that some issues would keep on arising on a day-to-day basis warranting attention of the High Court Chief Justice or the Appellate Tribunal. Liberty is given to approach the Chief Justice on the administrative side for redressal of pending issues," the bench said in its order.

Earlier, the top court ordered that persons, whose pleas were allowed by the Appellate Tribunals before April 21 or 27, must be permitted to vote in the first or second phase of elections respectively. (PTI)

Census: RGI orders village

people living in areas affected by some form of social/political tension etc," it said. The PCO should ensure that such groups are enumerated without omission, the directive said and added that it must be ensured that if any population has now started living in the uninhabited villages of the previous census then they are enumerated without omission. The Census Commissioner also asked district intelligence units to remain alert on the issue and provide regular feedback to the PCO through the district superintendent of police.

The RGI also said the PCO and the district superintendent of police should hold a joint review and finalise a focused action plan to address potential threats or intimidation. Officials have been asked to pay special attention to verify whether people from vulnerable habitats and communities are being properly enumerated.

"In case they find that some sections of the people are not being enumerated or that false information is being recorded or returned, they should immediately inform the Charge Officer/PCO," the directive said.

It added that the Charge Officer and PCO should dispatch squads to visit such areas to ensure that there is no overt or covert hindrance to enumeration and closely monitor the situation. (PTI)

Always on India: From service to essential infrastructure

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 24: Connectivity in India is no longer a differentiator; it is infrastructure. Much like electricity or banking, it is expected to work reliably, consistently, and without interruption, powering the digital moments that define everyday life.

The shift today is less about faster networks and more about the role connectivity plays as the backbone of an increasingly digital society. As expectations evolve, providers are being pushed to move beyond service delivery and position themselves as dependable enablers of seamless, always-on experiences.

Consumers rarely talk about bandwidth anymore. What they notice instead is disruption. A dropped call during a banking alert, a lag during a digital payment, or a network hiccup in the middle of work is no longer viewed as inconvenience, it's seen as infrastructure failure.

This has reshaped expectations. Networks are now judged on consistency, uptime, and predictability, not peak performance. The best connectivity today is the kind users don't have to think about at all.

As India's digital footprint has expanded, so have risks, scam calls, phishing attempts, and financial fraud now form a daily backdrop to digital life. Consumers increasingly expect connectivity providers to play an active role in protection, not

just access.

As digital adoption deepens, safety has moved from being a user responsibility to a built-in expectation from connectivity providers. Scam calls, phishing messages, and financial fraud have become frequent touchpoints in daily digital life, prompting networks to shift from passive carriers to active protectors.

In response, operators like Airtel are deploying AI-driven, network-level intelligence to secure users at scale. This includes advanced spam and scam detection systems that automatically identify and block suspicious calls and messages, real-time alerting for potential fraud attempts, and continuous network monitoring to flag emerging threat patterns. These solutions work proactively—intercepting risks even before they reach end users—thereby embedding safety directly into the connectivity experience.

The competitive edge has moved away from standalone features to problem solving. Modern connectivity offerings are designed backwards from customer pain points, security, simplicity, and peace of mind, rather than forward from technology.

This reflects a broader industry mindset: success is no longer about selling plans, but about reducing friction in everyday digital moments, whether that is a safer call experience, smoother onboarding, or simpler account management.

Yezdi and BSA launch two stunning new scrambler motorcycles

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 24: Yezdi and BSA come together for the first time to launch two distinct scramblers for India's modern rider — one who seeks a motorcycle that feels at home in the city, is confident on trails, and comfortable on the highway. The two brands with original scrambler lineage are strengthening the format at both ends of the premium motorcycling market. The Yezdi Scrambler 350 and the BSA Scrambler 650 feature purpose-built powertrains and rugged, authentic design.

India's lightest 350cc scrambler, the brand-new, restless Yezdi Scrambler is tuned and built for city streets and the weekend escapes of the young-at-heart rider. The new liquid-cooled engine, named Katar (pronounced 'ka-taar') is the functional and structural core of the motorcycle. With a strong torque-to-weight advantage, the scrambler delivers a quick, decisive response right off the line, bringing Yezdi's instinctive character to life: Direct, flickable, and always ready to move. It starts at an introductory price of ₹1,99,950.

Powered by India's only 650cc single-cylinder engine in the segment, the BSA Scrambler carries forward a way of riding built purely on instinct. Synonymous with British engineering excellence and an enduring spirit of exploration, the Scrambler 650 draws its bespoke design from icons such as the Gold Star Catalina, A10 Spitfire, and A65

Firebird, blending authentic proportions with a premium, modern finish. The BSA Scrambler 650 carries an introductory price of ₹3,24,950.

Anupam Thareja, Co-founder, Classic Legends, said, "I have always believed that scramblers will redefine Indian riding culture the way SUVs redefined passenger four-wheelers. They are the SUVs of motorcycling. Scramblers are built for confident city-riding. But they are also agile and rugged enough to inspire you to explore terrain beyond roads on the weekends. Cap it all with the drop-dead gorgeous and bold design signatures of Yezdi and BSA, and we are ready '2 cause a scene' in the segment we created. Between the Yezdi 350 and the BSA 650, we have just defined what the Indian scrambler can be. The new Yezdi is designed to be your first crush with its unmistakable presence. A real scrambler designed around a tight core, this Yezdi is a taut, restless storm in stance and performance."

Boman Irani, Co-Founder of Classic Legends, said, "Yezdi has always belonged to riders with a flair for style and little patience for rigid labels. I grew up around these machines and got to see the underground scrambler movement myself. When I think of Yezdi, I think of scramblers. Each ride carries a sense of mischief that has always been a part of the Yezdi experience. The first Yezdi Scrambler made the format accessible in India; the new one expands what scramblers can become."

KTM expands its successful KTM 390 Duke and KTM390 adventure range

HT Bureau

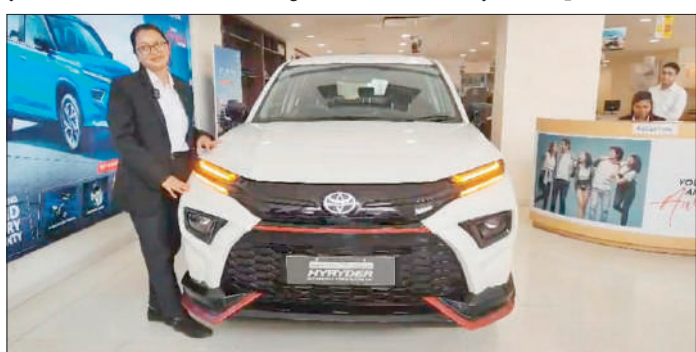
GUWAHATI, April 24: KTM, the world's No. 1 premium motorcycle brand, today announced the expansion of its celebrated KTM 390 Duke and KTM 390 Adventure range with new 350cc engine variants.

The move brings two of India's most popular performance motorcycles within reach of a wider set of riders. The KTM 390 Duke and KTM 390 Adventure have long set benchmark marks in the irrespective segments, known for sharp dynamics, advanced technology, and strong performance credentials. Building on this legacy, KTM is extending the range with 350cc variants that benefit from the lower 18% GST bracket, enabling a more accessible entry price while retaining the core attributes of the motorcycles.

The 350cc engine variants of the KTM 390 Duke and KTM 390 Adventure retain the KTM 'Ready to Race' character. Both models carry forward the full performance character of the range with 41.5 PS of power, 33.5 Nm of torque, and identical wheel base, ground clearance, technology and riding ergonomics. The KTM 390 Duke remains the sharp, aggressive, precision instrument built for spirited city riding. The KTM 390 Adventure continues to blend touring capability with genuine off-road ability.

The KTM 390 Duke with 350cc engine is available at INR 2,77,268 and the KTM 390 Adventure with 350 cc engine at INR 2,80,905 (ex-showroom, Delhi). All existing 399 cc variants—the KTM 390 Duke R, KTM 390 Adventure S, KTM 90 Adventure X and KTM 390 Adventure R continue unchanged.

This expansion reflects KTM's conviction that more riders deserve access to genuine performance motorcycling. By bringing the 390 Duke and 390 Adventure within reach of a broader customer base, KTM aims to meaningfully expand the segment and grow the community of riders who know what it truly means to be Ready to Race.



Toyota Urban Cruiser Hyryder combines strong fuel efficiency and premium features in a compact SUV

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 24: The Toyota Urban Cruiser Hyryder is available in two powertrains—Neo Drive and Self-charging Strong Hybrid Electric powertrain. The Urban Cruiser Hyryder delivers exemplary performance and best-in-class fuel efficiency.

The Urban Cruiser Hyryder also boasts of other best-in-segment features including an all-wheel drive powertrain, panoramic sunroof, 17-inch alloys, wireless charger, head-up display (HUD), 360-degree camera and connected car features. It is offered in seven monotone and four dual-tone exterior colours. Monotone colours include Cave Black, Sportin Red, Speedy Blue, Enticing Silver, Cafe White, Gaming Grey and Mid-night Black. Dual-tone colour options (with black roof) are available with Cafe White, Sportin Red, Enticing Silver and Speedy Blue.

Key features of the Urban Cruiser Hyryder include exterior design inspired by Toyota's global SUV line-

age with bold and sophisticated styling. It comes with advanced convenience features such as a panoramic sunroof, HUD and a 360-degree camera for an enhanced driving experience. It is also equipped with a 9-inch Smart Playseat touchscreen audio system with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, along with a wireless charger and i-Connect connected features.

In terms of safety, the SUV offers six airbags across all variants, ABS with EBD, Electronic Parking Brake (EPB),

TPMS, cruise control, front seat pretensioner and force limiter, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), advanced body structure, hill hold control, hill descent control, rear three-point seatbelts and all-wheel disc brakes.

Toyota i-Connect comes with over 55 connected features including smartwatch connectivity and advanced voice control. It also offers remote vehicle ignition start/stop, remote AC control, find my car, stolen vehicle tracking, remote immo-

biliser and vehicle health monitoring.

On the performance front, the Self-charging Strong Hybrid Electric grade is powered by a 1.5-litre engine with Toyota Hybrid System (THS) and e-drive transmission, delivering a combined output of 85 kW. It offers best-in-class fuel efficiency of 27.97 kmpl.

Technologically loaded, the Self-charging Strong Hybrid Electric technology highlights include:

Ability to run in EV mode, High fuel efficiency, Emissions well below specified limits, No external charging required, Responsive power with a quieter and more sustainable drive.

The Neo Drive grade comes with a 1.5-litre K-series engine with Integrated Starter Generator (ISG) technology, producing 75 kW power and 135 Nm torque. The Neo Drive variants also offer a first-in-segment all-wheel drive (AWD) option, along with a choice of 5-speed manual transmission and 6-speed automatic transmission.

Women activists demand dignity, safety and strict action against derogatory remarks BJP Mahila Morcha stages protest in Dibrugarh over women's rights



HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, April 24: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Mahila Morcha on Friday staged a protest in Dibrugarh, strongly voicing concerns over issues related to women's dignity, safety and rights.

A large number of women activists participated in the demonstration, carrying placards and raising slogans condemning what they described as "anti-women" remarks and actions.

The protest march witnessed active participation from party members across the district, including Prasanta Phukan, DMC Mayor Dr Saikat Patra, BJP District President Dulal Bora and Dibrugarh Zila Parishad president Pushpanjali Sonowal, who assembled in a disciplined manner holding banners and posters with messages advocating respect for women and condemning alleged derogatory statements made against them.

Slogans such as "Women are not weak," "Respect women's rights," and "Insult to

women will not be tolerated" echoed throughout the area.

The demonstrators emphasised the need to uphold the dignity of women in society and called for strict action against individuals or groups responsible for making offensive remarks. They also highlighted the importance of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women, stressing that any attempt to undermine women's status would be firmly opposed.

Leaders of the Mahila Morcha stated that the protest was organized as part of a broader movement to safeguard women's honour and to send a strong message against gender-based discrimination. They reiterated their commitment to continue such democratic protests until accountability is ensured.

The rally concluded peacefully, with participants urging authorities to take necessary steps to prevent such incidents in the future and to promote a culture of respect and equality.

Doctor couple attacked with iron rod, robbed by dacoits in Nagaon



HT Correspondent
NAGAON, April 24: A shocking dacoity took place in the early hours on Friday at Morikolung in Nagaon town, leaving a doctor couple critically injured.

Dr Ranjit Saikia and his wife Ruprekha Saikia were brutally attacked and robbed at their residence at Seuj Nagar, Morikolung, located a short distance from Morikolung Police Outpost. The incident has triggered widespread panic and outrage across Nagaon.

According to local residents, a gang of 6-7 dacoits with their faces covered in black cloth broke down the door of the house around 3 AM and went on a rampage inside.

Bleeding profusely, Dr Saikia managed to reach the house of a tenant and a relative nearby by ringing their doorbell. The occupants rushed out and were horrified to see his condition. The severely injured doctor gasped out details of the attack. Locals immediately reached the spot and found his wife Ruprekha Saikia lying in a critical state on a bed inside the house.

Both victims were immediately taken to Nagaon Bhogeswari Phukanani Civil Hospital. Due to their critical condition, they were shifted to a private hospital in Nagaon. After emergency treatment, they were referred to Guwahati for advanced medical care.

As per the latest information, both are currently admitted to the ICU of a Guwahati hospital. Ruprekha Saikia's condition is said to be critical.

Locals reported finding an iron rod lying beside Ruprekha Saikia's bed, leading them to believe the couple was attacked with it before the house was looted. The dacoits took cash, gold ornaments and other valuables, though the exact amount has not been ascertained yet.

An 8-9-year-old child present in the house was not harmed by the gang.

On being informed, a police team led by the Senior Superintendent of Police, Nagaon, reached the spot, took stock of the situation and launched an investigation. A sniffer dog was also deployed for tracking.

Police have intensified the probe, but no arrests had been made till the time of filing this report.

Local residents and conscious citizens have demanded the immediate arrest of the dacoits and strict punishment. They have also urged the police administration to ensure the safety and security of the public.

NFR restores 1927 steam locomotive 801-B

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, April 24: Reinforcing its commitment to preserving India's rich railway legacy, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has successfully restored the historic Steam Locomotive No 801-B, originally built in 1927 by M/s North British Locomotive Company Ltd., Glasgow, UK.

The meticulous renovation has been carried out at the New Bongaigaon Workshop (NBQS), blending heritage conservation with modern technological enhancements. The restored locomotive has been equipped with synchronised real steam locomotive sound, simulated smoke emission and dynamic lighting effects, bringing the vintage machine back to life in a visually and acoustically immersive manner, recreating the authentic ambience of the steam era. The enhancements have been carefully designed to maintain historical integrity while significantly improving experiential appeal for viewers.

Steam Locomotive 801-B represents a proud legacy of early 20th-century railway engineering. Its restoration serves as an important initiative to preserve and promote railway heritage, offering an engaging platform for railway enthusiasts, tourists and younger generations to experience the evolution of rail transport.

This initiative aligns with Indian Railways' broader vision of heritage conservation and public engagement, transforming static displays into interactive exhibits. The upgraded locomotive is expected to become a key attraction in heritage showcases and railway exhibitions under NFR.

Sanskrit speaking workshop concludes at Bodoland University

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, April 24: The successful conclusion of Seven-Day Sanskrit Speaking Workshop. The "Sanskrit Speaking Workshop" organised by the Department of Assamese at Bodoland University was held recently in the university conference hall in Kokrajhar. The valedictory programme of the workshop was successfully conducted in the presence of the Vice-Chancellor Professor B L Ahuja, respected language expert Professor Pradeep Kumar Patra, Assistant Professor Dr. Bibhuti Lochan Sharma (convener and trainer of the workshop), Dr Daisy Rani Deka (joint coordinator), Dr Dipamani Baishya (joint coordinator), Dr Ratul Deka, along with participating students and research scholars.



The programme began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the Vice-Chancellor and all activities were conducted in the Sanskrit language by the participants. Notable items of the programme included recitation of hymns, Sanskrit songs, Saraswati Vandana, self-introduction, two Sanskrit dramas, experience sharing, daily routine

narration, telephone conversation, market conversation, number reading and time reading.

In his speech, the Vice-Chancellor emphasized the importance of continuous practice for achieving fluency in spoken Sanskrit and wished a bright future for the participants. Language expert Professor Pradeep Kumar Patra highlighted the importance and necessity of Sanskrit in practical life and congratulated the participants while distributing certificates. The faculty members present also spoke on the importance of Sanskrit and encouraged regular practice and study, motivating the participants.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Assistant Professor Dr Dipamani Baishya of the Department of Assamese.

Betbari residents seek police outpost

HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, April 24: The Betbari Citizens Forum handed over a memorandum to the District Commissioner in view of the frequent accidents and anti-social activities in Betbari Mouza. The petition, signed by Betbari Citizens Forum President Lekhan Changmai and Secretary Ranjan Konwar, also demanded urgent repair of roads connecting Tarimua Ali, Kahan Ali, Na Ali and Gohai Ali, as well as speed bumps on Tarimua Road connecting to National Highway 37. Due to the continuous flow of vehicles at the Betbari Alimur point, local people, students and small vehicles find it very risky to cross the highway and hence a traffic constable is urgently required there.

Through a petition to the Sivasagar district administration, the Forum urged the authorities to move electrical poles near road junctions to a safer distance.

On April 16 and 17, one person died and another was severely injured in two separate accidents on Tarimua in Betbari due to the alarming increase in drug-related cases in Betbari Mouza. There are many liquor shops in the area and a simultaneous increase in the use of deadly drugs may bring serious hazards to the youth in the area.

The Forum stated in the petition that the authorities should direct NHIDCL to repair up to 39 metres of all local roads connecting to the National Highway, which it said is mandatory.

Durga is safe and healthy

Radio-collared elephant monitored by Golaghat forest department found to be pregnant and stable

HT Correspondent
GOLAGHAT, April 24: To observe movements and collect information, three elephants named Rongali (2022), Kaliyani (2023) and Durga (2023) were radio-collared by the Forest Department of Golaghat, which remained active till 2024. However, the forest officials came to know that the radio collars of two elephants were deactivated except for Durga. Recently, under the leadership of Mukut Ch Das, DFO, Golaghat and a team of expert veterinarians, it was informed that Durga is now safe and pregnant without any complications, though many questions arise about the radio collaring of Durga. The main objective of radio collaring of wild elephants is to determine elephant occupancy and facilitate elephant conservation as a whole.

Earth Day 2026: Projexel Foundation at South Point School organise green initiative



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, April 24: In a significant move toward fostering environmental consciousness among youth, the Projexel Foundation in collaboration with South Point School, Barsapara and Swapnapur, organised a grand celebration of Earth Day 2026. The event was held under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Science, bringing together educators, environmentalists and students to deliberate on sustainable solutions for the planet.

The programme began with the inauguration and welcome address delivered by Rishvik Chanda, Principal of South Point School.

Following the inauguration, a series of competitions were conducted, including an art competition, slogan writing competition and poem writing competition, encouraging students to express their thoughts on environmental protection and sustainability.

A rally for Mother Earth was also organised, during which students participated in an awareness march carrying placards to spread messages on environmental conservation.

As part of the initiative, a signature campaign titled "I Pledge to Save Mother Earth" was launched, encouraging collective responsibility toward protecting the environment.

The event also featured guest addresses by Chief Guest Ratna Singh Bhardwaj, Councillor and Social Activist and Guest of Honour Priyadarshini Sharma, Founder of Swapnapur, who spoke on the importance of youth participation in climate action and sustainable development.

The programme concluded with a prize distribution ceremony, recognising the winners of the various competitions.

Cachar gears up for smooth vote counting

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, April 24: In a concerted effort to ensure seamless and error-free vote counting for seven constituencies of the Assam Legislative Assembly Elections 2026, the District Administration, Cachar, organised a series of intensive training

and briefing sessions at the old conference halls of the DC office here on Thursday.

The initiative, held as part of the district's comprehensive preparedness measures was aimed at building the capacity of tabulators, transit officers and officials and staff en-

Special Lok Adalat scheduled in Silchar on July 18

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, April 24: The Special Lok Adalat is set to be organised by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Cachar, Silchar on 18/07/2026 in Cachar district. It will commence from 10:00 AM onwards at the District Court Campus and Lakhimpur Court Campus.

Pending cases, including those under the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, will be taken up during the Special Lok Adalat. Both parties of the respective cases who have received summons or notices are requested to participate and avail the opportunity to settle their cases amicably through the Lok Adalat.

The DLSA, Cachar will provide conciliators at the concerned courts/booths to handle the cases taken up during the Lok Adalat.

Basanta Utsav to be held in Nitaipukhuri

HT Correspondent
DEMOW, April 24: Under the patronage of Junak Yuba Sangha and in association with Dehingia, Duwarisiga and Gorukhuti Gaon people, the third annual Basanta Utsav 2026 will be organised at the Dehingia Gaon Middle School playground on April 25 and April 26.

Various programmes and competitions will be organised as part of the event. The organisers have invited people to be present and participate in the programme.

National seminar on marine economy held in Sivasagar



HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, April 24: Sivasagar Bir Lachit Borpuhan College organised a two-day national seminar on "Marine Economy" on April 22 and 23, which was inaugurated by Jiten Hazarika, Vice Chancellor of Dibrugarh University, in the presence of Prof Sandeep Kaur of Punjab Central University, Sangeeta Angam of Nagaland University, Dr Salima Begum, Registrar of Manipur Dhanmanjuri University, writer Dr Panchanan Borthakur, Dr Saumerjyoti Mahanta, Abhinandan Kashyap of Raja Fishery College and other distinguished guests.

Dr Jeeten Hazarika, in his speech, said that a sustainable economy dependent on oceans or water resources generally means the "blue economy," which refers to economic development through the conservation of water resources like oceans, rivers, lakes, etc.

Professor Kaur of Punjab Central University, delivering the keynote address, said that a sustainable economy based on marine or water resources is a development approach that promotes both economic benefits and environmental conservation.

Sangeeta Angam said that the concept of marine economy is completely possible in the Northeast, especially in Assam, as a centre stage of a "river-centric blue economy." Although there is no sea in the region, there is a need to develop a water economy for vast rivers, canals, reservoirs and cross-border trade.

Salima Begum said that water tourism should greatly enhance the importance of river routes in shipping and the import and export of commercial goods through river islands, river tours and boat tours. She added that hydropower and renewable energy are needed to strengthen the economy through tidal power, wave power and hydropower.

Another speaker, Dr Soumarjyoti Mohanty, said that rivers like the Brahmaputra, Barak and Kapili can be used as waterways to increase freight and passenger transport. This would reduce road pressure and lower costs.

Researcher Abhinandan Kashyap demonstrated a PowerPoint presentation on fisheries development. Earlier, Dr Pankajyoti Hazarika, Principal of Bir Lachit Borpuhan College, delivered the welcome address and said that the seminar is expected to draw national attention to the immense potential for the growth of the blue economy in the district. The programme was attended by many trainees from the Industries Department of Sivasagar district. The event was moderated by Dr Santanu Buragohain, Professor of the English Department of the college. Several dignitaries were present and a special Bihu dance programme was cheered by all the participants.

KKHSOU hosts lecture on Indian Knowledge Systems

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, April 24: The Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) in collaboration with the Banikanta Kakati Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems (BKCKIS), Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), organised an academic lecture on "Colonial Education and Indian Knowledge Systems: Revisiting Knowledge Hierarchies" on Thursday at the Conference Hall, 6th Floor, Block-C, City Campus, Khanapara.

The lecture was delivered by Prof Upasana Bora Sinha, Professor, Department of Chemistry, Nagaland University. Faculty members, officers, research scholars and students of the university attended the programme.

In her lecture, Prof Sinha discussed the evolution of educational systems in India and examined the

impact of colonial educational policies on indigenous systems of knowledge. She highlighted the richness of pre-colonial educational traditions and explained how colonial policies gradually created knowledge hierarchies by privileging Western systems of education over Indian knowledge traditions.

The lecture also focused on the significance of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in contemporary higher education and emphasised the need to recognise multiple knowledge traditions within academic discourse. Special attention was given to the role of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in promoting the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into mainstream education through multidisciplinary learning, language-based knowledge transmission and research initiatives.

ABSU confers Kamal Kumar Brahma Award to HSLC 2026 toppers

ABSU honours 14 meritorious Bodo medium students with Kamal Kumar Brahma Award at Baksa programme



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, April 24: The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) conferred the 20th edition of the Kamal Kumar Brahma Award, 2026, to meritorious students at a ceremonial programme held at Salbari Higher Secondary School premises in Baksa district on Thursday.

The award recognises the top-performing students from Bodo medium institutions in the HSLC 2026 examination. Altogether 14 students were honoured during the programme for their excellent performance in the recently declared HSLC final examination.

As part of the event, former Bodo Sahitya Sabha vice president Sitaram Basumatary paid floral tribute to the portrait of Kamal Kumar Brahma. The pro-

gramme was inaugurated by Nilokanta Goyary, BSS General Secretary.

Dr Jwngsar Brahma, Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Science at Tezpur University, attended the function as the chief guest. ABSU president Khwrmdao Wary chaired the programme and a large number of students and citizens participated in the event.

Wary stated that the students' union is conferring this award to students who have excelled with best performances in the HSLC final examination from Bodo medium backgrounds across the state. He said that the students' union is working for the uplift and development of Bodo medium education and accordingly students' results are improving in the state.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The most effective way to do it, is to do it.
- Amelia Earhart

Pakistan as peacemaker

Pakistan's emergence as a diplomatic intermediary between the United States and Iran has introduced an unexpected variable into South Asia's strategic equation. For a country more often associated in global discourse with internal instability and regional tensions, Islamabad's role - whether seen as substantive mediation or facilitated diplomacy - has generated symbolic capital. At first glance, Pakistan's peacemaker moment appears to cut against India's narrative. It has also triggered debate over what this means for India's long-standing ambition to be recognised as a leading global power and a consequential diplomatic actor. For over two decades, India has carefully cultivated an image of itself as a rising power defined by strategic autonomy, economic weight, democratic legitimacy and responsible international behaviour. It has positioned itself as a bridge between North and South, East and West, and as a credible voice in an increasingly fragmented global order. Yet diplomacy, particularly in moments of crisis, often rewards visibility as much as structural power. Pakistan's ability to insert itself into a high-stakes geopolitical crisis has, at least temporarily, created a perception of diplomatic initiative that India has not visibly matched.

This matters because global leadership is not measured only by GDP, military strength or summitry. It is also measured by the capacity to shape outcomes in moments of instability. In that respect, Pakistan's role - especially its reported access to both Washington and Tehran, alongside the personal diplomacy surrounding its military leadership - has projected agility. Even if the mediation remains fragile, contested or overstated, the optics alone have strategic consequences. For India, the challenge is not that Pakistan has displaced it as a global actor. That would overstate the case. India's economic scale, diplomatic reach, technological base and geopolitical relevance remain of a different order. The challenge is that Pakistan's move complicates India's claim to be the region's primary diplomatic anchor. It raises uncomfortable questions in some strategic circles: Why was India not more visible in a crisis involving two countries with which it has bilateral relations? Why did New Delhi appear more an observer rather than a shaper? And does Pakistan's emergence risk strengthening narratives - however exaggerated - that India's diplomatic ambitions sometimes outpace its crisis diplomacy?

Pakistan's mediation, while notable, rests on uncertain foundations. Reports differ on how decisive its role has actually been, with some analyses suggesting Islamabad has functioned more as a conduit than as the principal architect of diplomacy. Iran itself has at times sent mixed signals regarding the depth and format of talks. India should resist the temptation to react competitively to Pakistan's diplomatic visibility. Great-power credibility is not built through reactive diplomacy. It is built through sustained strategic positioning. New Delhi's strength has long been its ability to avoid being drawn into performative geopolitical contests. Preserving that discipline matters. India can leverage what Pakistan currently lacks: broad-based structural influence.

Cultural attack on festivals

By: Dr Priyanka Saurabh

The place of festivals in India's cultural fabric is not limited to mere joy and celebration; rather, they are deeply intertwined with society's historical memory, economic structure, relationship with nature, and human sensibilities. Here, festivals touch every aspect of life - farming, seasonal changes, family ties, collectivity, and faith. But today, the question is being seriously raised: are our traditional festivals drifting away from their original spirit? Are they facing a kind of 'cultural attack', gradually altering their true identity?

While the term "cultural invasion" may seem offensive, it is not meant to be an accusation directed at any one class or group. It refers to the slow, subtle, and often unseen process by which traditions, outside their original social and cultural context, begin to take on new meanings. This change can sometimes be natural, and sometimes the result of deliberate economic and ideological influences.

Indian festivals are primarily rooted in agriculture and nature. Much of India's society has been agriculturally dependent for centuries, and therefore, it has a deep connection with crops, seasons, and the land. The joy of harvest, the beginning of new sowing, and the arrival of rain - all of these were expressed through festivals. The farmer was central to these celebrations, as he was the producer of food and maintained the lifeline of society. Such festivals were less ostentatious and more participatory. People would gather together to sing and play music, share feasts, and express gratitude to nature.

But as society became increasingly urbanized, industrialized, and market forces strengthened, the nature of festivals began to change. Festivals were now viewed not only from a cultural or social perspective, but also as economic opportunities. The market linked festivals to consumption - where shopping, decoration, and display became central. Ideas like "offers," "discounts," and "auspicious shopping" became associated with festivals, which impacted their original form.

This change isn't just external, but also in mindset. Previously, festivals were about gathering, sharing, and expressing gratitude to nature. Now, in many places, they have become a competition - who spent how much, who bought what, whose celebration was more grand. In this process, the spirit of festivals has been lost. When discussing the "cultural invasion" of festivals, another important aspect emerges - the marginalization of folk traditions. Every region in India has had its own unique traditions, rooted in local lifestyles, languages, and resources. However, today, under the influence of media and the market, a kind of cultural homogenization is being observed. Certain festivals and their specific practices have become standardized across the country, leading to the gradual disappearance of local variations.

For example, many folk festivals that were once associated with agriculture and rural life have now been transformed into urban and religious interpretations. Their original spirit - connected to labor, nature, and collectivity - is now being overshadowed by mythology and market-driven symbols. This is diminishing the role of the segments of society that were truly the heart of these festivals - farmers and laborers.

It's also important to clarify that it's unfair to view every change negatively. Culture is inherently changeable. New elements are added to it over time, and this is proof of its vitality. However, problems arise when this change becomes unbalanced - when it begins to undermine the very foundations of society. The biggest question in today's context is whether we understand the true meaning of our festivals. Do we recognize that they are not merely religious rituals but also reflections of social and economic life? If festivals forget the role of the farmer, if the respect for labor is ignored, this signals a serious cultural imbalance. It is impossible, nor is it necessary, to completely separate festivals from the market. The market is a part of society and plays its role. However, it is essential that the market does not overpower the spirit of festivals. Maintaining a balance between consumption and ostentation is essential to ensure that the true spirit of festivals remains alive.

Blueprint for a secure Assamese national future

The question of the existence and secure future of the Assamese nation is no longer merely an emotional issue in the present time; rather, it has emerged as a profound political and economic challenge. If we observe closely the changes that have taken place in our society over the past few decades, it becomes evident that we have stepped into a very critical juncture. In our society today, emotional reactions have begun to take precedence over rational thinking, which can never be a positive sign for any nation. To prepare a blueprint for the future, we must first accept our weaknesses with complete objectivity. The rapid transformation in the demographic structure of Assam is a reality that cannot be ignored or concealed behind slogans. Addressing this requires a long-term strategy that encompasses all aspects, from land rights to the protection of language and culture. It must be understood that only those nations survive which can adapt themselves to the demands of time. The fear among Assamese people of losing dominance over their own land cannot be resolved merely through legal provisions or government protection. A fundamental transformation in our work culture and mindset is essential. As long as we remain dependent on others for our basic necessities, our self-respect will hold no meaning. Economic self-reliance alone can provide real political and social security to a nation. Therefore, strengthening the economic foundation must become the cornerstone of the Assamese future, and for that, every sector requires dedicated effort.

To strengthen the economic base of Assam, utmost importance must be given to land policy. Land is not merely a place for habitation; it is the primary source of production. The gradual loss of land from the hands of indigenous people in Assam is a deeply concerning issue. It is evident that the disinterest of local people in agriculture has allowed external forces to take control of fertile lands. If we fail to utilize our land productively, its transfer to others becomes inevitable. The future blueprint must ensure stricter legal safeguards over land ownership, restricting it primarily within the indigenous population. However, beyond legal frameworks, awareness about the practical use of land is even more crucial. The younger generation must engage in agriculture using modern techniques. Villages must be transformed into production hubs. The growing trend of selling land to build houses in urban areas will eventually render us landless. It must be remembered that the key to economic strength lies within the soil. Losing land essentially means breaking the backbone of a nation. Therefore, a new economic mindset centered around land conservation and scientific utilization must emerge. This demands a strong work culture and a society that respects labor. A nation that cannot demonstrate skill and productivity cannot survive for long on government support alone.

Another deep-rooted issue within Assamese society is the stagnation of intellectual growth and the lack of creative thinking. The current education system is producing degree holders who remain unemployed and lack practical knowledge. If Assam aspires to compete globally, a radical transformation in educational philosophy is necessary. Education must go beyond theoretical knowledge and integrate practical applications of science and technology into everyday life. The promotion of rational thinking is essential. Superstitions, blind be-

liefs, and emotional extremism have held us back for too long. A nation that prioritizes action over rhetoric is the one that thrives. If we remain dependent on external states even for basic goods, our sense of pride becomes meaningless. The future vision must be of a production-oriented Assam where every household functions as a small economic unit. This requires a robust work culture. The stereotype of Assamese people being lazy must be disproven through hard work. To capture markets, we must understand consumer behavior and maintain uncompromising quality standards. Economic independence will translate into real political strength. The younger generation must be educated not merely to chase government jobs but to innovate and create new opportunities.

Discussions on language and culture often become overly emotional, but the scientific approach necessary for preserving a language is frequently neglected. Language is not just a medium of literature; it is a vehicle of knowledge and intellectual discourse. If Assamese is not made compatible with modern technology and commerce, future generations will naturally drift away from it. Many powerful languages in the world face existential threats because they failed to evolve with time. Assamese must expand its presence in the digital sphere. Through translation, the best global knowledge must be brought into the language. Similarly, culture must not remain confined to traditional performances like Bihu dances or folk songs. It should be leveraged as an economic asset. Tourism can serve as a platform to showcase traditional crafts and cuisine globally. However, all this requires a long-term vision. No nation can build its future merely by glorifying its past. Learning from history, we must be mentally prepared to confront present challenges. Internal conflicts and narrow regionalism have divided us. It is time to construct a broader and more inclusive Assamese identity that respects all communities. Strengthening vocabulary and ensuring scientific use of grammar are essential for language development.

The geographical location and natural resources of Assam can play a decisive role in shaping its future. The vast water resources of our rivers have long been viewed only as sources of destruction due to floods and erosion. However, sustainable solutions have not been pursued with scientific and long-term planning. Future Assam must treat river management as a technical challenge and develop sectors like inland water transport and hydroelectric power. Forest resources and biodiversity must not only be preserved but also utilized as sustainable economic assets. The tea industry in Assam is facing challenges and requires modernization along with policies that protect small tea growers. The global demand for natural silk like muga and pat exists, yet we have failed to develop it as a modern industry. The future blueprint must prioritize industries based on indigenous resources. Instead of migrating for low-paying jobs, the youth must be trained to achieve self-reliance using local resources. This would also help reduce migration pressures. With advanced engineering and environmental science, our rivers can be transformed from sources of disaster into assets of prosperity.

Political awareness and effective leadership have often been lacking in Assamese society, leading to repeated failures. Politics is frequently driven by emotion and short-term gains

rather than long-term vision. Future Assam requires leadership capable of rational decision-making and bold action. Voters also have a significant responsibility. Blindly following slogans will never solve real problems. Decentralization of power and strengthening local governance are essential. A strong village economy is the foundation of a strong nation. The absence of organizational unity is another weakness. Fragmentation into numerous small groups has weakened collective strength. A minimum level of consensus is necessary to face crises unitedly. The future struggle will be a battle of knowledge and skills. Survival will depend on competence. Reservations may provide temporary relief but cannot be a permanent solution. The goal must be excellence in open competition. Political leadership must focus on shaping a long-term national vision rather than merely winning elections.

In the social domain, a progressive and inclusive outlook is necessary. The empowerment of women is crucial for societal progress. Although Assamese society offers relatively better status to women, they remain underrepresented in economic and decision-making roles. Future Assam must enable women to take leadership and entrepreneurial roles. Social attitudes towards labor must change. No work is inferior, and this mindset must be instilled from childhood. Vocational education and skill training should be made integral to the education system. Instead of producing job seekers, the goal should be to create job creators. Stronger engagement with capital markets and banking systems is necessary. The reluctance of Assamese people towards business often stems from fear of failure. Overcoming this fear and entering the market economy with confidence is essential. If we fail to plan our future, others will dictate it. Awareness and proactive engagement are our greatest tools. A shift from a saving mindset to an investment mindset is needed so that capital contributes to wealth creation.

The demographic imbalance in Assam presents a major challenge. This issue cannot be resolved through legal measures alone without public awareness. Long-term policies are required to preserve the demographic stability of indigenous communities. Emphasis must be placed on quality over quantity. A skilled and educated individual is more valuable than multiple unskilled individuals. Every citizen must be developed as a human resource. Special attention must be given to health and nutrition to ensure a physically and mentally strong future

generation. A strong nation can withstand any challenge. Assamese identity must extend beyond language and evolve into a representation of a robust work culture. Economic dominance in markets is essential for political slogans to have real impact. A financially weak nation cannot preserve its heritage. Understanding capital flow and financial systems is therefore crucial. In the modern world, wealth is the primary source of power, and acknowledging this reality is necessary for progress.

A bridge must be built between traditional knowledge and modern science. The wisdom of our ancestors in agriculture, architecture, and water management has been neglected. Techniques from the Ahom era, such as embankment construction and water conservation, still hold relevance. Integrating this knowledge with modern technology can address environmental challenges. In the era of climate change, environmental protection is vital for Assam. Preserving forests and rivers is not merely emotional but essential for economic sustainability. Destruction of natural resources will weaken our economic foundation. Sustainable development must become a widely accepted principle. Environmental balance should be considered in every industrial project. A green and prosperous Assam will establish a unique identity on the global stage. Drawing inspiration from history, we must build a modern, scientific, and progressive society.

The future of the Assamese nation depends on collective effort and a transformation in mindset. Remaining trapped in past glory or blaming others will not lead to progress. Problems must be addressed with responsibility and initiative. Transparency, accountability, and integrity must be strengthened at every level of society. Corruption has weakened our foundations and must be countered through social movements. If the youth adopt ethics and dedication as core values, the future will be bright. Assam possesses immense potential; it only needs proper direction. In the age of globalization, the challenge is to preserve identity while becoming global citizens. The day an Assamese youth excels globally while staying rooted in cultural identity will mark true security for the nation. The future Assam must harmonize modernity and tradition, ensuring equality, prosperity, and dignity for all. Achieving this vision requires commitment from today. A positive mindset and collective action are essential to build a secure and prosperous Assamese future.

keep dreaming of a world where no one dies from a mosquito bite. Education plays a massive role in the success of this mission. Much of the work happens on the ground, in villages and towns where community health workers travel door to door. They teach families how to properly hang a net, how to recognize the early signs of infection, and why it is vital to finish a full course of medication. These grassroots efforts are the heartbeat of the movement. On World Malaria Day, we celebrate these unsung heroes who work in difficult conditions to save lives. Their dedication is a testament to the human spirit and our innate desire to protect one another.

The economic argument for ending malaria is just as compelling as the moral one. Investing in malaria control is one of the most cost effective ways to improve global prosperity. For every dollar spent on prevention and treatment, there is a massive return in the form of improved health outcomes and increased economic activity. Children who grow up without the constant threat of malaria are more likely to stay in school and eventually contribute to their local economies. By clearing this hurdle, we unlock the potential of millions of people, allowing communities to flourish in ways that were previously impossible.

Climate change adds a new layer of urgency to the discussion. As global temperatures rise and weather patterns shift, the habitats of mosquitoes are expanding. Regions that were once too cold for malaria are now seeing the return of the disease. This reality reminds us that malaria is not just someone else's problem. It is a global issue that requires a global solution. The borders we draw on maps mean nothing to a mosquito. If we allow the disease to thrive in one corner of the world, we leave the door open for it to return to others.

Reflecting on World Malaria Day also forces us to confront the political will required to sustain this fight. Funding for malaria programs often fluctuates based on the political climate of donor nations. This inconsistency is dangerous. To truly



DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan



eliminate the disease, we need long term commitments that span decades. We need leaders who understand that health is the foundation of all other progress. This day is an opportunity for citizens to hold their governments accountable and demand that international health remains a top priority.

There is a certain beauty in the way the world comes together for this cause. From high level summits in Geneva to local football matches in rural villages, the message is the same: we have the tools, we have the knowledge, and we have the duty to end malaria. The red and white ribbons, the social media campaigns, and the lighting of monuments all serve to create a sense of shared destiny. It is a rare moment where the global community aligns its focus on a single, achievable goal.

The journey toward a malaria free world is not just about biology and logistics. It is about dignity. It is about the right of every person, regardless of where they are born, to live a life free from the fear of a preventable disease. When we celebrate World Malaria Day, we are celebrating our shared humanity. We are acknowledging that the suffering of a family in a remote village matters just as much as the health of those in a bustling metropolis. This empathy is what drives us forward.

The future path is clear but challenging. We must continue to invest in the development of even better vaccines and more resilient health systems. We must ensure that the tools we already have reach the people who need them most. We must listen to the voices of the communities on the front lines and empower them to lead

their own defense. The road to zero malaria is long, but every step we take brings us closer to a brighter, healthier reality for everyone.

World Malaria Day is a reminder to what we can achieve when we work together. It reminds us that while the challenges are great, our collective resolve is greater. It is a day of remembrance for those we have lost and a day of fierce determination for those we can still save. The fight against malaria is one of the great moral crusades of our time, and it is a battle we are winning, one net, one dose, and one life at a time.

The significance of this day will only grow until the day comes when we no longer need to mark it, because the disease itself has been consigned to the history books. Until then, we stand together, we speak out, and we continue the work of making the world a safer place for every child, every family, and every nation. This is the true meaning of the day. It is a promise kept to the future generations that they will inherit a world where the buzz of a mosquito is nothing more than a minor nuisance, not a death sentence. We carry this hope forward, fueled by the progress of the past and the possibilities of tomorrow.

The story of malaria is long, but the ending is ours to write. Through cooperation and unwavering focus, we are turning the tide. Every year on this day, we reaffirm that a malaria free world is not just a dream but a destination we are actively reaching for. The energy of this global movement is infectious, proving that when we unite against a common foe, there is no limit to what we can accomplish for the sake of all people everywhere.

the bridge it builds between those who have won the fight and those who are still in the thick of it. It is a call for equity. Most malaria deaths today occur in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly among children under five years old. This geographical concentration creates a cycle of poverty that is incredibly difficult to break. When a significant portion of the workforce is consistently sick, productivity drops. When healthcare systems are overwhelmed by preventable malaria cases, they have fewer resources to tackle other emerging threats. World Malaria Day highlights the fact that global health is only as strong as its weakest link.

Innovation is a major theme of this observance. Every year, researchers and health organizations use this platform to showcase new breakthroughs. We are currently living in an era of remarkable scientific advancement. The rollout of the first malaria vaccines represents a historic milestone that many thought would never come. These vaccines, along with next generation bed nets and more effective antimalarial treatments, provide a glimmer of hope. Still, the parasite is a cunning adversary. It constantly evolves to resist the drugs we throw at it, and mosquitoes develop ways to bypass our insecticides.

This constant biological arms race means that we can never afford to be complacent. World Malaria Day is the annual alarm clock that tells us to keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and



Author

By: Satyabrata Borah



keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

keep pushing, keep funding, and

Drive forward: Careers in India's electric vehicle

By: Dr. Prateek Singh

India is racing into an Electric Vehicle (EV) boom — and for engineers, it's the start of an exciting, opportunity-packed era. In 2024, over 50% of three-wheelers, 5% of two-wheelers, and 2% of cars sold in India were electric, with the country targeting 80 million EVs on the road by 2030. Despite global market slowdowns, India's EV sales surged by 20%, driven by policy support, robust consumer demand, and a firm commitment to local manufacturing. The EV battery market alone is projected to grow from US\$ 16.77 billion in 2023 to US\$ 27.70 billion by 2028, unlocking significant opportunities in energy systems, materials engineering, and battery innovation. With only around 12,000 public charging stations nationwide today, India needs to build 1.32 million by 2030 — a monumental infrastructure challenge requiring the expertise of electrical, civil, and software engineers alike. Backing this growth are powerful government schemes like FAME II and PM E-DRIVE, together injecting over Rs. 20,000 crore into EV manufacturing and infrastructure. Investments from major private sector players are flowing into R&D, production, and ecosystem development, while auto component makers ramp up spending, with Rs. 30,000 crore earmarked for FY26. Add to this India's advantage as a cost-competitive manufacturing hub and the drive for 100% domestic production, and

the message is clear: a wave of fresh demand is sweeping across multiple engineering fields. For aspiring and working engineers, this is a moment to seize. Electrical and Electronics Engineering is at the heart of the EV movement. From motor design to battery management systems, power converters to wiring harnesses, the shift to electric drives demands deep expertise in circuits, control systems, and high-voltage safety. Every EV needs a brain and a nervous system — and that's exactly what electrical engineers build. Mechanical Engineering is evolving fast. No longer limited to internal combustion engines, mechanical roles now focus on lightweight chassis design, thermal systems, aerodynamics, and integration of electric powertrains. The goal is to make EVs lighter, more efficient, and safer, without compromising performance. Battery Technology and Chemical Engineering are seeing explosive growth. Batteries are the beating heart of an EV, and engineers in this space are working on everything from lithium-ion cell chemistry to solid-state innovations, thermal regulation, and recycling solutions. As India ramps up domestic battery manufacturing, these roles are set to skyrocket. Software Engineering and Embedded Systems are now core to vehicle design. From smart dashboards to autonomous features and over-the-air updates, EVs are as much code as they are hardware. Engineers with skills in embedded C, IoT, machine learning, and cyber-



security are in high demand to power the EVs' digital backbone. Civil and Power Systems Engineering is critical behind the scenes. Charging infrastructure needs to be everywhere — in cities, towns, highways, and even rural areas. Engineers are needed to plan, build, and maintain a national network of fast, reliable, and grid-friendly EV chargers. Power systems experts are also leading efforts to ensure the grid can handle this new load. Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering is also entering a new phase. As companies scale up EV production, there's a huge need for engineers who can design efficient, automated, and sustainable manufacturing lines — especially under the "Make in India" push for self-reliant supply chains. Automotive Design and Human Factors Engi-

neering are gaining traction too. EVs offer new design freedoms, and engineers are rethinking everything — from interior layouts to user interfaces and driver experience — to suit electric platforms. Skills That Drive the EV Industry The EV sector blends mechanical, electrical, digital, and chemical domains into one high-performance engine, and to thrive here, engineers must rethink their learning pathways. Core design tools like SolidWorks, CATIA, and Ansys are now essential for mechanical and thermal engineers tasked with creating lightweight, energy-efficient components. In electrical and electronics engineering, mastering MATLAB/Simulink, power electronics, Battery Management Systems (BMS), and high-voltage safety protocols is no longer optional — it's expected. For those

eyeing roles in embedded systems, fluency in embedded C, Python, IoT frameworks, and CAN communication protocols is vital, particularly as vehicles become increasingly software-defined. On the battery front — one of India's fastest-growing verticals — knowledge in electrochemistry, cell design, thermal regulation, and battery lifecycle management is opening doors to high-value roles in both R&D and manufacturing. Platforms like Skill-Lync, NPTEL, and ISIE India offer tailored courses aligned with industry demand, while institutes such as IIT Madras, and IISc Bengaluru are pioneering specialised EV certifications and research programmes. Importantly, India's EV transition is being shaped by initiatives like FAME II, PLI schemes, and the Make in India mission — all of

which are nudging the industry towards local innovation. This means engineers who can work across disciplines, prototype rapidly, and understand both tech and policy frameworks are highly sought-after. Aspiring candidates should also focus on building project portfolios — whether it's a DIY electric drivetrain, a simulation of regenerative braking, or an EV charger prototype. These hands-on projects demonstrate real-world readiness and often matter more than a traditional résumé. In this new mobility era, the ability to learn fast, adapt across domains, and apply knowledge practically will separate the leaders from the laggards. For Indian engineers, the message is clear: your skills are your launchpad — and now is the time to upgrade. Choosing Your Launchpad in the EV Industry When it comes to starting a career in India's booming Electric Vehicle (EV) industry, one of the biggest choices young professionals face is where to begin: a nimble startup or a powerhouse corporate brand? Both offer rich ground — but the journey feels very different. EV startups are fast, flexible, and fearless. They are rewriting the rules of urban mobility and building bold, futuristic products. Working at a startup means getting your hands dirty — prototyping new battery systems, testing code in real-time, designing compact hardware that fits into scooters or city chargers. Here, you're not one cog in a big machine. You're in the core team. You might be building

in the morning and presenting to the CEO by afternoon. If you want speed, impact, and a steep learning curve, startups will stretch and shape you. But the pace comes with pressure. Roles blur. Resources are tight. And structure? Often still in the making. For self-driven engineers, designers, or marketers, that's the thrill. For others, it can feel chaotic. On the other hand, corporate giants offer scale, stability, and structure. You'll work on national-level EV rollouts, mass-market platforms, and robust R&D ecosystems. You'll learn how to test for safety and comply with global regulations. There's mentorship, cross-functional collaboration, and clear ladders to climb. The exposure here is vast — from advanced materials labs to international supplier chains. Yet, things move slower. Ideas can take months to get approvals. And your role might be more specialised. But if you value rigour, long-term growth, and deep domain mastery — this is where you build a strong foundation. The truth is, there's no wrong path — just different kinds of momentum. Some youngsters start in startups to gain versatility, then move to corporates for depth. Others build a base in large firms and leap into the startup world when they're ready to lead. What matters is knowing your strengths, your appetite for risk, and the kind of work culture that brings out your best. (The author is a NEET/JEE coach and career counsellor. Views expressed are personal).

CRPF Recruitment 2026 – 9195 Constable (Technical/ Tradesmen & Pioneer) Posts

Last Date: 19/05/2026.

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 9195 Constable (Technical & Tradesmen and Pioneer) Posts in Central Reserve Police Force. Minimum educational qualification for this post is 10th pass. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here till 19th May 2026.

Name of post: Constable (Technical & Tradesmen) and Constable (Pioneer)

No of posts: 9195 posts

No of posts @ Assam: 288 posts

Pay scale: Pay Level-3 (₹21,700 – ₹69,100)

Name of organisation: Central Reserve Police Force

Mode of application: Online

State-wise vacancy breakdown for Constable (Technical & Tradesmen) is as under.

Trade	No of vacancy
Driver	3,176
Bugler	1,274
Cook	1,426
Motor Mechanic Vehicle	739
Safai Karamchari	547
Water Carrier	529
Washerman	363
Barber	231
Tailor	197
Brass Band	175
Mali (Gardener)	142
Carpenter	123
Cobbler	118
Pipe Band	99
Painter	33
Hair Dresser	3
Total	9,175

Citizenship: Candidates must be a citizen of India.

Age Limit:

Constable (Driver): Candidates age must be between 21 to 27 years as on 1st August 2026. Candidates should not have been born earlier than 02/08/1999 and later than 01/08/2005.

Other posts: Candidates age must be between 18 to 23 years as on 1st August 2026. Candidates should not have been born earlier than 02/08/2003 and later than 01/08/2008.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

SC/ST: 5 years

OBC/ MOBC: 3 years

Educational Qualification: Candidates must have passed 10th exam or equivalent exam from a recognized Board/ University.

Technical Qualification:

Driver: Should possess Heavy Transport Vehicle Driving License and should pass the driving test at the time of recruitment.

Mechanic Motor Vehicle: Possessing 02 years Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) certificate in Mechanic Motor Vehicle recognized by National or State Council for Vocational training or any other recognized institution and one-year practical experience in the field of concerned trade.

OR

National or State apprenticeship certificate in Mechanic Motor Vehicle trade of three-year duration from a recognized institution and one-year practical experience in the field of concerned Trade.

Pioneer Wing:

a) One-year experience in respective trades like Masonry or Electrician.

b) Preference will be given to those having certificate of trade from recognized Industrial Training Institute.

Other Tradesmen posts: Must be proficient and worked in respective trades.

Candidates have to pay an application fee as mentioned below:

Category	Amount
UR/ EWS/ OBC	Rs 100/-
SC/ ST	Nil
Female/ Ex-servicemen	Nil

Payment Mode: Fee can be paid online.

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

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section.

Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "New Registration".

In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.

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

At the end, pay the application fee and submit the form.

Don't forget to take a print out of the application form.

Starting Date of online application submission: 20 April 2026

Last Date of online application submission: 19th May 2026

VisionQ Guwahati Recruitment 2026 – Faculty & Other Posts

Last Date: 30/04/2026.

VisionQ Coaching Institute, Guwahati has released an employment notification for the recruitment of Faculty and other posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply here.

VisionQ Coaching Institute is one of the most trusted coaching institutes in the region and is considered a leading destination for APSC and UPSC coaching in Guwahati.

1. English Faculty

No of posts: 02

Pay: ₹12,000 – ₹18,000 Basic pay per month

Age Limit: 26–35 years

Educational Qualification & Experience: Graduate/Post Graduate in English or related field. Minimum 6 months of teaching experience in competitive exams (SSC/Bank/Railway/APSC preferred). Strong command over grammar, comprehension, and exam-oriented teaching approach. Freshers can also apply.

2. Reasoning / History Teacher

No of Posts: 02

Pay: ₹12,000 – ₹18,000 per month (Negotiable based on experience and performance)

Age Limit: 25 – 35 Years

Educational Qualification & Experience:

* Graduate / Post Graduate in History / Any discipline with strong Reasoning aptitude.

* Prior teaching experience in competitive exam coaching preferred.

* Freshers with strong subject knowledge and communication skills may also apply.

* Must be able to teach Reasoning and/or History for competitive examinations (SSC, Banking, Railway, APSC, etc.).

* Good communication skills in English / Hindi / Assamese preferred.

3. Female Counsellor

No of posts: 02

Pay ₹10,000 – ₹14,000 Basic pay per month (Based on experience)

Age Limit: 22–35 years

Educational Qualification & Experience: Graduate in any discipline. Good communication and interpersonal skills required. Prior experience in counselling, student handling, or telecalling preferred. Candidate should be responsible for student counselling, handling inquiries, follow-ups, and guiding students regarding courses and admissions. Basic computer knowledge and professional behavior required. Freshers with good communication skills can also apply.

Interested candidate can email their resume to visionqghy@gmail.com or may contact 6001214044.

VisionQ Coaching Institute is one of the most trusted coaching institutes in the region and is considered as a leading destination for APSC and UPSC coaching in Guwahati. The institute also provides coaching for SSC, Bank, Railway, and CTET/ATET examinations through its centres located at Silpukhuri and Jalukbari.

Backed by a strong academic foundation and experienced faculty, VisionQ focuses on delivering quality education with a personalized approach. The institute aims to develop a competitive attitude among students through structured guidance, concept clarity, and continuous mentorship, helping aspirants achieve success in various government examinations.

LIC HFL Recruitment 2026 – 180 Junior Assistant Vacancy, Online Apply

Last Date: 30/04/2026.

LIC Housing Finance Ltd. has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 180 Junior Assistant Vacancy to be engaged in various offices of LIC Housing Finance Limited (LIC HFL). Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of post: Junior Assistant

Name of the organization: LIC Housing Finance Ltd.

No of posts: 180 posts

No of posts in Assam: 3 posts

Pay: Basic pay of Rs. 20,000/-

Nationality: Candidates must be an Indian Citizen.

Age Limit: Age of the candidates must be 21 years to 30 years as on 1st April 2026. i.e. candidates must have been born not earlier than 02.04.1996 and not later than 01.04.2005 (both dates inclusive).

Educational Qualification: Candidates must be a Graduate (minimum aggregate 55% marks) in any discipline from a university recognized by the Govt. of India or any equivalent qualification recognized as such by the central Government.

Note: Course completed through correspondence / distance / part-time are not eligible.

Computer Literacy: Candidates must have Operating and Working knowledge in computer systems.

Work Experience: Will be preferred.

Application Fee: Candidates have to pay an application fee of Rs. 800/- + GST. The above fee is applicable to all candidates and non-refundable.

State No of posts

Andhra Pradesh 8

Assam 3

Bihar 7

Chhattisgarh 3

Delhi 3

Gujarat 2

Jammu & Kashmir 1

Karnataka 29

Kerala 3

Madhya Pradesh 18

Maharashtra 25

Odisha 7

Punjab 1

Rajasthan 1

Sikkim 1

Tamil Nadu 21

Telangana 24

Uttar Pradesh 13

Uttarakhand 1

West Bengal 9

Grand Total 180

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these posts by visiting the official recruitment portal of LIC HFL. They may follow below mentioned steps.

* Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section.

* Click on Online Application Form link.

* A new webpage will be opened.

* Enter all your personal and educational details as required.

* Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.

* Pay the application fee and at the end click on submit button.

* Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form.

Starting date of submission of online application: 16th April 2026

Last date of submission of online application: 30th April 2026

Dhansiri Valley Public School Recruitment – 2 Posts

Last Date: 30/04/2026.

Dhansiri Valley Public School, Numaligarh has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 2 Faculty Posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of post: PGT

No of posts: 2

Subject-wise vacancy:

Mathematics: 1

Chemistry: 1

Educational Qualification: Post Graduate in concerned subject with minimum 60% marks. Candidates with B.Ed. degree will be preferred.

Experience:

‡ Minimum 2–3 years in a CBSE school preferred.

‡ Strong communication skills and proficiency in English required.

‡ Freshers with excellent academic records may also apply.

Age Limit: Not specified.

Pay: Salary will not be a constraint for deserving and experienced candidates.

Application fee if any: N/A.

Interested candidates may send their updated CV along with a recent passport-size photograph within 7 days to dhansiriao@gmail.com.

For any further information reach us on 6900439476.

Last date of submission of application is 30th April 2026.

Dhansiri Valley Public School is a CBSE-affiliated secondary co-educational institution located at Numaligarh, Golaghat, Assam. The school is committed to providing quality education with a focus on academic excellence, holistic development, and strong moral values.

With a supportive learning environment and emphasis on English proficiency and modern teaching methodologies, the school aims to nurture well-rounded individuals prepared for future challenges.

RBI JE Recruitment 2026 – 11 Junior Engineer Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 06/05/2026.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released a notification for the recruitment of 11 Junior Engineer (Civil/ Electrical) vacancy. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

1. Junior Engineer (Civil)

No of posts: 7 posts

2. Junior Engineer (Electrical)

No of posts: 4 posts

Job Role:

Junior Engineer (Civil): Handling and supervision of civil construction/ maintenance/ interior works, etc. of building related infrastructural system and other related jobs in office buildings and residential colonies.

Junior Engineer (Electrical): Handling and supervision of electrical/ electro-mechanical/ electrical and electronics installations/ systems and other related jobs in office building and residential colonies.

Pay Scale: Selected Candidates will draw a starting basic pay of ₹47,700/- per month (i.e. ₹29,000/- plus nine advance increments admissible to Junior Engineers) in the scale of ₹29,000 - 1700 (3) - 34100 - 2040 (4) - 42260 - 2720 (6) - 58580 - 2950 (2) - 64480 - 3370 (3) - 74590 - 4050 (1) - 78640 and other allowances, as admissible from time to time.

At present, initial monthly Gross emoluments for Junior Engineer (Civil/ Electrical) is approximately ₹91,309/-

Age Limit: Age of the candidates must be between 20 to 30 years as on 1st April 2026. Candidates born not earlier than 02/04/1996 and not later than 01/04/2006 (both days inclusive) are only eligible to apply.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

SC/ST: 5 years

OBC: 3 years

PwBD: 10 years

PwBD (OBC): 13 years

PwBD (SC/ ST): 15 years

Educational Qualification:

Junior Engineer (Civil): Minimum three years Diploma in Civil Engineering from a recognised Institute or University or Board with minimum 65% of marks (55% for SC/ ST/ PwBD) or Degree in Civil Engineering from a recognised University with 55% marks (45% for SC/ ST/ PwBD).

Junior Engineer (Electrical): Minimum three years Diploma in Electrical or Electrical and Electronic Engineering from a recognised Institute or University or Board with minimum 65% of marks (55% for SC/ ST/ PwBD) or Degree in Electrical or Electrical and Electronic Engineering from a recognised University with 55% marks (45% for SC/ ST/ PwBD).

Experience: Junior Engineer (Civil): At least 2 years' experience for Diploma holders or at least 1-year experience for Degree holders in execution and supervision of civil construction work and/ or civil maintenance of office buildings/ commercial buildings/ residential complexes with basic knowledge of RCC design and other civil works, working knowledge of computers, experience in preparation of tenders for civil works, etc or a 1-year graduate apprenticeship training in a PSU.

Junior Engineer (Electrical): At least 2 years' experience for Diploma holders or at least 1-year experience for Degree holders in execution and supervision of electrical installations in large buildings/ commercial buildings having HT/ LT substations, central AC plants, lifts, UPS, DG sets, CCTV, Fire alarm system, etc or a 1-year graduate apprenticeship training in a PSU.

Examination Fee:

All the applicants have to pay a nominal fee as application fee. The fee can be paid online. The category-wise application fee is as mentioned below.

Category Fee

SC/ST/PwBD Rs.50/- + 18%GST

GEN/OBC/EWS Rs.450/- + 18%GST

Staff Nil

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for Reserve Bank of India Vacancy by visiting at official recruitment portal of RBI. They may follow below mentioned steps.

'A large number of booths were looted, and many people were not allowed to reach the polling stations in that election' 'Anga, Banga, Kalinga' will have BJP govts next month: Shah

KOLKATA, April 24: Asserting that people voted with enthusiasm for a change in the first phase of the West Bengal assembly elections, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said 'Anga, Banga and Kalinga', the ancient kingdoms that ruled present-day eastern India, will have BJP governments next month.

Addressing a press conference in Kolkata, Shah said the BJP will bag more than 110 of the 152 seats that went to the polls in the first phase on Thursday.

"People of Bengal broke all records in the first phase and voted with enthusiasm for a change," he said, referring to the over 92 per cent turnout.

"I thank the Election Commission and security forces for ensuring no deaths during the first phase polls," he said, noting that 1,278 people were injured in the 2016 assembly elections, and 1,681 in 2021.

Claiming that the TMC's exit is imminent, Shah said the BJP will form a government in the state with an absolute majority.

"I see a tsunami this time, I feel the number of

seats and margin of win will be much higher," he said.

"We will have governments in 'Anga, Banga and Kalinga' after May 5," he said, referring to the ancient kingdoms that once ruled the region.

Having come to power in Odisha in 2024, the BJP is now seeking a third consecutive term in Assam and aiming to unseat the 15-year-old TMC government in West Bengal. The party's first chief minister in Bihar, Samrat Choudhary, won a floor test in the assembly earlier in the day.

Assam voted for its 126-member assembly on April 9, while Bengal will vote for 142 seats in the second phase on April 29. The counting of votes will be held in both the states, along with Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry, on May 4.

"Since the beginning, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has had a vision of equal development for both the eastern and western parts of the country, and by forming a government in West Bengal, that vision will be realised," Shah said.

He said anti-incumbency was at its peak in the state in 2021 as well, but the polling was not as



fear-free as it should have been.

"A large number of booths were looted, and many people were not allowed to reach the polling stations in that election. But this time, the voters' list has been cleansed, security has been tightened, and the EC has made free and fair election its top priority," he said.

Shah claimed the BJP will get more votes in the

state's Presidency Range, comprising Kolkata, Howrah, North and South 24 Parganas and Nadia districts in the southern part of the state, than it did in north Bengal, which has been the party's stronghold over the last few years.

Asked about Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's assertion that the TMC, along with other opposition parties, will "take over Delhi" after winning the West Bengal polls, he said with a wry smile, "Very good! There is nothing left here. Why will she come to Delhi? What should I say?"

He said a Bengal-born and Bengali-speaking person will be the first BJP chief minister of West Bengal, alleging that CM Banerjee was peddling the rumour that "outsiders" would be brought to rule here if the party wins.

Stating that thousands of hectares of land have been illegally encroached in the state over the years, Shah said, "Like Assam, we will undertake a massive drive to free such lands for the development of Bengal."

However, he said the BJP's top priority after forming the government in Bengal will be to en-

sure the safety and security of women.

"As a gesture in this regard, we have given nominations to women who have been affected by atrocities," he said.

The BJP has given a ticket to Ratna Debnath, the mother of the doctor who was raped and murdered at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, in Panihati and Rekha Patra, the face of the Sandeshkhali agitation, in Hingalaganj.

"The woman chief minister of a state who says women should not venture out after 7 pm has no right to rule," Shah said, maintaining that even a teenage girl will be able to safely go out at 1 am if the BJP comes to power.

He said he firmly believes that women of Bengal will give an appropriate reply to the TMC for "opposing" the women's quota legislation in Parliament.

"I want to assure the constituencies where elections are yet to be held that we will abolish syndicate raj and 'bhaipo (nephew) tax'," he said, alluding to TMC MP Abhishek Bhanerjee, the nephew of the CM. (PTI)

Infiltration forced Bengalis to leave homes for opportunities: PM

KOLKATA, April 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday launched a blistering attack on the ruling TMC, alleging that the Mamata Banerjee-led party had looted West Bengal for 15 years, destroyed the state's identity through corruption and infiltration, and turned premier institutions like Jadavpur University into symbols of disorder and political intimidation.

Addressing a rally in Baruipur within the Jadavpur Lok Sabha constituency, Modi claimed that the voting in the first phase of the state assembly polls signalled a strong undercurrent in "favour of the BJP" and asserted that the TMC might "not even be able to open its account" in several districts.

"The first phase of voting has shown that the TMC may not even be able to open its account in several districts. Now you must ensure a decisive defeat for TMC and a clear victory for the BJP," he told the gathering.

Around 92 per cent of the 3.60 crore electors voted in the first phase of the West Bengal assembly polls on Thursday.

"You are enduring intense heat,

TMC destroyed Bengal's identity



but I assure you that your effort will not go in vain. I will repay your dedication with interest by ensuring the development of this region," he said while addressing the rally.

Claiming that the BJP has emerged as the preferred choice cutting across professions and social classes, Modi said support for the saffron party was visible everywhere in Bengal.

"Since the country gained independence, India has never witnessed anything like what the people of Bengal have demonstrated this time. Everywhere, the talk is about how much massive support the BJP has received in Bengal," he said, referring to the voter turnout in the first phase of polling.

From small shopkeepers to big traders, from taxi drivers to rickshaw pullers, from government

employees to police personnel, everyone is "fearlessly standing with the BJP". Modi claimed, adding that teachers, lawyers and doctors have also openly backed the party.

Appealing particularly to first-time voters and young electors, Modi said they had already set the tone of the election and urged people to ensure an even bigger turnout in the second and final phase.

"First-time voters have set the tone. Now, it is your turn to surpass their record with even higher turnout," he said.

The Prime Minister sharpened his attack on the TMC by accusing it of institutionalising corruption and protecting criminal networks across sectors.

"In the last 15 years, the TMC has only worked to loot Bengal. There is no sector left untouched by corruption," he said.

Referring to recruitment irregularities, chit fund frauds, coal and sand mining scams, ration distribution anomalies and the "cut money" culture, Modi said the people of Bengal wanted accountability. (PTI)

IRS DAUGHTER'S MURDER Accused was infamous for aggressive behaviour, reveals probe

NEW DELHI, April 24: As crime and forensic teams prepare to conduct scene recreation in the murder of an IRS officer's daughter in southeast Delhi, investigations have revealed that the accused, Rahul Meena, was infamous for aggressive behaviour in his native village, police sources said.

"The teams may visit the crime scene today to recreate what unfolded where the CCTV footage was not available. They may take the accused with them," a source said, adding that Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Hemant Tiwari has reached the spot.

"During inquiry, we got to know that Meena and his father were known for their aggressive behaviour in their village. Our team is there. They came to know that his father is an alcoholic and Rahul is addicted to online games. The behaviour of both in the village is aggressive in nature," said a police source.

Meanwhile, sources said police will conduct a psychological analysis of the accused to evaluate his mental state and behavioural patterns and to ascertain the motives behind the crime.

On Meena's state of mind, sources said he has exhibited psychopathic tendencies and has had a history of violent conduct, raising serious concerns about his behavioural patterns.

"Teams are now planning a detailed psychological assessment of the accused," said a source.

He said Meena was addicted to online betting and card games such as "teen patti" and had lost over Rs 7 lakh in the last few months, which drove him to frequently borrow money to sustain the habit.

He was fired from the victim's house, where he was employed as a domestic help, over financial misconduct. However, Meena returned to his native village and lied to his parents that he had left the job, the police source said.



"He never told his parents that he was sacked. He lied to them that he had left the work and was searching for something new," said the source.

A senior police officer who interrogated Meena told PTI that he is remorseless and told investigators that "it just happened" in a fit of rage. He told the police, "agar didi paisa de deti to aisa nahi hota" (if sister had given the money, this would not have happened), the officer said.

"Chori karne ka afsos nahi par marna nahi chahiye tha, ho gaya" (I don't regret committing the theft, but I shouldn't have killed her. It just happened), Meena told interrogators, according to the officer.

Sources confirmed that the accused displayed a strangely calm demeanour after his arrest, showing no visible remorse.

"During questioning, he was quite casual. He acted as if everything was normal. Usually, when a person commits a heinous murder, they would display some anxiety, anger, restlessness or remorse. Surprisingly, Meena is very casual," said a source.

He said Meena does not react much, but only repeats that he wanted money to clear his debts.

"We asked him if he regrets what he has done. The accused replied that the family was like gods to him, but he wanted the money," the source said. (PTI)

Reviving Panchayati Raj system more urgent than raising LS: Cong

NEW DELHI, April 24: The Congress on Friday said the Panchayati Raj system has been an important medium for women's empowerment and its further revival is far more urgent than increasing the strength of Lok Sabha to ensure personal political survival.

On Panchayati Raj day, the Congress also said that it is fully committed to strengthening the spirit of Gram Swaraj and congratulated the village heads and members of the panchayats and local bodies across the country.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge credited the party for implementing the 33 per cent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions and said it was Rajiv Gandhi, who implemented the 73rd Constitutional Amendment that gave institutional strength to Panchayati Raj and brought democracy down to the grassroots level.

"The Congress Party is fully committed to strengthening the spirit of Gram Swaraj," Kharge said in a post on X, adding that Panchayati Raj institutions form



the strong foundation of our democracy.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the Panchayati Raj system has given the women of the country a golden opportunity to lead and ensure their participation in politics.

"Panchayati Raj has also been an important medium for women's empowerment," Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X.

Through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment since 1993, at least 33 per cent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions was ensured, he said.

"Today, in many states, this has

been increased to 50 percent," the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said.

Gandhi said the result of this historic initiative by the Congress is that today, nearly 14 to 15 lakh elected women representatives are playing an active role in Panchayati Raj institutions across the country - which is one of the largest democratic participation of women in the world.

He congratulated all heads, panchs and members of local bodies in the country on Panchayati Raj Day.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said April 24 is celebrated as National Panchayati Raj Day.

On this day in 1993, the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution was enacted and this introduced the extraordinarily detailed Articles 243-A to 243-O in the Constitution to vastly empower panchayats and make them the foundations of our polity.

Today there are about 2.6 lakh gram panchayats, over 6,700 intermediate panchayats, and 673 zilla parishads, he said. (PTI)

Row over removal of sacred thread during CET in Bengaluru, BJP slams Cong govt

BENGALURU, April 24: A row has erupted after five Brahmin students were forced to remove their sacred thread (Janu/Yajnopaveetha) at Krupandhi College in the city during the CET held here.

The BJP on Friday came down heavily on the ruling Congress following the incident and called it "anti-Hindu".

As the controversy took a political turn, the college suspended the invigilator pending inquiry. The government has also ordered a probe.

The Common Entrance Test (CET) is held to select students for admission into professional courses.

Students on Friday alleged that the invigilators present at the examination hall of the college at Madivala asked them to get the sacred thread removed if they wished to write the exam.

This was despite the fact that last year, when a similar controversy took place, the government made it clear that the sacred thread would not be removed during the CET. However, once again this year, students faced similar discrimination.

A student said, "When I went to the examination centre, the teachers got my ear ring removed. I can still understand that because no metal is allowed, but they also forced me to get the sacred thread removed from the body."

Left with no other option, the student obeyed the dictate of the invigilators.

Sources said parents of the students reached the venue after the exam was over and questioned the motive when there were standing instructions not to re-



move the sacred thread.

Some other students alleged that the red and yellow sacred thread (Mauli/Kalava) tied to the wrist was also removed by the invigilators.

When a similar controversy erupted in Shivamogga, Bidar and some other places, the state's Higher Education Minister M C Sudhakar, assured parents that action would be taken against those responsible for it.

Even the chief minister had directed authorities not to ask students to remove the thread last year. Yet, the incident was repeated on Thursday, the parents alleged.

Karnataka Higher Education Minister M C Sudhakar termed the incident unfortunate.

"It is very unfortunate, because a similar thing happened last year as well - one incident occurred in Bidar, and a few others happened in Shivamogga. We have taken this matter very seriously," he said.

He said as soon as he came to know about the issue, he gave clear instructions that a complaint must be filed against the institution. (PTI)

Samrat govt wins trust vote in Bihar assembly, promises speedy economic development

'You (the BJP) could have installed your own chief minister after the elections'

PATNA, April 24: The BJP-led government in Bihar on Friday won a vote of confidence in the state assembly, where Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary gave assurance of speedy economic development, with investments worth Rs 5 lakh crore in one year.

The motion seeking a vote of confidence, moved by Choudhary, who became the first BJP leader to head a government in the state, was passed through voice vote in the 243-strong House, where the ruling NDA enjoys a brute majority with 202 seats in its kitty.

The House also passed another motion censuring the opposition's stance on the women's reservation bill.

The debate on the motion of confidence saw acrimonious exchanges between the ruling side and the opposition, which seemed resolute to make its voice heard, moving past the trauma of decimation it faced in the assembly polls held last November.

Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav gave a brief but fiery speech, in

which he touched upon various issues, including the raging debate on reservation for women in the legislatures, which has been revived since a bill seeking to link the quotas to delimitation fell in Parliament as it did not get a two-thirds majority.

Yadav raised the issue of a "quota within quota", a line toed by his RJD and other INDIA bloc parties on the ground that reservation for women must not result in a decline in the representation of Dalits, OBCs and extremely backward classes.

The RJD leader was slammed by Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, a senior JD(U) leader and Deputy CM, who holds the Parliamentary Affairs portfolio, Chaudhary, who alleged that Yadav and his allies were "stalling" women's reservation, also tabled a censure motion on the issue, towards the end of the one-day special session.

State BJP president Sanjay Saraogi, who is also an MLA, later told reporters, "It was a big move by the NDA to call the bluff of the opposition, which has been trying to stall women's reservation."

Yadav, who is also a former Deputy



CM, tried to fish in troubled waters of the BJP, as well as the coalition led by it, as he accused the party of having worked to "finish" JD(U) president Nitish Kumar, who resigned as the chief minister last week, upon becoming a Rajya Sabha MP.

"You (the BJP) could have installed your own chief minister after the elections. But you acted in a manner that enabled you to finish Nitish Kumar, so much for your pronouncements of 'pachis se tees'," said the RJD national working president, mentioning the slogan coined by the NDA

during assembly polls.

"We need political stability for a state to prosper. But Bihar has had five governments in the last five years," he added.

However, in his speech, the CM countered the allegation and reminded Yadav that Kumar, "the most popular leader of Bihar who continues to guide our government," had played a key role in helping the RJD leader's father, Lalu Prasad, become the chief minister in the 1990s.

Choudhary, whom Yadav had sought to belittle by calling him "a product of

Lalujji's school", a reference to the BJP leader having begun his career with the RJD, also claimed, "I am a victim of your party's high-handedness, while it was in power. Several members of my family, including myself, had been named in fake cases, forcing me to enter public life."

Yadav had referred to a famous speech by Choudhary's father, Shakuni, in which the latter had threatened to "bury alive" Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said, "We wish all the best to the new chief minister, but he must be on his guard as old BJP hands are watching his rise with resentment and may strike at the earliest opportunity."

Choudhary, 57, sought to rubbish Yadav, reminding him "my father was a founding member of the Samata Party", the name by which the JD(U) was known earlier, and "I enjoy the trust of Modi, Amit Shah and the entire top leadership of the BJP and there is no space for misgivings, no matter how hard the opposition tries".

However, troubled equations between the BJP and JD(U) were also referred to by Manohar Prasad Singh, a Congress MLA, who made the tongue-in-cheek remark, "Perhaps, Nitish Kumar has paid the price for cancelling the dinner." (PTI)

'Gyanesh Kumar's continuation as CEC an assault on Constitution'

NEW DELHI, April 24: After 73 opposition MPs gave a fresh notice in Rajya Sabha to move a motion for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, the Congress on Friday said Kumar's continuation in the post is an assault on the Constitution.

Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh alleged that it is a "disgrace" that Kumar continues to occupy the post of CEC and "do bidding for the prime minister and the home minister."

MPs from the Congress, TMC, SP, DMK, Left parties, Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (SP), RJD, IUML and other like-minded parties are signatories to the notice against CEC.

In an X post, Ramesh wrote, "73 Opposition MPs in the Rajya Sabha have just submitted to its Secretary General a fresh notice of motion for presenting an address to the President of India praying for the removal of Gyanesh Kumar, Chief Election Commissioner of India, on the ground of proven misbehaviour constituted by acts and omissions committed on and after March 15, 2026, within the meaning of Article 324 (5) of the Constitution of India read with Article 124(4) thereof, Section 11(2) of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 and the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968."

"There are now nine specific charges against the CEC that have been documented in great detail and that simply cannot be denied or whitewashed away. His continuation is an assault on the Constitution. It is an absolute disgrace that the man continues to be in office to do the bidding of the PM and HM," Ramesh said.

Opposition parties on Friday submitted a fresh notice in the Rajya Sabha seeking to move a motion for the removal of CEC Gyanesh Kumar. The fresh charges against the CEC include "continued partisan asymmetry in the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct".

The opposition has accused the poll panel of not acting on complaints against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "address to the nation" on April 18, ahead of assembly elections in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. (PTI)

Parnaik completes self-enumeration, calls census vital for planning and governance

Arunachal Guv completes self-enumeration for Census 2027 urges public participation

ITANAGAR, April 24: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) KT Parnaik on Friday completed his self-enumeration for Census 2027 at Lok Bhavan here, calling on citizens to actively participate in the nationwide exercise.

Interacting with officials, the governor emphasised that self-enumeration is key to ensuring a credible and inclusive census, as it allows citizens to directly contribute to nation-building through accurate representation of their families, communities and regions, an official communique informed.

He observed that reliable census data forms the backbone of planning for essential services such as schools, hospitals, roads and welfare schemes and is crucial for achieving the vision of a developed India.

Describing the process as a civic responsibility, Parnaik urged citizens to participate with sincerity and awareness, stating that the exercise goes beyond data collection and plays a vital role in assessing needs, ensuring equitable



resource distribution and strengthening governance.

The governor also called on census officials to ensure that every household is covered and no individual is left out.

Earlier, a team from the Directorate of Census Operations, Shillong, led by director Biswajit Pegu, along with officials from the state economics and statistics department headed by secretary Anu Singh, briefed the governor on the modalities of the exercise.

The team informed that the self-enumeration phase under the House Listing Operations, which began on April 16, will continue till April 30, enabling citizens to complete the process online. This will be followed by field-level house listing from May 1 to May 30, during which enumerators will visit households for data collection.

State IT secretary Dr Sonal Swaroop, Deputy Commissioner of Itanagar Capital Region (ICR) Toko Babu and Director of Economics & Statistics Bebing Megu were present on the occasion. (PTI)

PM's visit: Tourists scheduled to leave Gangtok on April 28

GANGTOK, April 24: The Sikkim government has issued an advisory, asking tourists scheduled to leave Gangtok on April 28 to do so by 6 AM on that day, ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's programme in the state capital.

The decision was taken in view of the security arrangements, which will be in place in Gangtok on April 28, officials said.

Modi is scheduled to reach Gangtok on April 27 and undertake a roadshow. He will attend a function at Paljor Stadium here the next day to mark the conclusion of the year-long celebrations of 50 years of Sikkim's statehood.

"In view of the upcoming visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Sikkim on 27th-28th April 2026, all tourists/visitors currently within the precinct of Gangtok, who are scheduled to depart on 28th April 2026, are requested to leave the station by 6.00 AM on that day, positively," the advisory issued by the Tourism & Civil Aviation Department read.

Meanwhile, Sikkim Chief Secretary R Telang on Friday held a high-level meeting to review arrangements for the Prime Minister's two-day visit to the state, officials said.

He carried out a comprehensive assessment of security preparedness, with detailed deliberations focusing on the need for seamless inter-agency coordination, meticulous planning and strict adherence to established protocols.

All departments concerned made structured presentations before the top bureaucrat outlining various works being undertaken in preparation for Modi's visit.

The presentations covered key areas including medical preparedness, resource deployment, contingency planning and overall operational readiness, with a focus on ensuring timely execution and effective response mechanisms to address any exigencies during the visit.

The Director General of Police (DGP) Akshay Sachdeva and other senior officers of various departments attended the meeting. (PTI)

Candlelight vigils held across Naga areas after killing of two civilians in Ukhrul

IMPHAL, April 24: On the last day of the three-day "total shutdown in Naga areas" under the jurisdiction of the United Naga Council (UNC), candlelight vigils were observed in various places by the Nagas. The "total shutdown" and the candlelight vigils were observed to mourn the death of two Naga civilians killed in Ukhrul district on April 18, and as a collective expression of condemnation.

Chinaoshang Shokwungnao (45 years) of Tashar village and Yaruingam Vashum (42 years) of Kharasom village in Ukhrul district were killed at TM Kasom village along NH-202 (Imphal-Ukhrul road). Naga organisations, including the UNC, accused Kuki militants of the killing.

Candlelight vigils were observed in Imphal and in all district headquarters of Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel, Tamenglong, as well as in many other places.

"This was not just an attack on two men. This was an attack on every Naga who travels our highways. An attack on our right to live, to move, to exist without fear in our own land. NH-202 is not a war zone. It is a lifeline. And when blood is spilled on it, the silence of those who must protect us becomes louder than the gunfire," said UNC president Ng Lorho while delivering a speech in Senapati district headquarters during the candlelight vigil.

To the Kukis, the UNC chief said, "Our suspension of ties these three days is our traditional way of grief. It is not hatred. It is mourning. But let it be understood — our patience, our commitment to peace, must never be mistaken for weakness."

To the Naga youth, Ng Lorho said, "Hold these flames high, but keep your hearts disciplined. Our strength has always



been in our unity, in our dignity in our refusal to become what we condemn."

As these candles burn, said the UNC leader, "Let each flame stand for a promise. A promise that SW Chinaoshang and Yaruingam Vashum will not be reduced to statistics. A promise that we will protect the living so no more mothers wait for sons who will never come home. A promise that peace, when it returns, will be a peace with dignity."

The UNC leader also said, "We are gathered here this evening not in celebration, but in grief. We light these candles for two sons of our soil SW Chinaoshang and Yaruingam Vashum."

The UNC president further said that the Government of India cannot wash its hands of this responsibility. He stated that for months, armed groups have moved freely along highways under the shadow of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement. "Central forces are present, yet Nagas are killed in broad daylight on national highways. If this is not complicity through inaction, what is it?" he questioned, adding that protection cannot be

selective and security cannot be conditional.

When the Centre fails to disarm those who kill civilians, it becomes a party to the crime, he added. He further said, "Today we do not gather for revenge. We gather for remembrance. We gather to tell the families of Chinaoshang and Yaruingam: Your sons did not die unnoticed. Their names are spoken tonight in every Naga headquarters. In Imphal, Kohima in every range and village, in every home where a candle burns."

Ng Lorho also said that Naga grief knows no state borders. From Manipur to Nagaland, Assam to Arunachal and Myanmar to wherever their people live, candles were lit together. "Our pain is shared, and so is our resolve," he said, adding that the bullets that struck the two victims were felt in every Naga village because they are one people with one history and one destiny.

The UNC president also expressed gratitude to the Naga Students' Federation (NSF), various students' organisations and several organisations in Nagaland for showing solidarity during the time of hardship. (NNN)

3 killed in twin firing incidents in Manipur's Ukhrul district

Tangkhul Naga bodies have claimed Kuki militants to be behind the killing



IMPHAL, April 24: Three persons were killed in two separate incidents of firing between armed groups of rival tribal communities in Manipur's Ukhrul district on Friday morning, officials said.

In one incident near Mullam village, security forces recovered two bodies around 11.25 AM, they said.

The deceased, identified as L Sithou and P Haolai, were found in camouflage outfits with bullet injuries, officials added.

Earlier, a heavy exchange of fire broke out between armed militants at Mullam village in the Tangkhul

Naga-majority district around 5.30 AM.

Some outlying houses in the village were also set on fire by the militants.

Meanwhile, the Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust condemned the killing of "two village volunteers" and the burning of houses at Mullam and Songphal villages.

The organisation demanded immediate registration of an FIR and a time-bound investigation into the incident.

In a separate incident, a 29-year-old man, identified as H Jamang

from Chatric Khullen in Kamjong district was killed on the spot in an ambush by armed militants near Sinakeithi village in Ukhrul district early Friday morning, officials said.

The body has been recovered, they added.

The Tangkhul Naga Long, the apex body of the Tangkhul Naga community, expressed "profound sadness" over Jamang's killing.

In a statement, the organisation said, "Following constant movement and disruption along Sirarakhong and Sinakeithi (in Ukhrul district) by armed Kuki cadres, Naga village guards were posted near Sirarakhong and had gone out for patrol when they were ambushed by Kukis."

Tension had been brewing in the district and neighbouring Kamjong district after suspected militants killed two Tangkhul Naga civilians, including a retired army personnel, in an ambush at a civilian convoy at TM Kasom in Ukhrul district on April 18.

Tangkhul Naga bodies have claimed Kuki militants to be behind the killing, while Kuki organisations have denied any involvement in the ambush. (PTI)

Meghalaya targets drug elimination in five years

SHILLONG, April 24: Director of Drug Reduction, Elimination & Action Mission (DREAM), Francis Kharshing, said that drug use in Meghalaya could be significantly reduced and even eliminated within five years if all stakeholders, including government departments and the public, actively participate in the mission.

"Drug use in the State could be significantly reduced and even eliminated within five years—if all stakeholders, including government departments and the public, actively participate in the mission," Kharshing said while addressing a one-day conference on drugs and substance abuse in West Garo Hills district held on Thursday.

He underscored the importance of collective responsibility in tackling the problem.

"Collaboration and proactive engagement are key to effectively addressing drug and substance abuse," he added.

Kharshing said the mission requires coordinated efforts across departments and sustained community involvement to curb the drug menace in Meghalaya.

In her opening remarks, Chairperson of the Meghalaya State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Agatha K Sangma, highlighted the increasing concern over the easy availability of intoxicating substances, including drugs and tobacco, among children.

She pointed out that Meghalaya's proximity to the "Golden



Triangle" has made it vulnerable to the transit of illegal substances to neighbouring states and countries, further aggravating the issue.

Emphasising child protection, she stressed the urgent need for awareness, prevention and a stronger institutional response to safeguard young people from addiction.

Organised by the Meghalaya State Commission for Protection of Child Rights in collaboration with the District Social Welfare Office and the District Child Protection Unit, the conference was held with the aim of ensuring better coordination among various line departments in combating drug and substance abuse in the district.

The conference featured a series of technical sessions focusing on the current scenario of substance abuse in West Garo

Hills, personal perspectives from recovering users and ongoing initiatives aimed at reducing addiction and rehabilitating affected individuals.

A panel discussion and brainstorming session on the way forward also formed part of the programme, with participants deliberating on strategies to strengthen prevention and intervention efforts.

The programme witnessed active participation from officers of various line departments, members of NGOs working in related fields and representatives of Local Development Committees, reflecting a collective commitment to addressing the issue.

The conference concluded with a call for sustained coordination, community involvement and intensified efforts to combat drug and substance abuse and protect the youth of the district. (NNN)

Assistive devices distributed to 584 beneficiaries in North Garo Hills

Minister TD Shira leads CSR initiative to support Divyangjan and senior citizens

GUWAHATI, April 24: A free distribution programme of aids and assistive devices for Divyangjan and senior citizens under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) was held on Thursday, at the Multi Purpose Cooperative Society Hall, Resubelpara, North Garo Hills.

The programme was organised by IOCL in collaboration with the District Administration and the District Social Welfare Office (DSWO), North Garo Hills, with the objective of supporting persons with disabilities and elderly citizens by improving their mobility, independence and quality of life.

The distribution was carried out by Minister for Tourism, Fisheries, Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Timothy D Shira, who graced the occasion as the chief guest.

A total of 584 beneficiaries, comprising Divyangjan and senior citizens from different parts of the district, received assistive devices under various categories.

The devices distributed included motorised tricycles, wheelchairs, hearing aids, cervical collars, crutches, walkers and other essential appliances aimed at enhancing mobility and daily living support.

Addressing the gathering, chief guest TD Shira lauded IOCL for its significant CSR contribution towards uplifting the lives of



persons with disabilities and senior citizens through the free distribution of assistive devices.

He also appreciated the efforts of the District Administration and the DSWO for conducting extensive assessment camps and groundwork to identify genuine beneficiaries across the district, ensuring that the support reaches the most vulnerable sections of society.

The Minister expressed hope that the initiative would go a long way in making the lives of senior citizens and persons with dis-

abilities easier, more dignified and self-reliant.

He further acknowledged the role of the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) in producing quality assistive appliances that continue to ease the lives of many persons with disabilities across the country.

It may be mentioned that ALIMCO is the only public sector undertaking in India engaged in the manufacturing of assistive devices and appliances for persons with orthopaedic, visual, hearing and intellectual

disabilities.

In his address, Deputy Commissioner Dr Abhishek Saini reiterated the commitment of the government and district administration towards the welfare of vulnerable sections. He stated that the doors of the government and administration are always open for people in need of support.

The Deputy Commissioner further urged the DSWO to continue going the extra mile to ensure maximum benefits reach the deserving beneficiaries.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Manager, IOCL, Malati Malakar, said that IOCL is not only fuelling vehicles and households through petrol and LPG, but is also contributing towards the spirit of Viksit Bharat through social welfare initiatives.

She described the distribution of assistive devices as a small token of gratitude for the contributions made by the beneficiaries to society over the years, and a step towards enabling persons with disabilities to live a life of dignity and self-reliance.

In her welcome address, District Social Welfare Officer Norimchi Sangma informed that the successful implementation of the programme was made possible through the relentless guidance and financial support of the Deputy Commissioner, which enabled the conduct of assessment camps across all four blocks of North Garo Hills district.

NAME CORRECTION

My Actual name is Fahidur Rahman, s/o-Mojil Hoque. But in my HSLC certificate wrongly my name recorded Fahidur Rahman.

Fahidur Rahman
S/O- Mojil Hoque
Doboka Town 10 no
ward, Hojai (Assam)

NAME CORRECTION

My actual and correct name is MINARA BEGUM. But my name has been wrongly recorded in bank pass-book as MINARA KHATUN.

That, both the names Minara Begum & Minara Khatun are the same and one identical person i.e. myself.

MINARA BEGUM
W/O. SALIM
BADSHA
Vill- ICHAKURI
P.O. MONABARI
P.S. AMPATI
Dist. SOUTH WEST
GARO HILLS

ENGINEERING AND OTHER ANCILLARY WORKS

Tender Notice No.: 08 of 2025, Dated: 23-04-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work:

Tender No.: DCESTMGL-14-2026; **Name of Work:** - At Maligaon - Provision of cooking facilities, outsourcing of maintenance of Subordinate Rest House with other ancillary works for a period of 12 months. **Tender Value:** ₹27,46,804/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹54,900/-;

Tender No.: DCESTMGL-15-2026; **Name of Work:** - Annual horticulture maintenance of open areas of ORH complex at Luitgarh and Kamakhya, Officers bungalows at Maligaon and its open area. **Tender Value:** ₹2,24,84,679.54/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹4,49,700/-;

Tender No.: DCESTMGL-16-2026; **Name of Work:** - Assistance to desilting of open drain by utilization of Railway owned excavator/ earth moving equipments (JCB) at Nambari-HQ/Maligaon Railway area including manual desilting (For One year). **Tender Value:** ₹1,27,38,473.06/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹2,54,800/-; Date & time of closing/opening of above all tenders at 13:00 hrs. on 14-05-2026. For complete information please visit in website www.iraps.gov.in

Dy. CE/Estate/Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

Series lost, India seek to salvage pride against SA in fourth women's T20I

JOHANNESBURG, April 24: The series is lost, but India will still have a lot to play for in the fourth Women's T20I against South Africa here on Saturday, including salvaging pride, restoring rhythm, and setting the tone for what lies ahead in the World Cup year.

Hosts South Africa have already taken an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match rubber and are aiming for a clean sweep to continue their unbeaten streak at home, even as the Indians seek to bring to an end a series of disappointing performances despite possessing a team that is full of quality players, including few superstars of the modern women's game.

With the T20 World Cup scheduled later this year in England, the Indians will not be low on motivation as they look to plug the gaps heading into the mega event, less than a year after winning their maiden ICC title in the form of the ODI World Cup.

The three successive losses have exposed a few weaknesses in the side. Whereas the South Africans executed their plans to perfection, India struggled to maintain the tempo with the bat.

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who believes that the reverses in last few days will allow the team manage-



ment sufficient time to address their shortcomings and "come back strong" for the T20 World Cup in June, will be expecting to see a more complete performance on Saturday, especially from a middle order that has struggled to convert starts into match-defining contributions.

It is time for solid performers like Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh to fire in unison.

The Indian bowling, too, has lacked bite at crucial junctures during the series so far. While seasoned all-rounders like Deepti Sharma have offered control, India

have often allowed momentum to slip during the middle overs -- something South Africa have capitalised on effectively.

Tightening those phases will be key if the visitors are to avoid another frustrating outing.

While South Africa have claimed 21 Indian wickets in three matches, India have managed just seven scalps, with the visitors failing to make early inroads throughout the series.

As far as the South African batting is concerned, Laura Wolvaardt has been in spectacular form, scoring a career-best 115 off 53 balls in

the third match to secure a 3-0 series win.

She produced a record-setting performance, with scores of 51, 54, and 115 in the first three matches, demonstrating her dominance at the top of the order. Sune Luus has also been doing well, as was evident on Wednesday.

South Africa's bowlers have also been dominant in the series with the likes of Tumi Sekhukhune, Chloe Tryon, and Ayabonga Khaka consistently getting the job done for the home team by restricting the fancied Indian batting line-up.

Teams :

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (captain), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Bharti Fulmali, Anushka Sharma, Deepti Sharma, Arundhati Reddy, Shree Charani, Kashvee Gautam, Richa Ghosh, Uma Chetry, Renuka Singh Thakur, Kranti Gaud, Shreyanka Patil.

South Africa: Laura Wolvaardt (captain), Anneke Bosch, Kayla Reyneke, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Sune Luus, Elizabeth Mari Marx, Chloe Tryon, Tazmin Brits, Sinalo Jafta, Tobogo Macheke, Ayanda Hlubi, Ayabonga Khaka, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Tumi Sekhukhune.

Match starts at 9:30 pm IST. (PTI)

RR look to make home advantage count against SRH



JAIPUR, April 24: Rajasthan Royals would want to assert their dominance at home and settle old scores when they host Sunrisers Hyderabad in what promises to be a high-stakes Indian Premier League game here on Saturday, with both sides eyeing crucial points.

Revenge could be on RR's mind, having been outplayed by SRH in their first-leg match on April 13, when Praful Hinge headlined a 57-run drubbing with a performance that has become part of IPL lore now.

RR have since then done well, including notching a 40-run win over Lucknow SuperGiants away on Wednesday, and are currently placed second in the pecking order.

SRH, who have already had their share of ups and downs this season due to inconsistency, are occupying the fourth spot, and they know the home team will come at them all

guns blazing at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium.

Whether it was controlling the start, the middle overs, or closing out at the death, RR were found wanting in almost every department in the most recent meeting between the two sides, and they will see this fixture as the perfect opportunity to come up with a befitting response, especially in phases where they faltered last time.

There is no doubt that there is a clear subplot of unfinished business in the game as far as RR are concerned, even as SRH bank on their attacking top-order batters to fire and set the tone for the visitors.

SRH's aggressive template worked for them the last time, with the likes of Ishan Kishan and Heinrich Klaasen doing the job with the bat.

Fresh from his blazing hundred against Delhi Capitals, Abhishek

Sharma will be keen to continue in the same vein, even as Travis Head too looks for some quick runs at the top.

SRH boast one of the most explosive batting units in the tournament, with their top three striking at a high rate.

Although Hinge and Sakib Husain both grabbed four wickets on their IPL debut against RR, the SRH bowling unit is relatively inexperienced and has struggled in the absence of skipper Pat Cummins, despite showing improvement in recent matches.

As far as RR are concerned, they are performing strongly, having secured five wins out of their first seven matches.

The team has a strong Indian batting core with Yashasvi Jaiswal, teen sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, and Dhruv Jurel though skipper Riyan Parag has mostly struggled to make significant contributions with the bat.

Nevertheless, they are playing a high-intensity game, focusing on batting depth and their explosive approach with the willow has often left opponents demoralised.

The 15-year-old sensation Sooryavanshi is RR's top run-scorer with 254 runs, coming at a remarkable strike rate of 220.86 and two 15-ball fifties.

Jaiswal has provided stability and aggression at the top, accumulating 245 runs at an average of 49.00. (PTI)

Major champion Justin Rose confirms participation at DP World India C'ship, joins McIlroy and Fleetwood

NEW DELHI, April 24: Major champion Justin Rose is set to make his professional debut in India following the confirmation that the world number five will compete in the DP World India Championship from October 15-18.

Some of the best players in the world are set to gather once again at Delhi Golf Club for the highly-anticipated USD 4,000,000 event - including defending champion Tommy Fleetwood and back-to-back Masters winner Rory McIlroy. Rose has established himself at the top of the global game since claiming his first DP World Tour win in 2002, going on to win the U.S. Open in 2013 and the Olympic gold medal three years later.

Earlier this season the former world number one secured his 13th victory on the PGA TOUR.

The Englishman made his seventh Ryder Cup appearance at Bethpage Black last September, lifting the trophy for the fifth time as he helped Europe earn a first away win over the United States since 2012.

Co-sanctioned with the DP World Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI), the tournament features the largest prize fund ever offered for a DP World Tour event in India, and will once again take its place as part of the crucial Back 9 phase of the Race to Dubai.

Rose said: "I've played all over the world over the course of my career, and I'm excited to get the chance to add India to the list this season."

"I've heard so much about the country and how passionate the golf fans are, so I'm very much looking forward to trying it up in the DP World India Championship for the first time and experiencing what Delhi has to offer."

Rose joins fellow Englishman



Fleetwood, who emerged victorious at the end of the thrilling inaugural event last season to claim his eighth DP World Tour title, as part of an incredible season for the Englishman who also won the FedExCup on the PGA TOUR, and made his fourth appearance in the Ryder Cup as part of the historic victory over the USA.

McIlroy will also return to India in October after recently winning his sixth Major title and second Green Jacket at Augusta National.

The launch of the second edition of the DP World India Championship underscores India's growing influence as a destination for elite golf and as a strategic market for DP World.

The new tournament follows the success of the long-running Hero Indian Open, and further boosts the Tour's momentum in the region.

As the Tour's title partner since 2022, and after becoming the Title and Official Umbrella Partner of the PGTI earlier this year, the tournament complements DP World's broader sporting footprint in India, which includes partnerships with Delhi Capitals, and grassroots programmes like the Second Life Container initiative and "Balls for Birdies" campaign -- both of which involve DP World donating golf balls, using its smart logistics network, to help grow the game and make it more accessible. (PTI)

Anush Agarwalla claims silver at CDI Hagen

NEW DELHI, April 24: Indian equestrian Anush Agarwalla delivered an outstanding performance at the CDI Hagen, one of Europe's most esteemed international dressage competitions, securing a second-place finish with a score of 70.94 per cent aboard his accomplished mare, Floriana, in Hagen, Germany.

The result marks another landmark achievement in the young Indian rider's rapidly ascending international career. Agarwalla and Floriana produced a polished and expressive test that impressed the panel of international judges.

The pair's harmony, technical precision, and artistic presentation earned them a score of 70.94 per cent, placing them firmly on the podium in second position.

Talking about the same Agarwalla said, "This result at CDI Hagen is a testament to the incredible partnership I share with Floriana."

"I'm really pleased with how Floriana and I performed at Hagen. She felt confident and expressive throughout the test, and we were able to execute what we've been working on in training. (PTI)

India submits expression of interest to host 2038 Asian Games



NEW DELHI, April 24: India has officially submitted its expression of interest to host the 2038 Asian Games, a top official of the national Olympic body said, marking a significant step in the country's broader strategy to become a global hub for major multi-sporting events.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has recently submitted its Expression of Interest (EOI) to the 2038 Games to the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). The continental Olympic body discussed India's EOI at its executive board meeting on April 21 in the Chinese city of Sanya, where the Asian Beach Games began from April 22.

"Yes, we have submitted an EOI and it was discussed by the OCA in its executive board meeting," IOA CEO Raghuram Iyer told PTI on Friday.

India will host the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad which is also the proposed city for the country's 2036 Olympics bid. The Gujarat city could yet again be a strong candidate to host the 2038 Asian Games, if the country wins the bid.

"It's only an Expression of Interest (as of) now. They (OCA) had an initial discussion and they will tell us what to do going ahead," Iyer said.

"There is no deadline for submission of bids (as such)."

Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh will host the 2030 Asian Games while Doha, Qatar, will stage the 2034 edition of the sporting extravaganza. Both the 2030 and 2034 editions of the Asian Games were awarded together in 2020 by the OCA. The 2026 edition will be held in Aichi-Nagoya in Japan from September 19 to October 4.

South Korea is the first country to have expressed its interest to host the 2038 edition of the Asian Games, way back in 2021, with Gwangju and Daegu as the proposed cities.

Mongolia has also reportedly expressed its interest to bid for the 2038 edition but it is not known whether it has submitted an official EOI to the OCA.

An OCA official said that the host city of the 2038 Asian Games is likely to be decided in 2028.

"It (the award of 2038 Asian Games) is likely to be done in two years' time," said the official.

India last hosted an Asian Games in 1982 in New Delhi. The national capital city was also the venue of the inaugural Asian Games in 1951. (PTI)

India beat Canada 4-1 in Thomas Cup Final opener

HORSENS (DENMARK), April 24: Lakshya Sen endured a tough loss but Ayush Shetty and the doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty registered wins as 2022 champions India notched up a commanding 4-1 win over Canada in their opening Group A tie of the Thomas Cup Finals, here Friday.

After Lakshya's spirited effort ended in a 18-21, 21-19, 21-10 loss to world No. 13 Victor Lai, world No. 4 Satwik and Chirag levelled the tie with a dominant 21-10 21-11 win over Jonathan Bing Tsan Lai and Kevin Lee. The 20-year-old Ayush, runner-up at the recent Asia Championships, then outwit-

ted world No. 33 Brian Yang 21-13, 21-17 in 39 minutes to hand India a 2-1 lead.

The second doubles pair of Hariharan Am-sakarunan and M R Arjun sealed the tie for India with a convincing 21-7 21-15 victory over Ty Alexander Lindeman and Nyl Yakura.

Kidambi Srikanth then outsmarted world No. 77 Joshua Nguyen 21-17 21-12 in the inconsequential fifth match as India wrapped up the match 4-1 to be placed second in the table behind China. China, 11-time winners and defending champions, beat Australia 5-0.

The top two teams from each of the four

groups will qualify for the quarter-finals. Indian women's team will face Denmark in their opening match of the Uber Cup later in the day.

Lakshya vs Lai

It turned into another energy-sapping contest, reminiscent of his All England semifinal, with Lakshya Sen and Victor Lai engaging in long, draining rallies. Lakshya looked in control early, dictating the pace with precise net play and sharp smashes to dominate the opening exchanges. Lai, however, began to find his rhythm late in the first game, narrowing the gap from 14-18, but the Indian did enough to close it out. (PTI)

Indian need to improve physically to match global standards: Women junior hockey coach White

NEW DELHI, April 24: Indian junior women's hockey coach Tim White says the country's next generation of players needs to improve physically to match top international standards, even as senior team coach Sjoerd Marijne believes India is moving in the right direction.

White, who recently took charge after stints in Belgium and Australia, said while the talent pool in India is promising, bridging the physical gap will be critical to achieving sustained success at the highest level.

"I feel that for a group to be world-class, a country to be world-class, then physically they have to be world-class. When Belgium improved a lot, they improved a lot physically, along with other things," White said during a virtual interaction on Friday.

"One of the things that I've observed already is that the group is lower physically than, say, where I was in Belgium or even working in Australia. And we are going to have to work hard to improve physically to be then able to compete with the best junior teams and have a flow of athletes who are going into the senior program."

White, however, was encouraged by the attitude within the group, pointing out that

the players are motivated and eager to learn.

"I already see enough talent. I see a very engaged group, a very motivated group, and a group who want to learn. So that's a very good platform," he said.

The Australian emphasised that developing a world-class team requires more than just skill, underlining the need for a structured approach to strength, conditioning, recovery and nutrition.

"So, we have to have a good physical program. We have to build up their knowledge of recovery and nutrition, all those sorts of things, which happens in any program around the world."

"But I also have to make sure that they understand that they need to train with a certain intensity. And that doesn't happen overnight. I have to build that up. But it's been something that I've already been busy with."

"And they're starting to improve already after a few weeks. But that'll be a big focus. It's a challenge in India, that's for sure," he added.

Team is moving in right direction but finishing remains area of concern: Marijne



Senior team chief coach Sjoerd Marijne, who recently oversaw India's tour of Argentina, said the side is moving in the right direction but finishing remains an area of concern.

"I think we are in the right direction," Marijne said, citing the team's 2-2 draw against world No. 2 Argentina in the recent series.

"I'm not talking only about winning or

losing because sometimes I didn't play variations in penalty corners on purpose. We were training their kind of systems and maybe the next time when I play against Argentina, we do some things differently. But this was just to train those things and I think the progress in that made me really positive."

"For us, the most important thing was that the benchmark was set by Argentina. What is required to be able to play against number two and also be successful."

India showed steady improvement over the course of the tour, particularly in coping with the pace and physicality of the opposition.

"In the first two matches, they did everything sprinting and we did everything running. If we want to be a top team, we need to do everything sprinting. And we did that much better in match three and four," he said.

After losing the first two games, India staged a dramatic comeback to win the final two matches and level the series.

While he was satisfied with the gains in fitness and mental resilience, Marijne admitted finishing remains an area of concern.

"There's always room to improve. But

finishing, no, that was not good enough in the Argentina tour. But that comes because we were the average of 10 to 12 times in the circle, and that's very difficult against Argentina," he said.

"But we got a lot of penalty corners. And what I said with the PCs, I only did direct. We didn't do variations. So for me, it was not only about picking the best option, I wanted to see how they deal with the pressure."

"So, scoring could be more, but it was difficult against Argentina. The mental side, I think they improved really well because they managed to cope with their level."

Looking ahead to a packed calendar featuring the Nations Cup, World Cup and Asian Games, Marijne said the focus would be on gradual improvement while targeting peak performance at key events.

"This was the same in 2018. We had the same situation, and then we also had the Commonwealth Games. We worked from tournament to tournament."

"At the end, the Asian Games is for us the most important. But it doesn't mean we don't want to do well at the other tournaments. We use every tournament to see if we have improved enough," he said. (PTI)

Modest start for Aditi Ashok in Chevron

HOUSTON (US) April 24: India's Aditi Ashok endured a disappointing start to her campaign in The Chevron Championship here as she carded 2-over 74 and was placed tied 80th after the first day.

Nelly Korda putted superbly to save pars early and then made some great ones for birdies on her back nine of Memorial Park for a 7-under 65, her best start to a major in four years.

Korda now has a two-shot lead over Patty Tavatanakit, who won this major as a rookie in 2021 when it was the ANA Inspiration. She played bogey-free for a 67 and was two shots back along with Somi Lee, who bogeyed her final hole on the par-3 ninth.

Farah O'Keefe, the junior at Texas, missed a 5-foot par putt on her last hole to fall back into the group of players at 68.

Thirty-seven players in the 132-player field broke par. Jeeno Thitikul was not among them. The No. 1 player in women's golf had four bogeys over her last eight holes and shot 74. In her quest to win her first major, she started out nine shots behind Korda with her first goal to make the cut.

Minjee Lee, the Women's PGA champion trying to win her fourth of the LPGA's five majors, also opened with a 74. (PTI)

India to be top-10 sporting nation by 2036, top-5 by 2047: Mandaviya

BUDGAMI, April 24: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday said India would emerge among the top 10 sporting nations by 2036 and break into the top five by 2047.

Speaking to reporters after inaugurating a 30-bedded Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) hospital at Ompora in the central Kashmir district here, Mandaviya credited the Narendra Modi-led government for streamlining sports governance and creating a more structured system.

"It (the government) is providing opportunity to the youth to perform in the sports arena. I am sure that in the days to come, in the next ten years by 2036, India will be among the 10 best sporting nations in the world and by 2047, India will emerge among the top five sporting nations," Mandaviya said.

The minister added that the government's sustained push has strengthened the sporting framework across the country.

"The country has won the bid for hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2030 and has also bid for hosting the 2036 Olympic Games. The process is going on to meet all the demands and expectations of the International Olympic Committee. (PTI)