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Beef incident at Goalpara School: Condemnation pouring in Inquiry underway; police assures action

HT Correspondent

GOALPARA, June 6: A controversy has surfaced at Krishnai Habraghat High School in Goalpara district following allegations that five students brought beef in their lunch boxes to the school premises and attempted to share it with two students belonging to the Hindu community.

The matter reportedly came to the attention of the school authorities, triggering concern among parents and local residents.

Following the incident, the parents of the two students lodged a complaint at Krishnai Police Station seeking a detailed investigation.

On Saturday, Goalpara District Commissioner Propip Timung, Senior Superintendent of Police Navaneet Mahanta and Inspector of Schools Khirush Missong visited the school to assess the situation.



The officials interacted with local residents, school authorities and other stakeholders to gather information regarding the allegations.

During the visit, the District Commissioner directed the Inspec-

tor of Schools to enforce restrictions on non-vegetarian food items in tiffin boxes for high school students, with eggs being the only exception.

He said the police inquiry was progressing and that appropriate

action would be taken once the investigation was completed.

The DC also instructed teachers to remain vigilant to prevent recurrence of such incidents and suggested regular checking of students' tiffin boxes.

Speaking to the media, SSP Navaneet Mahanta said the police were examining all aspects of the case.

"We are looking into the matter thoroughly. The investigation is ongoing, and once it is completed, the actual sequence of events will become clear. Necessary action will be taken based on the findings," he said.

Meanwhile, several organisations have condemned the alleged incident and demanded strict action if any wrongdoing is established.

The district administration also expressed concern over the role of parents in (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

NEET-UG 2026: NTA dismisses claims of re-exam paper 'leak', warns of action

NEW DELHI, June 6: The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Saturday dismissed as "false" and "fraudulent" claims circulating on social media about alleged leak or sale of the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination question paper and warned of strict action against those spreading such content. In a statement on X, the agency said messages claiming a "leak", advance access or "sale" of the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination paper were aimed at misleading students and parents.

"The National Testing Agency (NTA) has noted certain messages circulating on social media and messaging platforms claiming a 'leak', advance access or 'sale' of the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination question paper," the NTA said in a post on X.

"These claims are false, fraudulent and intended to mislead," the NTA said, adding that such content was being circulated by "organised cheating rackets" seeking to exploit the anxiety of candidates and their fam-

ilies by selling fake question papers. "Such content is the work of organised cheating rackets that prey on the anxiety of students and their families. Their objective is to extort money by selling fake 'papers', and every such claim circulating is a fabrication," the agency added.

"The integrity of the examination process is fully intact, and every safeguard is in place to ensure a fair and secure examination for all candidates," the agency said.

The NTA said it was actively identifying and reporting the offending channels, accounts and content to the platforms and cyber-crime authorities for immediate takedown and action.

The agency further said it was filing a formal complaint with law-enforcement and cyber-crime authorities, warning that creating, circulating or forwarding such fraudulent content and attempting to defraud students constituted a serious punishable offence. "Strict action will be taken against

those responsible," it said.

Candidates and parents have been advised not to engage with, pay for or forward such messages and not to fall prey to these "fraudulent solicitations". It also said to rely only on official communications issued through NTA's verified channels.

"We urge all aspirants to ignore these rumours and to rely solely on official communication issued by NTA through its verified website and channels," the statement said.

"To every candidate appearing for NEET (UG) 2026 -- focus on your preparation with confidence. Your hard work is what matters, and NTA stands committed to conducting a fair, secure and credible examination," it added.

The NEET-UG for admissions into medical courses took place on May 3 this year but was cancelled by the NTA on May 12 amid allegations of a paper leak. The CBI is currently investigating this matter, and a retest is scheduled for June 21. (PTI)

India world's fastest-growing major economy even as many face uncertainty: Rajnath

LUCKNOW, June 6: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said that at a time when many countries are facing economic uncertainty, India continues to stand out as the "world's fastest-growing major economy".

In a post on X, Rajnath Singh said, "India's economy grew by 7.7 per cent in FY 2025-26, with growth accelerating to 7.8 per cent in the fourth quarter, underscoring its resilience and underlying strength built over the last 12 years through the mantra of Reform, Perform and Transform."

He said, "At a time when many countries are facing economic uncertainty, India continues to stand out as the world's fastest-growing major economy."

Singh also said that under the

leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has combined economic growth with stability, confidence, sustainability and credibility.

"His unwavering commitment to nation-building, focus on innovation, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship, and ability to steer the country through unprecedented global challenges have transformed India into a confident, resilient, and globally respected economic power," he added.

As India moves towards the vision of Viksit Bharat, this growth story continues to create new opportunities and strengthen the aspirations of 140 crore Indians, Singh said further in his post. (PTI)



30 species of raptors, six of storks recorded in Kaziranga during survey

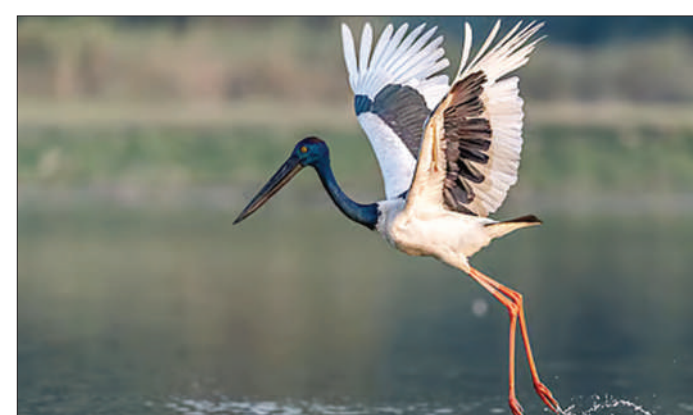
GUWAHATI, June 6: A total of 30 species of raptors (birds of prey) and six types of storks have been recorded during a survey in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNTPR), officials said on Saturday.

Altogether 271 raptors and 266 storks were found during the survey conducted by the KNTPR and researchers from various universities of Assam in February-March.

The study was held across all administrative ranges under the Eastern Assam Wildlife Division, and the report was released on the occasion of World Environment Day on Friday.

Most of these species are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972, which provides the highest degree of protection, prohibiting hunting, poaching, and unauthorised commercial trade of the birds.

The park is home to a wide variety of diurnal and nocturnal raptors, which include eagles, falcons, vultures, buzzards and owls, while numerous resident and migratory stork species are found in its vast network of wetlands.



These include Slender-billed vulture, Red-headed vulture, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Brown Fish Owl, Dusky Eagle-Owl, Greater Adjutant stork, Lesser Adjutant, Black-necked Stork and Black Stork.

A total of 112 species of raptors are recorded from India, with Kaziranga National Park and the adjoining landscape harbours about 50 species of

raptors.

The state's rich, diverse wetlands and Himalayan foothills provide critical habitats for these birds of prey.

The survey of storks and raptors reveals a striking diversity of these birds across three administrative divisions, officials said.

Kaziranga National Park reveals the highest number of raptors with 21 species and 5 species of storks, followed (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Governor hosts Chief Minister, Ministers at Lok Bhavan

**HT Bureau**

GUWAHATI, June 6: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya hosted Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and members of the State Council of Ministers at an interaction programme, "Sneha Milan", held at Lok Bhavan on Saturday.

During the interaction, the Governor exchanged views with the Chief Minister and ministers on issues of public importance and reaffirmed the collective commitment towards peace,

progress, prosperity and inclusive development of Assam.

Chief Minister Sarma and the members of the Council of Ministers thanked the Governor for hosting the programme and reiterated their commitment to working for the development of the state and the welfare of its people.

The programme also featured a commemorative group photograph.

It may be noted that Lok Bhavan, (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Tributes paid to Assam's first chief minister on birth anniversary

GUWAHATI, June 6: Rich tributes were paid to Assam's first chief minister Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi on the occasion of his 136th birth anniversary on Saturday.

Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya in a message said that Bardoloi's "profound patriotism, visionary personality and visionary political decisions have enriched and safeguarded the Assamese and the state".

"On the birth anniversary of this great son of Assam, I offer my heartfelt respects," he added.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, in a post on X, said, "Remembering Bharat Ratna Lokpriya Gopinath Bardoloi on his Jayanti. The architect of modern Assam, his (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Sanctions threat to India would 'boomerang' under PM Modi's leadership: Putin

ST PETERSBURG, June 6: Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that any attempt to undermine India's sovereignty through "threats of sanctions" would "boomerang immediately" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Putin made these remarks at the annual St Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday in response to a question about his comments during an interaction with heads of leading global news agencies, including PTI, on Thursday night.

"India always acts as a sovereign country, and under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, any potential threats of sanctions would boomerang immediately," Putin said.

Putin said that he has been in close talks with Prime Minister

Modi for a long period, while recalling the time when the Indian leader was banned from entering the United States.

"I know PM Modi will never forget about it," Putin said. "Now that he is (the) prime minister, all the sanctions have been eliminated, and the relationship between the US and India is developing successfully as far as I understand."

Asked about the possibility of India facing US sanctions if it were to acquire Russian defence systems such as the Su-57 aircraft or the S-500 air defence platform, Putin said,

"India is a sovereign country, and it is free to choose those products that they consider to be most up to date and most applicable for them and obviously offering the best price. No matter what people say, India has always been acting in this man-

ner."

"India is always guided by its national interests," he added.

Putin said that Russia's cooperation with India, just like with all other partners, is not subject to the political environment.

"We can't be dictated... Nobody can dictate to us, and nobody would even try to do that. We are always going to do what we consider to be right, and we will always stand true to the commitments given to partners, especially partners like India," he said.

Highlighting Russia's long-standing relationship with India, especially in the area of defence, Putin said, "Our relations with the Indian friends are specific, thanks to our mutual trust. We concentrate not just on trade. Not just on buying and selling, (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

India, China share two millennia of legacy of learning and dialogue: Indian envoy

BEIJING, June 6: Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami has said mutual learning of languages and a dialogue of ideas over two millennia have been a defining feature of ties between the two countries.

Doraiswami, who took over as India's envoy to China last month, visited the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), where he delivered a lecture on Friday, and interacted with students and faculty members.

BFSU, a premier institution for foreign languages in China, offers courses in 102 languages, including Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit and Urdu. It recently added Punjabi to its list of courses.

The languages are taught primarily to Chinese students as well as diplomats and officials.

Many of its students go on to work with Chinese foreign-language media organisations, including state radio and television services catering to overseas audiences.

During his lecture, Doraiswami, a fluent Mandarin speaker, highlighted how the study of languages, so-

cieties and a dialogue of ideas had been a defining feature of India-China engagement for more than two millennia.

"Citing examples from the Mauryan period to the modern era, he [Doraiswami] noted how exchanges between the world's two oldest continuous civilizations enriched both societies through the sharing of knowledge, philosophy, artistic traditions, technologies, and innovation," according to a post on X by the Indian Embassy in Beijing.

"He emphasised that such interactions historically generated mutual benefit and remained more important than ever as both countries undergo profound economic, technological and social transformation," it said.

It added, "The lecture also explored the remarkable changes taking place in India today and the need for deeper knowledge, academic engagement, and people-to-people exchanges to better understand each other's contemporary realities."

It was followed by an interactive session during which Doraiswami answered (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Singapore blocks social media posts attacking Indian community

SINGAPORE, June 6: The Singapore government on Saturday ordered three social media platforms to block access to 14 posts, likely originating from China, which targeted the Indian community and "undermine" the country's "model of multiculturalism".

The police have issued disabling directions under the Online Criminal Harms Act (OCHA) to block access to the posts on YouTube, Facebook and X, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement.

Seventy-five per cent of Singapore's over six million population are of Chinese descent, 15 per cent are Malay, and between seven to nine per cent are of Indian origin. The rest are of other international origins.

The direction requires the platforms to "take all reasonable steps to disable access by Singapore users to these posts", it added.

Second Minister for Home Affairs Edwin Tong told reporters at a community event on Saturday that "from what we know so far, the content originated from overseas".

Investigations into the problematic content in these posts had revealed that it likely originated from a China-based platform and was subsequently shared by other platforms and

websites, according to a Channel News Asia report on Saturday.

"These videos attack our multiracial society and they try to divide people based on race. This, however, is not who we are. Every community in Singapore here is valued and everyone has an equal place," the Channel quoted Tong as saying.

"These videos strike at the very foundation of what makes Singapore home for all of us and they undermine the very basis of our society," said Tong, who is also Minister of Law.

Tong said the government does not tolerate any narratives that seek to undermine Singapore's racial harmony, "especially when it is propagated by foreigners".

In a statement, the MHA said Singapore firmly opposes "nativism and xenophobia". "Any attempt to pit one community against another here must be firmly rejected," said the MHA. "These attacks coming from a foreign source are doubly unacceptable."

Tong said that there is currently no evidence to suggest that this is a coordinated campaign by any government. Investigations have shown that the content was likely generated organically by various (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Exports to Dubai and Singapore mark opening day Two-day Tezpur Litchi Festival underway

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, June 6: The historic town of Tezpur witnessed a festive atmosphere on Saturday as the second edition of the Tezpur Litchi Festival 2026 commenced with a series of programmes aimed at promoting the town's renowned GI-tagged litchi and creating stronger market opportunities for local growers.

The two-day festival, being held at the District Library Auditorium and Ananda Chandra Agarwala Garden, has brought together farmers, entrepreneurs, scientists, domestic and international buyers, and fruit enthusiasts from different parts of the country.

The event began with floral tributes to noted litterateur Padmanath Gohain Baruah, who is credited with introducing improved varieties of litchi saplings to Tezpur during his tenure as Chairman of the Tezpur Municipality in 1923.

The inaugural programme opened with a violin rendition of Borgeet by young musician Shivam.



Sonitpur District Commissioner and president of the organising committee, Ananda Kumar Das, paid tribute to Gohain Baruah along with his grandsons, Uday Krishna Gohain Baruah and Sanjay Krishna Gohain Baruah, and several litchi farmers.

A book on Tezpur litchi, edited by

noted litterateur Dr Bhupen Saikia, was released during the programme. A special commemorative postal cover issued by the Department of Posts was also unveiled on the occasion.

Ten prominent litchi cultivators — Sarat Chandra Saikia, Kaushik Neog, Abdul Jalil, Prem Sagar Chowdhury,

Ram Narayan Singh, Bina Swargiary, Samir Ali, Raju Sahani, Dhiraj Kumar Singh and Subhash Singh — were felicitated for their contributions to litchi cultivation.

In a symbolic gesture promoting agriculture and environmental awareness, the Indian Army's Fourth Corps distributed litchi saplings among NCC cadets attending the event.

Addressing the gathering as chief guest, Sonitpur MP Ranjit Dutta interacted directly with farmers and listened to their grievances.

He directed officials from the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments to take immediate steps to address issues faced by cultivators.

"Nowhere else can you find litchi as flavourful as those from Tezpur. We are proud that the vision of Padmanath Gohain Baruah has today earned national recognition," Dutta said.

Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rabha announced the launch of an ambitious programme (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Over 100-year-old cooperative society transforming lives of farmers in Punjab

HOSHIARPUR (PUNJAB) June 6: An over-100-year-old cooperative society in the agricultural heartland of Punjab's Hoshiarpur district has become a paragon of community cohesion, offering farmers multiple services to boost productivity and enhance their living standards.

The Lambra Kangri Multipurpose Cooperative Service Society Ltd, which was set up in July 1920 with just 11 members, has evolved into a multipurpose primary agriculture credit society (M-PACS), providing farmers with a host of facilities, including loans, farming equipment on rent, and supply of ultra-low-cost biogas kitchen fuel.

It has transformed into a multi-dimensional institution serving four villages - Lambra, Beron Kangri, Durdiana Kalan and Baggeval - catering to over 3,700 people, with around 1,922 active members, says its secretary-cum-project manager Jaswinder Singh Saini.

Now, the society has total deposits of approximately ₹ 31 crore through savings and fixed deposit accounts, and it has extended loans worth around ₹ 5 crore, covering activities such as agriculture, education, housing, vehicles and women's empowerment.

Nearly 2,900 customers, including regular and nominal members, avail its services daily, Saini says.

The society has set up a custom hiring centre for giving farming equipment on rent, as well as an agro-processing centre for value addition of farm produce.

According to Saini, a defining moment for the society came in 1997-98 when a member, Partap Singh, donated his fixed deposit of ₹ 80,000 to address transportation challenges faced by villagers.

Using these funds, the society started a tempo taxi service connecting Bulhawal, Lambra and Hariana. However, the move ran into regulatory hurdles, as cooperative societies were not authorised to operate transport services.

Thane industry body welcomes 'stable' repo rate, bats for affordable credit supply to MSMEs

THANE, June 6: The Thane Small Scale Industries Association (TSSIA) on Saturday welcomed the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s cautious monetary policy, but said the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector urgently requires simplified, affordable and swift credit supply. The RBI on Friday kept its benchmark repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent, and announced a raft of measures to attract foreign capital and support the rupee amid growing risks to growth and inflation from the prolonged West Asia conflict, elevated energy prices and global supply-chain disruptions. In an official release, TSSIA President Sandeep Parikh said keeping interest rates unchanged provides relief amid global geopolitical tensions, rising fuel prices and economic uncertainty. "The stable repo rate prevents an additional interest burden, making working capital and term loan planning easier. Controlling inflation will also help reduce pressure on raw material costs," Parikh said. (PTI)

AFFIDAVIT

My actual name is "Bulmai Gayan" but in my Assam Gramin Vikash Bank (AGVB) Savings Bank account vide no. 7415010070780, Diphu Branch it has been recorded as "Bulu Gayan". So, for all intent and purposes the names "Bulmai Gayan" and "Bulu Gayan" belong to the same and single person, i.e., me.

Smt. Bulmai Gayan, W/o- Mahashwar Gayan, R/o- Lower Dillaji, Nr. Nepali Basti, PO- Diphu, PS- Diphu, Dist.- Karbi Anglong, Assam

AFFIDAVIT

I, Smt. Diya Porbosa, C/O Deshing Porbosa resident of Gadaipur Gaon, Dhansripur, PS, Diphu, Karbi Anglong would like to mention that my daughter's name wrongly recorded in Aadhaar Card as Khaimola Porbosa instead of the correct and actual name Giriksmi Porbosa and Date of birth wrongly recorded as 08-07-2021 instead of correct date 31-12-2012

AFFIDAVIT

I, Nang Kusana Mein, D/O Chau Supia Mein, aged about 22 years, a permanent resident of Jenglai, P.O., Pryong & P.S Namsai, district Namsai, state Arunachal Pradesh through an affidavit before the Notary Public, Namsai dated 05, June, 2026, states that in my matric certificate of Class-X, my mother's name has been wrongly recorded as Nang Bimola Mein in place of Nang Bimla Mein. The names Nang Bimla Mein and Nang Bimola Mein are one and same person with single identity, that is my mother. This affidavit is sworn authenticating the above facts and same will be used as a piece of documentary evidence to prove the facts stated above before the appropriate authority for change of name, as mentioned in para 3.



With the intervention of the then Joint Registrar Kahan Singh Pannu, the society was upgraded to an M-PAC on July 19, 1999, which proved as a milestone, opening doors for diversification and expansion, Saini says.

To support small and marginal farmers, the society offers for rent more than 90 pieces of agricultural equipment, including tractors, paddy transplanters, harvesting and threshing machines, rotavators and seed drills.

Drone technology is also being used for precise spraying of fertilisers and pesticides, reducing chemical use and saving time. Farmers are provided seeds, fertilisers, and diesel, ensuring a comprehensive support system, Saini says.

This has helped farmers reduce cultivation costs significantly and improve productivity, he says.

Besides, the society has set up an agro-processing centre at a cost of about ₹ 1 crore under government schemes.

Equipped with facilities such as an 'atta chakki' (flour mill), a mini rice sheller, an oil expeller and grinders (for grinding grains, spices, animal feed), the centre allows farmers to process their produce locally.

This reduces dependence on mid-

dlemen, lowers transportation costs and increases farmers' income through value addition.

Processed products like flour, oil, rice and spices are marketed directly to consumers, he says.

The society has also undertaken environmental projects.

A biogas plant, operational in Lambra and Beron Kangri villages, supplies gas to households through metered connections. The cost is significantly lower than LPG, with fuel equivalent to an LPG cylinder costing approximately ₹ 276, he says.

The biogas plant has a capacity to produce 100 cubic meters of gas per day. For this plant, cattle dung is procured from Lambra and Beron Kangri villages at ₹ 8 per kg.

Saini says the society has also installed a wastewater treatment plant, which treats nearly 4 lakh litres of wastewater daily and addresses the issue of sewage.

"Materials like fly ash are used for filtration, while solar-powered systems have been installed for lifting the water," he says.

He further says that while a small quantity of treated water is currently being used by farmers for irrigation, a large quantity of the resource goes unused.

"We have submitted a proposal to

the government seeking permission to store the treated water at the village's common pond, as the society does not have adequate storage infrastructure at present," Saini says, adding that once the storage is allowed, pipelines can be laid to channel this water for irrigation throughout the year.

The society runs a Common Service Centre, offering Aadhaar and other online services to villagers.

It has also set up a Jan Aushadhi Kendra under a central government scheme to provide affordable medicines to locals.

Other facilities offered by the society include ambulance, physiotherapy, gym, medical camps and shuttering material for construction needs, says Saini.

Also, a computer training centre, which was earlier operational in collaboration with a Chandigarh-based institute, trained rural youth in basic digital skills and is expected to resume soon.

The society has also digitised its operations, ensuring efficiency and transparency in financial transactions and service delivery.

Looking ahead, it plans to undertake projects such as grain storage facilities, solar energy systems, bio-CNG production and paddy straw management to further strengthen rural sustainability and address environmental concerns, says Saini.

The society has earned recognition for its contributions to rural development, sustainability, and community welfare.

Its major accolades include the NABARD Best Performance Award (2025) and the NCDC Best Primary Agriculture Cooperative Society Award under the Excellence category (2023).

The society was also honoured with the Punjab State Award (2024) by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for its innovative sustainability initiatives, including a community piped biogas network and a rice-husk-ash water purification system. (PTI)

Mittal Motocorp inaugurates Royal Enfield dealership in Narengi



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 6: Mittal Motocorp recently inaugurated its new authorised Royal Enfield dealership at Narengi, Guwahati.

The showroom was inaugurated by Regional Business Manager Soumya Sankar Bhuyan and Mahendra Mittal in the presence of Kunal Mittal, Vinit

Mittal and Lokesh Mittal.

Located near Maria Public School, Narengi, the dealership offers sales, service and spare parts facilities under one roof, providing customers with a complete Royal Enfield ownership experience.

The showroom features Royal Enfield's popular range of motorcycles,

including the Classic 350, Bullet 350, Hunter 350, Meteor 350, Himalayan 450, Interceptor 650 and Continental GT 650.

The dealership is promoted by brothers Vinit Mittal and Lokesh Mittal of the SBM Group, which has over 15 years of experience in the automobile sector through ventures such as Mittal Autozone, an authorised Maruti Suzuki dealership, and Mittal Eicher, a VECV trucks and buses dealership.

Speaking on the occasion, Vinit Mittal said the dealership aims to foster a vibrant motorcycling community in the Northeast while providing customers with quality products and services.

He added that the facility offers comprehensive after-sales support, including maintenance and service facilities.

The showroom and workshop are now fully operational and open for bookings, test rides and service appointments.

Contd. from Page 1...

Inquiry underway;

sending such food items with students. Residents from different communities have urged the authorities to conduct a fair and impartial investigation and ensure that appropriate action is taken based on the facts that emerge.

Governor hosts Chief

formerly known as Raj Bhavan, traditionally hosted the newly sworn-in Council of Ministers after assuming office. The practice had been discontinued during the Covid-19 pandemic and has now been revived at the initiative of Governor Acharya.

30 species of raptors

by Biswanath Wildlife Division with 20 species of raptors and 6 species of storks. The Nagaon Wildlife Division has 14 species of raptors and 5 species of storks.

Among the stork species, Asian Openbill is the most abundant with 92 individual records across all divisions and Greater adjutant stork is the rarest species with only three individual sightings.

Among the raptors, Himalayan Griffon vulture is the most common bird of prey with 69 individual sightings, while Booted eagle and the White-tailed eagle are the rarest species with only one individual sighting each.

Kaziranga's landscape also serves as a last stronghold for the enigmatic Pallas's fish eagle.

These findings underline Kaziranga's importance for conservation and highlight priorities including nest and flood-plain habitat protection, mitigation of powerline electrocution, continued telemetry and international collaboration to secure the species' remaining populations, officials said.

Nesting locations from the current year were also included in the overall analysis.

The findings will contribute to ongoing efforts to protect these threatened raptor and stork species and enhance the biodiversity of the park's diverse habitats. (PTI)

Tributes paid to

leadership came at a defining moment in our history." "Through his courage and vision, he safeguarded Assam's interests and played a pivotal role in ensuring that Assam remains an integral part of India," he said.

The Guwahati airport, named after the first chief minister, also observed his birth anniversary, with employees asserting that he was a visionary leader whose contributions continue to inspire generations.

The team at the terminal also distributed saplings to passengers to mark the occasion. (PTI)

Sanctions threat to

we're also concentrating on joint research and development." Putin highlighted how experts from both countries are working on the design of the mid-range missile BrahMos.

On the fifth-generation stealth aircraft Sukhoi Su-57, Putin said Russia had earlier proposed a joint development programme with India, but later pursued the project independently after the plan did not materialise.

"Su-57 is a very good aircraft, probably the most modern one, the most up-to-date in the world as of now," Putin said. "We offered that we should do that together. Well, it didn't work out, but we did it on our own, and we stand ready to sell Su-57."

For decades, Russia has served as India's primary defence supplier. However, persistent supply chain disruptions and delivery delays stemming from the war in Ukraine have forced New Delhi to aggressively diversify its military procurement strategy.

After a years-long search for a fifth-generation fighter jet, India has launched its ambitious Advanced Multirole Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project, widely regarded as the nation's largest indigenous aerospace programme.

As the aircraft under the AMCA project is unlikely to join the Indian Air Force (IAF) before 2035, the government is considering the procurement of at least two squadrons (around 36) of Su-57s, provided they fulfil the technical specifications. (PTI)

India, China share

questions from students. During his visit, Doraiswami was briefed on the activities of the university by BFSU President Jia Wenjian. (PTI)

Singapore blocks social

foreign netizens, he added. "I would say any country seeking to safeguard its social cohesion would agree with us that such content is unacceptable, and would take a similar stance to safeguard their own society," the Channel quoted the minister as saying.

The social media posts, which include videos, portray various claims that Singapore is displaying anxiety over its cultural identity and ethnic politics. Such narratives started circulating online in the Chinese information space in May, the MHA said.

"Shortly thereafter, online content emerged containing inflammatory narratives about Singapore's cultural diversity and suggesting that Singapore was being overrun by Indians," said the ministry.

The problematic content likely breach Section 298A of the Penal Code for knowingly promoting feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different groups on grounds of race, or committing an act prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different racial groups in Singapore, said the ministry.

The offence carries a punishment of up to three years' jail and a fine.

The Singapore government takes a serious view of threats to the country's social cohesion and racial harmony, including from external actors, and will act resolutely against them, it added.

Tong said the government will continue to monitor the sites "very closely" and will not hesitate to take further measures "if we regard it to be in Singapore's interests".

"More importantly, I think Singaporeans should also be discerning and careful with what they are consuming online, and also question the source or intention of such videos. And, don't disseminate them if they may harm our social fabric or our social harmony," the Channel had Tong as saying. (PTI)

Two-day Tezpur

titled Ghar Ghar Lichoo, under which two improved-variety litchi saplings will be distributed to 20,000 households at an estimated cost of ₹52 lakh.

He informed that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma would formally launch the initiative.

Professor Amarendra Kumar Das, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Tezpur University, stressed the need for scientific planning and coordinated efforts across the entire value chain, from cultivation and production to processing and marketing, to ensure sustainable income for farmers.

The festival also featured a session on litchi entrepreneurship led by industrialist Anuj Sharma, coordinator of LCSAR Impact, along with Prof Das and food entrepreneur Amrit Madhuri Devi of Madhur Food Products.

A technical session involving scientists from Krishi Vigyan Kendras and agricultural institutions followed later in the day.

In a significant achievement for local growers, one tonne of Tezpur litchi, including the popular Bombaiya and Piyaaji varieties, was exported to Dubai through a Kolkata-based company on the opening day of the festival.

Organisers informed that an additional five quintals of litchi would be exported to Singapore on the second day. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) showcased chemically untreated litchi chips developed from the fruit, highlighting their extended shelf life while retaining the original flavour.

The festival attracted thousands of visitors to exhibition and sales stalls. Premium Bombai variety litchis fetched prices of up to ₹50 per fruit, while improved-variety saplings were available for sale at ₹1,000 each.

More than 50 exhibitors, around 30 farmers and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), along with several domestic and international buyers, are participating in the festival.

The event has been organised with support from the Sonitpur district administration, APEDA, NABARD, NERAMAC, EXIM Bank, ICAR, Tezpur University, Assam Agricultural University, the Indian Army's Fourth Corps, the Department of Posts and several other institutions.

The festival is expected to further strengthen Tezpur's identity as one of India's premier litchi-producing regions while opening new avenues for exports and value-added products.

PM discusses with EAC measures to further boost growth in times of global turmoil



NEW DELHI, June 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday discussed with the members of the Economic Advisory Council various measures to further boost India's economic growth amid global turmoil, official sources said.

The members of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) also gave their assessment of the impact of the West Asia conflict on India and the world.

The Prime Minister and the EAC members discussed various ideas and measures to further boost India's economic growth in times of global turmoil, they said.

Various reforms to improve ease of living and ease of doing business were also discussed at the high-level

meeting, the sources said.

The EAC is an independent body that gives advice to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister, on economic and related issues.

Two principal secretaries to the Prime Minister -- PK Mishra and Shaktikanta Das -- attended the meeting besides the members of the EAC.

At present, the EAC comprises a chairman, three full-time members and 11 part-time members.

S Mahendra Dev is the chairman, while full-time members are Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Sanjeev Sanyal and Shamika Ravi.

There are 11 part-time members: Rakesh Mohan, Sajjid. Z. Chinoy, Neelkanti Mishra, Nilesh Shah, TT Ram Mohan, Soumya Kanti Ghosh, KV Raju, Chetan Ghatge, Pami Dua, Pulak Ghosh and Gaurav Vallabh.

The terms of reference of EAC include analysing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister, and advising him thereon, addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting views thereon to the PM.

These could be either suo-motu or on reference from the Prime Minister or anyone else. They also include attending to any other task as may be desired by the PM from time to time. (PTI)

LGBI Airport pays tribute to Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi on birth anniversary

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 6: Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport (LGBI Airport) on Saturday observed the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi, the first Chief Minister of Assam and one of the foremost architects of modern Assam.

The programme began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and floral tributes offered at the statue of Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi by Chief Airport Officer Mukesh Nankani, along with officials of Guwahati International Airport Limited (GIAL) and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

As part of the observance, passengers travelling through the airport terminal were invited to pay floral tributes to the iconic leader.

The airport authorities also distributed saplings among passengers to

commemorate the occasion and honour the enduring legacy of the Bharat Ratna awardee. The annual observance reflects the airport's commitment to remembering and celebrating the contributions of the distinguished statesman after whom the airport is named. LGBI Airport noted that its new integrated terminal, inspired by the culture, craftsmanship and natural beauty of Assam, serves as a modern gateway to Northeast India.

Combining regional identity with digital innovation and passenger-centric facilities, the terminal symbolises the aspirations of a progressive Assam while preserving the state's rich cultural heritage.

Through such commemorative initiatives, the airport continues to honour and preserve the legacy of Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi and his immense contribution to Assam and the nation.

US-based GE Vernova inks pact with Powerica for supply of wind turbines in Gujarat

NEW DELHI, June 6: US-based energy equipment manufacturer GE Vernova has signed an agreement with renewable energy company Powerica Ltd to supply 28 wind turbines for a project in Gujarat.

The deal includes turbine supply and installation at Botad Wind Farm in Gujarat, GE Vernova said in a statement on Friday.

"The project marks the debut of GE Vernova's 3.8-MW workhorse turbine in the Indian market, a key milestone in the company's strategy to expand its onshore wind portfolio in one of the world's fastest-growing renewable energy markets," it said. Powerica has secured the project's power purchase agreement (PPA) through a competitive auction conducted by Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (GUVNL). Deliveries for the project are expected to begin in the fourth quarter of 2026, GE Vernova said, adding that it will supply wind turbines from its facility in Pune, Maharashtra.

GE Vernova also said that it has been certified by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and included in the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers of Wind Turbines (ALMM) - a mandatory requirement for wind turbine OEMs participating in India's wind market. (PTI)

Kriti joins Shahid as Vogue Eyewear brand ambassador

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 6: Vogue Eyewear has announced National Award-winning actor Kriti Sanon as its new female Brand Ambassador, joining Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor, who continues his long-standing association with the brand.

The announcement comes along the launch of the brand's latest campaign, "Vogue Eyewear Journeys," which celebrates individuality, confidence and self-expression.

Aimed at connecting with a new generation of fashion-conscious consumers, the campaign highlights the evolving nature of personal style and identity. Known for her distinctive fashion sense and strong appeal among young audiences, Kriti Sanon brings a contemporary perspective to the brand.

The campaign explores the idea that fashion is a journey of self-discovery, portraying different versions of an individual across various moments in life.

Speaking about the association, Kriti Sanon said, "Vogue Eyewear is on trend, versatile and resonates perfectly with my personal style. I'm excited to join them with their latest campaign that explores constant reinvention, as we discover new aspects of our personality. The campaign beautifully captures this journey of self-discovery and how style plays a key role in self-expression."

Shahid Kapoor also welcomed the collaboration, saying, "What I've always appreciated about my journey with Vogue Eyewear is how naturally it aligns with my own sense of style—unforced, evolving and personal."

Nominations invited for Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2026

Staff Reporter

DIPHU, June 6: The District Commissioner of Karbi Anglong has announced that the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India is inviting nominations for the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) 2026.

The national award is instituted annually to recognise and honour children across the country for their exceptional achievements and outstanding contributions.

The PMRBP 2026 will be conferred upon meritorious children who have demonstrated excellence in six fields: bravery, social service, environment, sports, art and culture and science and technology.

To be eligible for the 2026 awards, nominees must be below the age of 18 years as of July 31, 2026. Official guidelines state that



a background in public service linked to the child's achievements will be considered an added advantage during the selection process.

The online application process is currently open, having commenced on April 1, 2026. The deadline for submitting nominations is July 31,

2026. Nominations and recommendations are being accepted only through the official online portal at <https://awards.gov.in>. No offline applications will be entertained.

The District Commissioner has urged all educational institutions,

social organisations, public bodies and community members in Karbi Anglong to actively identify deserving children. While submitting nominations, stakeholders have been asked to ensure that candidates have high-calibre achievements worthy of national-level recognition.

Special emphasis has also been placed on inclusivity. Stakeholders have been encouraged to identify and nominate talented children from marginalised groups, including girls, weaker sections of society, SC/ST communities and Divyang (specially-abled) children, ensuring equal opportunity for recognition at the national level.

The District Commissioner has appealed to all stakeholders to act promptly and ensure that Karbi Anglong's most talented young achievers are nominated before the registration window closes.

Inquiry ordered against two rehab centres in Biswanath

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, June 6: The district administration has ordered an inquiry against two drug rehabilitation centres in Biswanath following allegations of physical assault and mistreatment of residents. The centres - Live Well Rehabilitation Centre at Madhupur and Pratigya Rehabilitation Centre at Biswanath have been sealed with immediate effect.

Biswanath District Magistrate Lakhinandan Saharia, through an order dated June 5, 2026 (BNM.71/2022/572), announced an inquiry into the functioning of the two rehabilitation centres and directed them to submit a detailed report within seven days.

Biswanath Executive Magistrate and Election Officer Dhiman Hazarika has been entrusted with conducting the inquiry. He has been directed to carry out a detailed investigation into the activities of the rehabilitation centres and examine the allegations raised against them.

According to reports, residents of the two centres had allegedly been subjected to physical and mental torture by the authorities over a prolonged period. Based on the incident, the District Social Welfare Department lodged a complaint at Biswanath Chariali Sadar Police Station.

Police have registered a case under Sections 117(2), 127(4), 351(2) and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. During the course of the investigation, police reportedly obtained preliminary evidence supporting the allegations.

Considering the seriousness of the complaints and the need for an impartial and unhindered investigation, the district administration deemed immediate preventive measures necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of the residents.

Accordingly, the District Magistrate ordered the immediate sealing of Live Well Rehabilitation Centre, Madhupur and Pratigya Rehabilitation Centre, Biswanath, while also directing a formal inquiry into the matter.

500 neem saplings distributed at Doboka High School

Jayanta Choudhury honoured as 'Neem Manav'



HT Correspondent

HOJAI, June 6: Marking World Environment Day, educator and social worker Jayanta Choudhury led a sapling plantation drive at Doboka High School on Friday. Around 500 neem saplings were planted on the school campus, while nearly 500 neem saplings were distributed among students and local residents.

The programme witnessed the

participation of school authorities, students and members of the local community. On the occasion, Minmay Goswami, Education Officer, unveiled a pamphlet prepared by Jayanta Choudhury highlighting the benefits of the neem tree.

Attendees, including school and community leaders, pledged to promote tree plantation and strengthen environmental conser-

vation efforts in the area. Choudhury, who has distributed nearly 62,000 neem saplings over the past two decades as part of his environmental initiatives was felicitated by the community for his sustained contribution towards afforestation and environmental awareness.

In recognition of his efforts, members of the community affectionately honoured him with the title "Neem Manav".

MY Bharat, Udhorlangso Youth Club conduct plantation drive

HT Bureau

DIPHU, June 6: To mark World Environment Day, MY Bharat: Mera Yuva Bharat, Diphu Kendra under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India in collaboration with Udhorlangso Youth Club, successfully carried out a plantation drive at Udhharjan Ramsing Tisso Village roadside in Phuloni MAC Constituency, Karbi Anglong.

The plantation drive was organised under the theme "Inspired by nature. For Climate. For our Future." Youth volunteers, school students and community members actively participated in the programme, planting saplings and installing bamboo tree guards along the roadside to

ensure their protection and growth.

The event was attended by Jiten Bey, Adviser of Udhorlangso Youth Club and state vice-president of BJYM Assam Pradesh and Bursing Tisso, social activist, along with school students and active members of the Udhorlangso Youth Club. Their presence encouraged the youth and highlighted the importance of community-led environmental action.

Speaking on the occasion, volunteers emphasised that "Every sapling is a step towards a better climate and a safer future." The initiative reflects the commitment of MY Bharat and local youth towards environmental sustainability and climate action in Karbi Anglong.



Baksa reviews flood preparedness measures



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, June 6: A meeting of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Baksa was held on Saturday at the Conference Hall of the District Commissioner's Office, Mushalpur, under the chairmanship of District Commissioner, Baksa, Kimnei Changsan, IAS to review flood preparedness measures and storm/flood damage assessment for the years 2025-26 and 2026-27.

During the meeting, the District Commissioner reviewed the preparedness of all concerned departments for the ensuing flood season and directed officials to conduct regular field visits to ensure that all necessary arrangements and resources are in place in vulnerable areas.

The meeting discussed the preparedness of relief camps across the

district. It was informed that 15 relief camps have already been identified and kept ready for use during emergencies. The District Commissioner also emphasised the readiness of one model relief camp in each revenue circle. Concerned officials were directed to ensure that relief camps are located on higher ground and are equipped with essential facilities such as safe drinking water, sanitation, electricity, basic infrastructure and other necessary amenities.

Preparedness for essential services at relief camps, including food supplies, medicines, anti-venom and veterinary support was reviewed. Concerned departments were instructed to maintain adequate stocks of essential commodities and emergency materials to effectively respond to any eventuality during the

flood season. The meeting also reviewed proposals submitted by various departments to the Circle Level Task Force Committees. The District Commissioner directed all concerned departments to submit the status of pending proposals at the earliest and stressed the need to expedite preventive and mitigation measures in flood-prone areas.

Preparedness for rescue and emergency response operations was discussed in detail, with departments presenting their action plans and preparedness measures for effective disaster management and a coordinated response during emergencies.

Officials from various line departments attended the meeting and shared updates on departmental preparedness and contingency plans for the forthcoming flood season.

Special Lok Adalat to be held in Karbi Anglong on July 18

Staff Reporter

DIPHU, June 6: In a bid to ensure speedy justice and reduce the burden of pending litigation, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Karbi Anglong is scheduled to host a Special Lok Adalat on July 18, 2026.

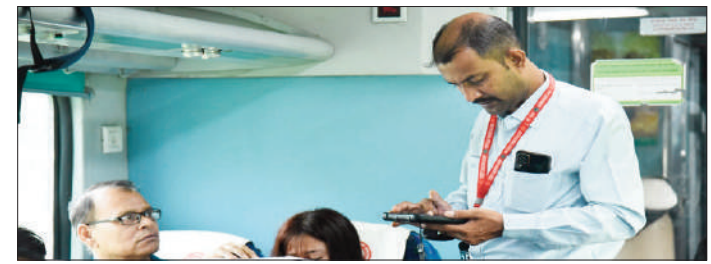
The day-long settlement camp will commence at 10:00 AM and will be held simultaneously at two venues: the District Judiciary Campus in Diphu and the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM) Court Campus in Bokajan.

According to an official statement issued by Fariha Faridi, Secretary of the DLSA, Karbi Anglong, the Special Lok Adalat is being organised in line with directives from the Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSA).

This session will focus exclusively on cases related to the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, which primarily deals with cheque bounce disputes and other financial matters with an emphasis on resolving them through amicable and mutual settlement.

The DLSA has appealed to all litigants and parties who have already received official summonses or notices in such cases to attend the session and make use of the alternative dispute resolution platform. They have been encouraged to settle their cases through conciliation without engaging in prolonged legal proceedings.

NJP sets record in ticket checking revenue



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 6: The Ticket Checking Section of New Jalpaiguri (NJP) under Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has achieved a historic milestone by recording an unprecedented earning of more than ₹ 2.08 crore during the month of May 2026. This marks the highest-ever monthly ticket checking revenue achieved by any section across Northeast Frontier Railway. This remarkable accomplishment reflects the exceptional dedication, professionalism and relentless efforts of the ticket checking staff in ensuring ticket compliance, preventing ticketless travel and safeguarding railway revenue. The achievement stands as a shining example of operational excellence and effective revenue protection initiatives undertaken by NFR.

The record-breaking performance was achieved through sustained ticket checking drives, meticulous enforcement activities and coordinated teamwork by the ticket checking staff of NJP. During the month, the section maintained an impressive average daily earning of more than ₹ 6.54 lakh (approx.), while the highest single-day earning of more than ₹ 9.65 lakh (approx.) was recorded on May 9, 2026. With a dedicated workforce in the NJP/TTE Lobby, the remarkable achievement reflects the unwavering commitment, exceptional efficiency and sincere efforts of the entire team towards their duties and responsibilities.

The success was further strengthened by several outstanding performances by ticket checking staff, which significantly contributed towards setting this new benchmark for ticket checking earnings in NFR. Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager and senior officials of Northeast Frontier Railway congratulated the entire Ticket Checking Team of NJP for this remarkable achievement, which reflects the continuous efforts of NFR towards revenue protection initiatives and its commitment to transparency, accountability and proper ticketing awareness. The achievement of the NJP Ticket Checking Section will serve as a source of inspiration for all railway sections and employees across the zone, encouraging them to strive for even greater excellence in service and performance.

BGLA launches biodiversity conservation drive

NGO urges stricter eco-friendly practices in Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, June 6: As a noble initiative for the protection of biodiversity in Bodoland, the Bodoland Golden Langur Association

(BGLA), a Kokrajhar-based NGO, erected signboards appealing to visitors entering Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park to follow rules and regulations while travelling

through the wildlife zone.

The signboards carrying slogans on wildlife protection were installed along the roadside leading to the Saralpara tourist spot near the Bhutan border through Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park. The signboards were erected from Digli, the entrance gate of the National Park, to Ultapani. The programme was organised on the occasion of World Environment Day 2026.

The BGLA also planted saplings along the roadside leading to Saralpara and appealed to visitors and picnickers to follow directives such as driving slowly in the wildlife zone, refraining from blowing horns, avoiding noise pollution and not throwing plastic waste or water bottles inside the National Park. The association also held a brief meeting with the party managing the Saralpara tourist spot and urged it to take immediate steps to distribute multilingual pamphlets to tourists regarding rules aimed at preventing harmful environmental activities, including the disposal of single-use plastics and bottles in water bodies.

The participants also discussed the management of the

tourist spot, regulation of vehicle movement and the necessity of introducing an online booking system to control the increasing number of visitors, which could adversely impact the ecosystem of the park. Talking to media persons, BGLA president Ajit Basumatary said that celebrating World Environment Day through tree plantation drives and meetings was a regular practice worldwide, but their focus was primarily on the protection of wild animals and biodiversity. He said Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park, located within the Chirang Reserve Forest in Kokrajhar district is renowned for its rich greenery and wildlife, including several endangered species.

He said the park is home to Asiatic elephants, golden langurs, hornbills, tigers, deer, around 350 species of butterflies, reptiles and birds. However, the rapid depletion of reserve forest areas due to large-scale encroachments has raised serious concerns regarding the protection of wildlife habitats. He stressed that illegal encroachments inside the National Park must be stopped at any cost.

Basumatary further said

that there had recently been reports of the deaths of a golden langur and a hornbill, as well as incidents involving wild elephants inside the park due to over speeding vehicles. He added that speeding vehicles also kill hundreds of butterflies every day.

He urged the authorities concerned to take strong measures against reckless driving inside the park, regulate the number of tourist vehicles according to the carrying capacity of the area, introduce an online booking system for tourists, address illegal encroachments and conduct regular awareness campaigns involving NGOs working for biodiversity conservation.

He also stated that the BGLA would extend full cooperation to the concerned departments in protecting biodiversity across the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) region for a better future. Basumatary further said that the endangered golden langur has been recognised as the pride of Bodoland and that the association has decided to organise a "Golden Langur Festival" every year, as BTC is home to more than 5,000 golden langurs.

ASS postpones incomplete Pancharatna-Guwahati Pratinidhi Sabha

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, June 6: The incomplete representative assembly of the Pancharatna-Guwahati Session of the Asam Sahitya Sabha scheduled to be held on June 7, has been postponed following a ruling by the Kamrup Metropolitan Civil Judge on Saturday afternoon. The representative assembly held on February 1, 2026, at the Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati was abruptly adjourned midway after an unexpected situation arose towards the end of the session. As a result, several important agenda items, including the annual accounts, remained unaddressed.

A meeting of the Karnadhara Samiti held in Guwahati on April 11, 2026, had recommended that the incomplete assembly be convened immediately after the Fifth Full Executive Session scheduled in Golaghat. Accordingly, it was earlier decided to organise the adjourned representative assembly on June 7, 2026, after the Fifth Executive Session at the Birangana Sati Sadhani Kalakshetra in Golaghat under the auspices of the Golaghat Zila Sahitya Sabha. A caveat petition bearing No 16/2026 had also been filed before the Satra Judicial Court in Jorhat seeking requisite permission for the same.

GOVT. OF ASSAM.
OFFICE OF THE JT. DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES,
KARBI ANGLONG DIST., DIPHU

No.Jt.DHS/KA/Diet/Tender/2026/911 Dated 5th June'2026

NOTIFICATION

It is hereby notify to all intending contractors/ Diet Suppliers/Firms etc. that the last date of submission of Application/Tenders for supply of Dietary Articles to various Health Institutions in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong District Vide this Office S.T.N No. Jt.DHS/Diet/Tender/2026/848 Dated Diphu the 25/05/2026, is hereby extended and re-fixed on 19/06/2026 next instead of 06/06/2026 due to unavoidable circumstances.

Other terms and condition will remain same.

Sd/-

Joint Director of Health Services,
Karbi Anglong District, Diphu.

IPRD/ KA/ 2026-27/41

Editor's pick

Assam's Economic Rise and the Challenge of Sustaining Growth

By: Siddharth Roy

For much of post-Independence India, Assam was viewed through the prism of its challenges. Insurgency, inadequate infrastructure, geographic isolation, periodic floods and a narrow economic base often dominated discussions about the State. Today, however, a different narrative is beginning to emerge. During his recent meeting with President Droupadi Murmu, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma described Assam as India's fastest-growing State and outlined his government's plans to sustain this momentum. While political claims naturally invite scrutiny, there is little doubt that Assam has undergone a significant economic transformation in recent years.

The more important question is not whether Assam is growing rapidly, but whether it can convert this phase of accelerated growth into a durable and inclusive development model. The answer lies in understanding the policy choices, economic drivers and structural challenges that will shape Assam's future.

A Decade of Economic Acceleration

The numbers suggest that Assam's economy has expanded at a pace that compares favourably with many Indian States. Official and government-backed assessments indicate strong growth in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), rising per capita income and increased investment activity. State authorities have pointed to data showing that Assam's economy grew significantly faster than the national average between 2020 and 2025, while the State's economic size has expanded rapidly over the past decade.

This growth is noteworthy because Assam has historically lagged behind the national average on several economic indicators. For decades, the State suffered from weak industrialisation, limited private investment and connectivity bottlenecks. The transformation therefore represents not merely cyclical growth but a broader structural shift.

The State's economic trajectory has also coincided with a period of relative political stability and stronger Centre-State coordination. Infrastructure spending, administrative reforms and targeted investment promotion have combined to create a more favourable business environment than existed a decade ago.

Infrastructure as Growth Catalyst

Perhaps the most important factor behind Assam's recent economic performance has been infrastructure development. Economic history repeatedly demonstrates that connectivity determines growth. Assam's challenge has always been its geography. Despite abundant natural resources and strategic location, poor connectivity limited economic opportunities.

Recent investments in highways, bridges, airports, railways and digital infrastructure have begun altering this reality. The expansion of transport networks has reduced transaction costs and improved market access. Better connectivity has also strengthened Assam's role as the gateway to the Northeast and as a potential bridge between mainland India and Southeast Asia.

The policy significance of these developments cannot be overstated. Infrastructure is not merely a public good; it is a productivity-enhancing asset that attracts private investment and facilitates economic diversification.

Beyond Tea and Oil

Historically, Assam's economy depended heavily on tea, petroleum and agriculture. While these sectors remain important, policymakers increasingly recognise that long-term prosperity requires diversification.

The State continues to dominate India's tea production and remains an important energy-producing region. However, growth is now being driven by a broader mix of sectors, including services, tourism, logistics, healthcare, information technology and manufacturing. Government efforts to position Assam as an investment destination have sought to leverage its strategic location and natural advantages while reducing dependence on traditional industries.

This diversification is critical because traditional sectors face growing vulnerabilities. Tea production is increasingly affected by climate variability, while the long-term future of fossil-fuel-dependent growth remains uncertain in an era of global energy transition.

The Investment Push

A central pillar of Assam's development strategy has been investment mobilisation. The Advantage Assam initiative and subsequent investor outreach programmes have attempted to reposition the State within India's investment geography. Government estimates suggest that investment commitments worth several lakh crore rupees have been secured across multiple sectors, ranging from healthcare and tourism to manufacturing and infrastructure.

The real test, however, lies not in the value of Memoranda of Understanding but in implementation. India has often witnessed large investment announcements that failed to translate into actual projects. Assam's success will therefore depend on project execution, land availability, regulatory efficiency and the creation of a skilled workforce.

Investment-led growth is sustainable only when it generates employment and productivity gains. Policymakers must therefore focus on converting investment inflows into long-term economic assets.

The Demographic and Human Capital Challenge

Economic growth alone does not guarantee development. Assam's next challenge is human capital formation. While income levels have risen, the State still faces deficits in higher education, skill development and healthcare.

The proposal for an Indian Institute of Management in Guwahati reflects recognition of the need to strengthen knowledge infrastructure and improve workforce quality. Expanding educational opportunities will be essential if Assam wishes to move beyond resource-based growth towards innovation-driven development.

Equally important is ensuring that growth remains geographically balanced. Large sections of rural Assam continue to depend on agriculture and allied activities. Development policies must therefore ensure that prosperity reaches districts beyond major urban centres.

The Road Ahead

Assam's emergence as one of India's fastest-growing economies is undoubtedly a significant achievement. Yet the true measure of success will not be growth rates alone. Sustainable development requires resilient institutions, diversified economic structures, skilled human resources and environmental stewardship.

The State possesses several advantages: strategic geography, abundant natural resources, growing connectivity and increasing investor confidence. At a time when India seeks to strengthen its engagement with Southeast Asia through the Act East Policy, Assam is uniquely positioned to become a major economic hub linking South Asia with the Indo-Pacific region.

The challenge now is to convert momentum into permanence. If infrastructure investments continue, economic diversification deepens and human capital development receives sustained attention, Assam could emerge not merely as a fast-growing State but as a model of regional transformation. For a region long associated with unrealised potential, that would represent a historic achievement.

How Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is rewriting the cricketing grammar of Bihar

The historical trajectory of Indian domestic cricket has consistently been defined by remarkable stories of grassroots emergence, but few narratives match the sheer velocity, precocity, and analytical significance surrounding Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Born on March 27, 2011, in the modest town of Tajpur within the Samastipur district of Bihar, this young left-handed batting prodigy has transitioned from a regional marvel into a genuinely transformative phenomenon within global cricket circles. For a state like Bihar, whose sporting infrastructure has historically contended with complex administrative disruptions, protracted governance battles, and a structural deficit of elite developmental opportunities, the rise of an authentic top-order powerhouse represents a major regional milestone. Sooryavanshi is not merely a highly productive run-scorer across multiple competitive formats; he embodies a profound paradigm shift for a region long searching for a definitive modern sporting icon, effectively rewriting the socio-cultural script of what small-town talent can achieve on the grandest stages of modern sport.

To fully appreciate the scope of Sooryavanshi's developmental trajectory, one must observe the foundational environment constructed during his early childhood through intense familial dedication. His father, Sanjiv Sooryavanshi, a former aspiring cricketer who redirected his focus toward farming, recognized an innate physical coordination and spatial awareness in his son at the fragile age of four, prompting him to construct a rudimentary concrete practice pitch in their family backyard. The long-term pursuit of athletic excellence soon demanded immense structural and financial sacrifices, culminating in his father selling precious family farmland to consistently fund the requirements of high-level coaching, travel, and premium equipment. By the time the young southpaw reached the age of eight, he was formally enrolled at Manish Ojha's GenNex Cricket

Academy located in Patna, initiating a grueling logistical routine where his parents managed an alternate-day, 100-kilometer commute from Samastipur to Patna. This persistent familial investment sharpened an innate talent characterized by rapid cognitive processing, exceptional hand-speed, and an uncanny ability to decipher delivery lengths significantly earlier than contemporary biomechanical metrics deem typical for his age group.

The competitive manifestation of this rigorous preparation quickly shattered age-group benchmarks across the domestic circuit, thrusting the young prodigy into elite first-class cricket at an age where most children are navigating early secondary education. In January 2024, at the age of twelve years and 284 days, Sooryavanshi made his debut for Bihar against Mumbai in the prestigious Ranji Trophy, eclipsing modern-era benchmarks established by legendary figures like Yuvraj Singh to become the fourth youngest Indian first-class debutant in history. This milestone was rapidly reinforced by structural versatility, as he became the youngest T20 debutant in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy against Rajasthan and the youngest List A player in the Vijay Hazare Trophy against Madhya Pradesh before his fourteenth birthday. Far from being a ceremonial selection, his inclusion was validated by overwhelming run production, including a majestic 190 off 84 deliveries against Arunachal Pradesh in the 2025-26 Vijay Hazare Trophy, an innings that demolished AB de Villiers' record for the fastest 150 in List A history by reaching the milestone in a mere 59 balls.

On the international youth stage, the Samastipur native translated his domestic dominance into historical benchmarks while representing the India Under-19 team. In July 2025, during a multi-format tour against England in Worcester, he etched his name into the record books as the youngest centurion in Youth Test matches, blasting a 58-ball century that stood as the second-fastest in

under-19 international history. He maintained this rich vein of form through the ACC Under-19 Asia Cup and the subsequent 2026 ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup, where his technical lineage—deeply inspired by his idol, the legendary West Indian batsman Brian Lara—was fully displayed. In the World Cup final against England, Sooryavanshi executed a masterclass of controlled aggression, hammering 175 runs off just 80 balls, garnished with fifteen boundaries and fifteen sixes, securing the championship for India and earning the Player of the Tournament award with an aggregate

of 439 runs at an index of 62.71 and an astonishing strike rate of 169.49. The grandest validation of his tactical evolution occurred on the elite stage of the Indian Premier League, where the Rajasthan Royals retained the teen sensation after acquiring him for 1.10 crore INR,

providing the ultimate platform for his explosive capabilities. The 2026 IPL season witnessed an unprecedented assault on bowling opposition, as the fifteen-year-old opener reconfigured powerplay analytics by becoming the first player in any T20 tournament to cross the 500-run mark within the initial six overs of a single season. Across 16 matches,

member probables list for the upcoming Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, positioning him alongside elite peers like Yashasvi Jaiswal and Abhishek Sharma, while older established stars were omitted to facilitate a long-term transition towards future global tournaments. Furthermore, his inclusion in the India A squad for the 50-over series in Sri Lanka signals a structured progression curated by the Board of Control for Cricket in India. This rapid ascent has prompted administrative figures, including IPL Chairman Arun Dhimal, to publicly emphasize the necessity of holistic mentorship, noting that the governing body and the franchise must handhold the young prodigy to preserve his psychological temperament, ensuring his rare mental toughness matures alongside his physical skills through the inevitable fluctuations of an elite sporting career.

Ultimately, the narrative of Vaibhav Sooryavanshi extends far beyond personal records and commercial validation; it acts as a cultural catalyst for the entire state of Bihar. In a socio-economic environment where ancestral adages traditionally favored formal academic security over sporting pursuits, a teenage boy with a willow bat has single-handedly transformed regional perspectives, prompting local families to actively invest in the athletic aspirations of the next generation. The burden of tomorrow is undeniably heavy for a teenager navigating global fame before crossing the threshold of adulthood, yet his grounded upbringing in Tajpur keeps him fundamentally resilient. As he continues to blend the rhythmic flair of Brian Lara with a contemporary power hitting style, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi stands as a beacon of sporting independence—a homegrown superhero who did not wait for structural systems to perfect him, but instead forced the cricketing world to adapt to his brilliance. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)



DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

Narendra Modi: India's longest-serving PM

By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

Finally on June 10 the long waited day has come. Narendra Modi surpasses Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister. The story of Narendra Modi's political journey reflects broader transformations within Indian democracy. His rise demonstrates the increasing importance of mass communication, leadership branding, and aspirational politics in the modern era. Whether admired or criticized, Modi has undeniably reshaped India's political landscape. His influence extends beyond party politics, affecting discussions on governance, national identity, economic development, and India's place in the world. Jawaharlal Nehru served as Prime Minister for approximately seventeen years, making him India's longest-serving Prime Minister for decades. His leadership was characterized by institution-building, democratic consolidation, economic planning, and a commitment to secularism. Nehru inherited a nation traumatized by Partition, widespread poverty, illiteracy, and communal violence.

Despite these immense challenges, he laid the foundations of modern India through the establishment of scientific institutions, public sector enterprises, educational centers, and democratic traditions. His vision of a socialist-inspired mixed economy influenced Indian policymaking for several decades. Narendra Modi emerged from a dramatically different political environment. Unlike Nehru, who belonged to the generation of freedom fighters, Modi rose through the ranks of organizational politics. His political journey from a modest background to the highest executive office of the world's largest democracy has become a significant part of his public image. The history of independent India has been shaped by a handful of leaders whose political influence transcended their own generations. Among them, Jawaharlal Nehru and Narendra Modi occupy distinct and significant positions. Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, guided the newly independent nation through its formative years from 1947 to 1964. Narendra Modi, who assumed office in 2014, has emerged as one of the most influential political figures in contemporary India. As Modi continues to lead the country through successive electoral victories, comparisons with Nehru have become increasingly common. The possibility of Modi serving a longer tenure than Nehru has generated considerable political and academic discussion, inviting an examination of leadership styles, governance models, public appeal, and their respective impacts on India. His supporters often portray him as a self-made leader who understands the aspirations of ordinary Indians. This narrative has played a substantial role in his sustained popularity across diverse social groups. The political circumstances surrounding Modi's rise to power were also fundamentally different.

By 2014, India had experienced decades of coalition governments, economic liberalization, and changing social dynamics. Public frustration over corruption scandals, administrative inefficiency, and economic concerns created an environment conducive to political change. Modi's campaign effectively projected him as a decisive leader capable of delivering development, economic growth, and strong governance. His victory marked a significant shift in India's political landscape, with the Bharatiya Janata Party securing a parliamentary majority on its own. One of the defining characteristics of Modi's tenure has been the centralization of political leadership around his personality. Unlike many previous Prime Ministers who operated within broader collective frameworks, Modi has become the principal face of government policy, electoral campaigns, and national initiatives. His communication skills, extensive use of digital media, and ability to connect with large audiences have contributed to his enduring political appeal. Through radio broadcasts, social media engagement, and public rallies, he has maintained direct communication with citizens on an unprecedented scale.

Economic development has remained a central pillar of Modi's governance philosophy. Initiatives such as Digital India, Make in India, Startup India, and various infrastructure programs have sought to transform India's economic landscape. Massive investments in highways, railways, airports, and digital connectivity have aimed to modernize the nation's infrastructure. The expansion of digital payment systems and financial inclusion initiatives has brought millions into the formal banking sector. Supporters argue that these measures have accelerated India's emergence as a major global economic power. At the same time, Modi's tenure has witnessed ambitious welfare programs targeting the poor and marginalized sections of society. Housing schemes, sanitation campaigns, cooking gas distribution, healthcare initiatives, and direct benefit transfers have reached millions of households. Programs such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan have sought to address longstanding public health challenges, while the construction of toilets across rural India has been presented as a major social transformation. These initiatives have contributed significantly to Modi's popularity among lower-income groups. Foreign policy has emerged as another notable dimension of Modi's leadership.

Under Modi's tenure, India has pursued a more assertive global role. Strategic partnerships with major powers, engagement with the Indian diaspora, and active participation in international forums have enhanced India's global visibility. Modi's personal diplomacy and frequent international engagements have projected India as a confident and ambitious nation seeking greater influence in global affairs. Relations with countries across Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas have received considerable attention. Comparisons with Nehru often focus on contrasting visions of nationhood. Nehru emphasized secularism, scientific temper, and non-alignment in foreign policy. Modi, by contrast, has emphasized cultural nationalism, civilizational identity, and strategic pragmatism. Supporters

argue that Modi has revived pride in India's ancient heritage and cultural traditions while simultaneously promoting modernization. Critics, however, contend that some aspects of his political approach challenge the secular framework envisioned by India's founders. These debates reflect broader ideological differences that continue to shape Indian political discourse.

The electoral success achieved under Modi's leadership is particularly remarkable. Winning consecutive parliamentary majorities in a country as vast and diverse as India is an extraordinary political accomplishment. His ability to maintain popularity across multiple election cycles distinguishes him from many contemporary democratic leaders worldwide. Electoral victories in numerous state and national contests have reinforced the perception of Modi as the dominant figure in Indian politics. Today nearly all the border adjacent states are being ruled by BJP under the leadership of Modi as the Prime Minister. Media and communication strategies have also contributed significantly to Modi's political longevity. He has effectively utilized digital platforms to bypass traditional channels and communicate directly with citizens. This approach has enabled him to maintain a consistent narrative and respond rapidly to political developments. His campaigns often combine traditional grassroots mobilization with sophisticated technological outreach, creating a powerful electoral machine capable of reaching millions of voters.

The COVID-19 pandemic represented one of the greatest challenges of Modi's tenure. India faced immense public health and economic pressures during the crisis. Government responses included nationwide lockdowns, vaccination campaigns, healthcare infrastructure expansion, and economic relief measures. While the handling of certain phases of the pandemic attracted criticism, India's large-scale vaccination effort was widely recognized as one of the most extensive public health operations in human history. Infrastructure development under Modi has been particularly visible. New highways, expressways, railway modernization projects, metro systems, and digital networks have transformed many parts of the country. Advocates view these developments as essential foundations for future economic growth. The emphasis on connectivity, logistics, and urban development reflects a broader vision of India as a globally competitive economy capable of sustaining long-term expansion. Another factor contributing to Modi's enduring appeal is his ability to frame politics around national aspirations. His speeches frequently emphasize themes of self-reliance, national pride, technological advancement, and India's emergence as a leading global power. These themes resonate strongly with younger generations seeking opportunities in a rapidly changing world.

The narrative of a rising India has become a central component of his political message. Critics have raised concerns regarding freedom of expression, institutional autonomy,



economic inequalities, and social polarization. Opposition parties argue that democratic institutions require stronger safeguards and greater pluralism. Supporters counter that strong leadership is necessary to implement reforms and overcome bureaucratic inertia. The comparison with Nehru extends beyond duration in office. Nehru's legacy is associated with institution-building during the early years of independence, while Modi's legacy may ultimately be judged by India's transformation in the twenty-first century. Both leaders have operated in vastly different historical contexts, making direct comparisons challenging. Nehru confronted the task of nation-building from the ground up, whereas Modi has focused on accelerating growth and redefining India's global position.

If Narendra Modi ultimately surpasses Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister, it will represent a significant milestone in Indian political history. Longevity in office, however, is only one measure of leadership. Historical judgment depends not merely on years served but on the lasting impact of policies, institutions, and ideas. Leaders are remembered not only for electoral victories but for the changes they bring to society and the legacy they leave for future generations.

As India continues its journey through the twenty-first century, scholars, historians, and citizens will continue to debate the relative achievements of Nehru and Modi. Such comparisons are inevitable when leaders leave deep marks on national life. Nehru helped define the foundations of independent India, while Modi seeks to redefine its future trajectory. Their legacies, though different in character and context, represent two major chapters in the evolving story of the Indian republic. Should Modi remain in office longer than Nehru, it would symbolize not only a personal political achievement but also a reflection of the changing dynamics of Indian democracy, where leadership, public expectations, and national ambitions continue to evolve in new and significant ways. (Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee is former Affiliate Faculty Virginia Commonwealth University & Retd. Head Post Graduate Dept of English Dum Dum Motijheel College. Glen Allen Mobile +1(804) -564-2383 email profatanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)

Artificial intelligence: Revolution, reality, and the future of human identity

By: Lalit Garg

In the history of human civilization, certain revolutions have fundamentally transformed both the course and character of life. The Agricultural Revolution provided stability to human existence, the Industrial Revolution redefined production and labor, and the Information Revolution erased barriers to knowledge and communication. Today, the revolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) stands at another historic turning point. It is not merely a technological advancement; it has become a profound question intertwined with human intelligence, decision-making, employment, social structures, governance systems, and even human identity and existence itself. This is why an intense global debate has emerged: Will AI prove to be a blessing for humanity, or will it gradually challenge the very significance of human beings?

The most remarkable aspect of AI is that it is no longer confined to operating machines. It is increasingly performing tasks that were once considered uniquely human. From writing and visual art to music composition, disease diagnosis, judicial analysis, scientific research, and administrative decision-making, AI's growing presence has raised a host of new questions. If machines can think, learn, and make decisions, what will remain distinctive about human beings? This is not merely a technological concern; it is also

a philosophical and ethical one.

Human identity is rooted in consciousness, sensitivity, creativity, and moral judgment. AI may possess vast stores of information and extraordinary computational power, but it lacks experiential consciousness, compassion, self-awareness, and a sense of values. Yet when machines write poetry, create paintings, and engage in conversations, an illusion emerges that they might eventually replace humans. The real challenge, however, is not that machines will become human, but that humans may begin to behave like machines. If every aspect of life is governed solely by data, calculations, and efficiency, human emotions and ethical values may be pushed to the margins.

Another significant question arises in this context: Will the future witness the emergence of a new form of humanity? Many scientists and technology thinkers believe that the gap between biological humans and digital technology will continue to narrow in the coming decades. Through direct brain-computer interfaces, artificial organs, memory-enhancement technologies, and biotechnological interventions, a future is being envisioned in which human beings and machines merge into a hybrid form. While this possibility appears fascinating, it is equally unsettling. If technologically enhanced humans gain significant advantages over ordinary individ-

uals, a new and deeper form of social inequality may emerge.

AI's growing influence is already transforming employment and the global economy. Routine and repetitive tasks are increasingly being automated, leading to fears that millions of jobs may disappear. Many major technology companies have reduced their workforce in the name of cost-cutting and productivity enhancement. However, recent experiences suggest that AI has not become a complete substitute for human labor. In areas requiring complex judgment, innovation, interpersonal relationships, and contextual understanding, the human role remains indispensable.

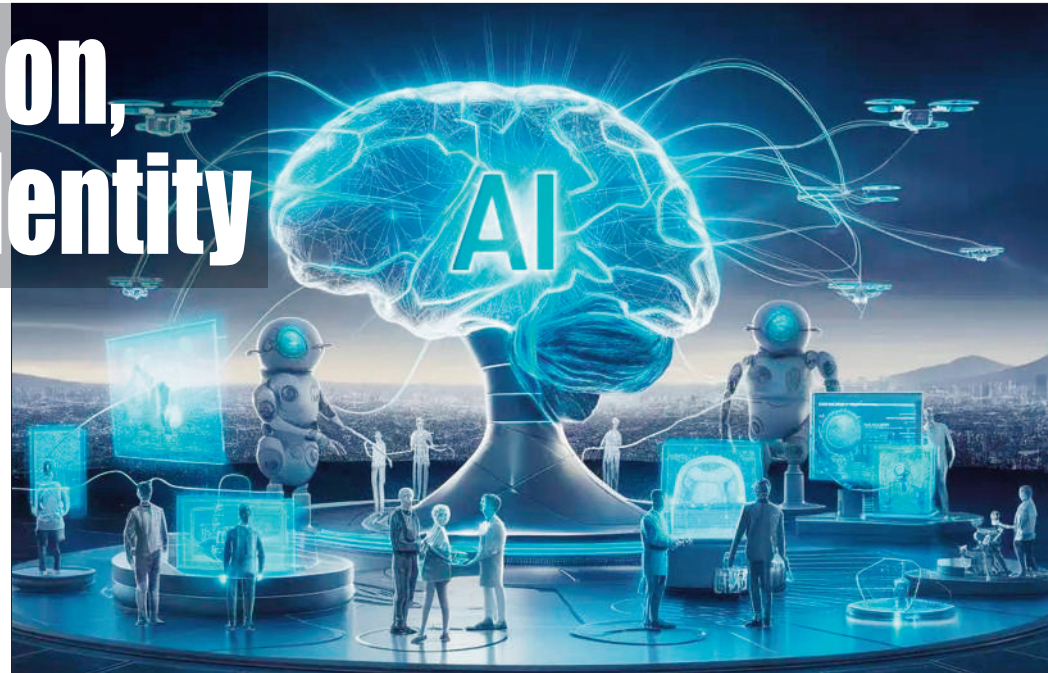
This is where the latest findings of the global research and advisory firm, Gartner, assume particular significance. In its recent analytical report, Gartner suggests that AI is moving beyond the "peak of inflated expectations" and entering a phase of disillusionment. Many organizations expected immediate economic gains and dramatic improvements in productivity, but the actual outcomes have often fallen short of expectations. High implementation costs, concerns about data security, the tendency of AI systems to generate inaccurate or misleading responses, and difficulties in demonstrating clear business value have all emerged as major challenges. The report also warns that nearly one-third of AI projects may be abandoned after their initial stages because they fail

to deliver returns commensurate with investment. This conclusion challenges the assumption that AI will instantly solve every problem.

However, this does not mean that AI is merely a temporary bubble destined to burst. History demonstrates that every major technological revolution is accompanied by both enthusiasm and exaggeration in its early stages. Over time, its real value becomes clearer, leading to more balanced and sustainable development. The Internet followed a similar trajectory. While many early internet companies disappeared, the Internet itself became the foundation of modern global society. AI is likely to follow a comparable path. Therefore, neither exaggerated glorification nor predictions of its imminent collapse reflect reality.

The role of AI in business will continue to expand. It will increasingly influence manufacturing, marketing, customer service, financial analysis, and supply-chain management. While this will enhance speed and efficiency, it will also transform the nature of work. In the future, technical knowledge alone will not be sufficient. Skills such as problem-solving, creativity, leadership, adaptability, and emotional intelligence will become even more valuable.

Consequently, education and workforce development systems must be redesigned to prepare individuals for this new reality. In governance and public administration, AI has the potential to make



systems more efficient, transparent, and responsive. It can improve policy analysis, resource allocation, healthcare and education programs, and disaster management. Yet these benefits are accompanied by significant risks. The large-scale collection and analysis of citizens' personal data could threaten privacy and individual freedom. Maintaining a balance between technological efficiency and civil liberties will therefore be essential.

The application of AI in the military sphere is perhaps the most alarming. Autonomous weapons systems, unmanned combat technologies, and machines capable of selecting targets could fundamentally alter the nature of warfare. If machines are granted the power to make life-and-death decisions, profound ethical and humanitarian questions arise. This is why there is a growing global demand for effective regulation and oversight of such technologies. Amid all these

developments, the most important question remains: How can human life remain secure, balanced, and meaningful? The answer does not lie in rejecting technology but in using it wisely. AI must remain a tool that serves humanity rather than a force that dominates it. Educational systems must place greater emphasis on ethics, empathy, coexistence, and human values. Emotional intelligence, compassion, empathy, and spiritual awareness are dimensions of human existence that no machine can truly replicate.

At the same time, there is an urgent need for global policies and regulatory frameworks that ensure AI development serves the broader interests of humanity. If this technology remains concentrated in the hands of a few powerful corporations or nations, it could intensify inequality and conflict. Conversely, if directed toward education, healthcare, environmental protection, and social develop-

ment, it could unlock unprecedented opportunities for human progress. Ultimately, AI is neither an unquestionable blessing nor an inevitable curse. It is a powerful instrument whose impact will depend on human wisdom and responsibility. The real challenge is not the machine itself, but whether humanity can preserve its compassion, moral consciousness, and human values in an age of rapidly advancing technology.

The defining question of the future is not how powerful AI will become, but how vigilant, responsible, and value-driven human beings will remain. If humanity succeeds in balancing technological advancement with ethical and human values, AI will help write a remarkable new chapter in human development. If not, the same technology could become a source of imbalance, inequality, and existential risk. This is both the greatest challenge and the greatest responsibility of our time.

How to prevent summer breakouts

By: Shahnaz Husain

Wondering why your skin is breaking out in the summer?

If you struggle with acne, you're certainly not alone. In fact, it is the most common skin problem in India.

With the hot and humid summer, your skin becomes prone to many skin troubles. But the most common skin problem that troubles a lot of people is acne. Acne is a common problem with several underlying causes.

The excessive heat, sweat, and humidity that our body produces during summer months intensify oil production, which clogs pores with dirt, grime and debris that leads to more breakouts during this season.

Summer skin is prone to infections as dust, oil, heat and humidity create the perfect environment for pores to clog and acne-causing bacteria to grow. As many oil-producing glands are on the forehead, nose, and chin, this area — the T-zone — is where a person is most prone to pimples. A pimple starts when the pores in the skin become clogged with a type of oil called sebum, which normally lubricates the skin and hair. When sebum accumulates, it causes the formation of comedones (blackheads).

Some people are genetically prone to breakouts, but heat and sweat can significantly clog skin pores and stimulate an overgrowth of not just bacteria, but yeast that normally lives on skin, making your skin vulnerable to acne-causing debris and bacteria.

Whether you have acne-prone skin or you deal with those pesky pimples. The good news is that there are ways to prevent and treat common skin problems with gentle herbal creams and gels, essential oils, natural supplements, and some simple lifestyle changes.

Try to Keep Your Hands Off Your Face

It can be very tempting, but touching, picking or scratching your pimples will irritate the skin, may make pimples worse and can spread to other areas. Every time your fingers meet your face, they transfer dirt and oils. It's a hard habit to break, but an important one.

Do not squeeze your pimples. Your hands aren't always clean, and dirt under your fingernails and improper squeezing can cause acne to spread or lead to further infection.

Pimples and blackheads shouldn't be picked at, scratched or pierced.

This usually leads to further inflammation and the spread of germs on neighbouring skin. Also, this will leave a bad pigmented scar. Ideally, stay away from irritating products, remain patient, and develop a regular skin cleansing regimen. One of the most basic tips for how to get rid of acne is simply to keep your hands to yourself.

Turmeric Powder

One of the best and simplest turmeric facial masks is to simply mix one teaspoon of turmeric powder with two to three teaspoons of plain yoghurt and one tsp of plain honey. Mix it well and make a paste of it. Apply this paste on the face and other affected areas and leave it to dry in a natural environment. You can use it two or three times a week. Just remember one thing: never expose your body to the sun's rays after applying this. It may give you a reverse result. It gives the best results at night

Curd & Turmeric mixture can not only



remove all your acne, pimples or freckles, but it can also give you a fair, smooth skin

Mix one part lemon juice with one-half part turmeric powder. Then stir the two ingredients together to make a smooth paste. Apply the paste on the face using a cotton pad and wash with cool water after 30 minutes

Lemon juice is a natural antiseptic and antibacterial agent. It also helps to even out skin tone, which can reduce the appearance of older acne scars.

Hot turmeric milk (Haladi doodh) is a traditional healing recipe in India. Just add a teaspoon to a cup of hot water and drink it daily night before going to bed. It will treat acne, provide a glow to your skin and aid in digestion. Milk contains lactic acid that has a mild exfoliating effect. This mixture can keep your skin acne-free and make it soft

Eat a healthy Diet.

The relationship between diet and acne has been debated for years. Recent research suggests that any foods with a high glycemic index, such as white bread, sugary soft drinks, cakes, doughnuts, pastries, candies, sugary breakfast cereals, greasy foods and other processed foods, etc., that cause a spike in insulin can lead to inflammation and an acne flare.

Regular consumption of high GI foods raises insulin levels, which may stimulate sebum production and inflammation, and raise androgen levels—all of which contribute to acne.

These studies suggest that a low-glycemic, healthy, balanced diet, such as fruits, barley, soybean sprouts and fibre-rich food, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole or minimally processed grains, may be helpful for individuals with acne-prone skin.

Neem Leaves:

Take some Neem Bark and soak it for 5 minutes in the water. After that, apply the paste only to the affected area.

Do it regularly every 2 weeks, and you will see your skin such a spotless, acne free fair skin without any side effects.

Take two tablespoons of neem powder and sandalwood powder each, and add a little water and one tablespoon of rose water to make a paste. Apply it as a face pack and leave it on for 20 minutes. Wash with cool water and wipe clean. Alternatively, you can use fresh leaves if you want. Boil neem leaves in water and filter the water from the leaves. Once it cools down. Mix sandalwood in neem water to form a thin paste. Apply to the face and neck, and leave to dry for 15

minutes, then wash with clean water

Boil about 20 neem leaves in half a litre of water till the leaves are soft and discoloured, and the water turns green. Strain and store in a bottle. Dip a cotton ball into it and wipe your face.

Stay hydrated

Dehydration also gives your skin a dull appearance and promotes inflammation and redness.

If you're hydrated, your body may signal your skin's oil glands to produce more oil, making it easier for acne sores to heal and reducing the overall risk of outbreaks.

Daily intake of eight classes of clean and normal water (juice, soup, coconut water, and Lassi magically clears your skin. Being hydrated also ensures new skin cells develop correctly as sores heal. Drink more after exercise, if you're pregnant or breastfeeding, or if you spend time in a hot, humid environment.

Lemon

The simplest and most ubiquitous of ingredients, lemon juice is one of the most effective and inexpensive at-home acne remedies.

Lemon juice is the best natural cleanser. Take a lemon and put its juice in a bowl. Take some cotton, and with the help of it, apply it to the face. Leave it until it gets dry. Wash it off.

If you have dry skin, then use it only once a week. Other ingredients like sandalwood, basil (tulsi), mint (pudina), and neem (margosa) can be used to treat eruptive conditions of the skin, like acne.

They can be good protective and preventive treatments for oily skin. Mix a few drops of lemon juice with honey and apply twice daily to the affected areas, let it absorb for over 15 minutes, and wash your skin with fresh water.

Moisturize

Moisturising is a very important part of treating acne, as moistened skin tends to loosen sebum built up inside pores.

Many acne products contain ingredients that dry the skin. When your skin becomes dry, your body makes more oil. The extra oil can clog your pores, which may lead to more breakouts, which is another reason to keep skin balanced by applying a moisturiser.

The right moisturiser can prevent your skin from becoming dry and irritated. Hydrating the skin surface can rebalance oil glands and help control acne and improve healing.

Always buy a lightweight, oil-free moisturiser that won't clog your pores.

Applying it after you wash helps to maintain hydration in your skin.

SHORT STORY

The Sunday Haat

By: Meenakshi Gogoi

The bright rays of the mesmerising, setting sun spread its orangish hues across the sky, resembling a fine piece of artwork to the goers. The rays falling over the green rice fields signalled to the farmers that it was time to return home as the day ended, paving the way for a breezy evening. Maloti finished plucking a few ripe pumpkins and some leafy veggies from her farmland and reached home, carrying the vegetable bamboo basket on her head. She took a quick shower and lit an earthen diya, completing her evening prayers. Her young daughter, Nomita, came home playing with her village friends. She was served with a glass of hot, sweetened milk and a bowl of puffed rice mixed with roasted peanuts. Maloti sat beside the fireplace, the earthen chowka, at one corner of the veranda. She prepared her aromatic cup of ginger tea with bay leaves and left some in the sauceman for her husband, who was on the way home. Nomita suddenly asked, "Maa, I want to accompany father to the haat bazar tomorrow?" Maloti replied, "If the weather is fine, then you can go. I hope your father won't mind." In a moment, Nomita's eyes glistened with joy.

Soon after, her father, Tilok, arrived home. He brought three large sacks of harvested pumpkins and rice to sell off in the Sunday haat. He took a quick bath and sat beside the fireplace, wearing the Naga shawl over a kurta and dhoti. It was a cold November evening, and the warmth of the fire was very satisfying. Maloti served him hot tea and crunchy-crispy jaggery-mixed puffed rice laddus. Nomita, in her enthusiasm, asked, "Deuta, I want to go with you to the haat tomorrow. It has been some time since I last accompanied you to the haat bazar." Tilok replied, "Well, you have to sit with me for hours until I sell off our farm produce. Will you sit for long without roaming the haat?" "Yes, of course. I will take my drawing copy with coloured pencils. I will sit and

draw to pass my time," replied an enthusiastic Nomita. Tilok could very well sense the willingness in Nomita's talk about visiting the haat next morning, to which he agreed.

After dinner, Nomita went to her room and cleaned her small, messy bed. She arranged all her playthings, books, and copies and placed them on her desk table. She picked a yellow full-sleeved frock with leggings, socks, and a sweater to wear to the haat bazar the following day. She cleaned her canvas shoes to wear with the dress. All the articles she needed for drawing copy, colour pencils, eraser, scale, a handkerchief and a vaseline tube were put in a designed, woven macramé bag. Like a big girl, Nomita organised her things properly and fell asleep with sweet thoughts.

The next morning, Nomita went to the haat bazar with her father in their neighbour's van. Their neighbour was a farmer who had to sell off his rice harvest. It was a fine Sunday, with light rays of the sun. They chose a shady spot under a tall banyan tree after reaching the haat. Tilok placed his farm produce on a thick woven mat and sat beside. Nomita sat next to her father with her bag and water bottle. Their neighbour sat a little away. She was ecstatic to view the bustling crowd gathered in the haat from nearby villages and town. The vendors' and little children's noisy screams had filled the air. She spotted a few sweet and snack shops with people eating and buying food from them, talking and laughing with friends and family. Nomita's observant eyes wandered around the multi-coloured dresses of the young girls and adult women, a few children clinging on top of their father's bodies to beat walking in the crowd. Some older women and men were busy selling local veggies and wild herbs. The haat bazar had small stalls selling a variety of farm produce and other household items. People were seen buying items at reasonable prices and enjoying their Sunday afternoon. Tilok had sold off a good quantity of his farm produce and given money to Nomita to

satisfy her sweet tooth. She quickly got some eatables and a cup of tea for her father. Nomita finished her eating, and soon after, she began drawing a beautiful crayon artwork depicting that ongoing Sunday haat scene. Her drawing covered different aspects of the haat. An old woman selling bananas, alocasia leaves, and local ferns, vendors selling crispy-juicy hot jalebis, farmers sitting in line with their farm produce and buyers purchasing necessary household things. At one corner, her drawing highlighted two children playing ludo who had accompanied their mother to sell off her farm-grown leafy veggies. The buyers purchasing her father's farmland produce were amazed to find Nomita's drawing very thoughtful, displaying shades of fine colours perfectly depicting the real haat scenes. Her father told one of the buyers it was the beautiful effect of the yearly summer Art classes conducted by an NGO in their village that she had attended consistently. The Art classes had quenched her insane thirst for drawing landscapes, crowded places and human figures. It honed her drawing and painting skills. Undoubtedly, the buyers praised her grooming art talent. The future artist in her had to find a suitable way to depict human bodies and their excitement, joy, and smiles in small bazars, as Nomita's drawing had portrayed.

After a long day spent in the haat, they returned home. Tilok was delighted to sell off all the pumpkins and rice. He handed some money, a sweet, and snack packet to Maloti. He wrapped a shawl around her shoulders, which he had bought from the haat with delight. Maloti knew the selling was fine, judging by his joyful face. She quickly prepared some tea, and they sat beside the fireplace while eating their evening supper. Nomita enthusiastically showed her artwork to Maloti, who praised her and encouraged her to draw more such fine paintings. The evening was spent in content, with good hopes of welcoming more such wonderful evenings in the coming weekly Sunday haats.

The Shoreline

By: Himadri Chekanidhara

My love waits at the marshy sands
Like a gem for a Gemini
Like a Lotus for Sanatana Brahman
Like the eye on a cloudy day...
Like the talent hidden under drugs
Like intellect beneath promiscuity
A joke at the core of human suffering
Like the future wrapped in a present...
I stray nowhere;
I flow and ebb.

Orion shoots it's arrow to the west
Haunting the tasty mighty boar
At a God's feet who was felled...
When it fell, it made no noise
Grunting, he pleaded to live;
God must've smiled and
Pulled away the pernicious arrow
Equal balance of His life for His,
And how the Hunter cursed himself
Discovering the arrow
At the feet of God he is used to pray.
So he refuted his claim of murder,
Never thought he would be depressed.
Yet, my love never dies

It flows and it ebbs.

Oh my soul, my High Priestess
A Hanged Man hangs at your gates
The occult omen of negativity
The Knight of Swords to your rescue
The Fool comes in close
Chills the Hanged Man away
The Chariot is in charge of view
As your doors open to the Star
A Hero, he was never meant to be
The Emperor steals the Empress
The Fool at the cliffs dances with joy
The joke at the core of human suffering

I lay beside the Scorpion's graves undead
A hairy camel in a desert
An ageing camel forsaken in the ice
Listening to a wolf, howl faint to the Moon
Oh my Demeter, what an infidel creature
May this life cease on these freezing sands
The scorpions are cosy in the fur
They must have stabbed a hundred times
As I carry them days and days on with me
The humps that once stoned water
Now is a reservoir of medicines
Yet memories of torment it doesn't heal;
Though, all I can kill, with all that they gave
I wish no more, just to flow and to ebb.

'These improvements highlight the difference between years of neglect and a decade of focussed governance'

NFHS-6 reflects healthcare transformation: Nadda

NEW DELHI, June 6: Union Health Minister J P Nadda hit back at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday over his criticism of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 findings, saying "half-knowledge is dangerous" and asserting that the latest data reflects significant improvements in India's healthcare indicators under the Modi government.

The remarks came after Kharge, in a social media post two days ago, alleged that the NFHS-6 data has exposed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government's "absolute incompetence" and accused it of deliberately hiding crucial data that brings to light its failures in healthcare and nutrition.

Responding to the Congress chief's remarks, Nadda accused him of selectively reading the survey findings for political purposes and said the data demonstrates the "remarkable transformation" in India's health ecosystem under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Shri Kharge ji's half-knowledge is dangerous. Public health is too important to be reduced to political rhetoric. Selective reading may serve politics, but facts serve the nation," Nadda said in a post on X.

Citing improvements in maternal healthcare indicators since



NFHS-3 (2005-06), he said first-trimester antenatal registration rose from 43.9 per cent to 76.2 per cent, institutional deliveries increased from 38.7 per cent to 90.6 per cent and births attended by skilled health personnel climbed from 46.6 per cent to 91.3 per cent.

The minister said the gains reflect better access to healthcare services for women across the country.

"These are not mere statistics. They represent millions of mothers receiving timely care, safer deliveries and better health outcomes. The real story of India's healthcare journey is one of

progress, not pessimism," he said. In another post, Nadda compared the latest survey findings with those recorded during the Congress-led UPA era and said the gains reflected in NFHS-6 extend far beyond maternal healthcare and stand in sharp contrast to the poor outcomes witnessed during that time.

"Compared to NFHS-3 (2005-06), conducted during the UPA regime: Full immunisation coverage in the NFHS-6 has increased to 87.1 per cent. Health insurance coverage has surged from 4.9 per cent to 60.2 per cent. Use of hygienic menstrual protection has risen to 79.2 per cent. Child stunt-

ing has declined from 48.0 per cent to 29.3 per cent," he said.

He attributed the improvements to sustained investments made over the last 10 years in healthcare, nutrition, sanitation and last-mile service delivery.

"These improvements highlight the difference between years of neglect and a decade of focussed governance."

"Behind every percentage point are millions of Indians with better health, greater security and improved quality of life. NFHS-6 is not merely a set of statistics -- it is evidence of the transformative outcomes achieved through sustained policy action and effective implementation," Nadda said. In a third post, the health minister accused the Congress of ignoring the shortcomings of previous governments and said the latest survey reflects greater access to healthcare and wider social protection.

"What is most revealing is what the Congress leadership chooses not to acknowledge. For decades, India struggled with poor health outcomes, inadequate healthcare access and weak delivery systems despite repeated promises. The consequences of that prolonged policy failure were visible across generations," he said.

While acknowledging that chal-

lenges remain, Nadda said the BJP-led government continues to address those with urgency, but dismissing the progress recorded in the survey does a disservice to the efforts of health workers and beneficiaries who have contributed to the improvements.

"But denying progress does a disservice to the millions of frontline health workers and beneficiaries who have driven this transformation. Facts matter. Outcomes matter. NFHS-6 speaks for itself," he said.

In a post on X on Thursday, Kharge had said the "absolute incompetence" of the BJP has been unmasked by the NFHS-6 data.

"BJP's five-step formula to hide its sins is to bury selected data, abandon the vulnerable, advertise 'Sabka Saath' and 'Amrit Kaal', manipulate the narrative and protect Modi ji's PR at all costs," he said.

The Congress chief claimed that the data showed one in five children suffers from acute malnutrition and one-third of India's children are underweight.

"More than 84 per cent of children aged 6 to 23 months do not receive adequate nutrition, while 57 per cent of women between 15 and 49 years are anaemic as per NFHS-5. One in five women is undernourished," he said. (PTI)

BJP gov't stopped projects begun by Congress: Ex-CM Ashok Gehlot

JAIPUR, June 6: Former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday accused the BJP government in the state of halting projects initiated by the previous Congress regime and said the functioning of the current administration was "beyond understanding."

Addressing reporters at his residence here, Gehlot alleged that several major projects launched during his tenure have been stalled and not even inaugurated by the present government.

"This government has stopped big projects. They are not even inaugurating them. It is difficult to understand what is happening in the government," he said.

Taking a swipe at the ruling dispensation, he questioned who was actually running the state. "Who is running the government? Is it the BJP, the party leadership or the RSS guiding the chief minister?" he said.

The former chief minister also said attempts by some politicians to project themselves as more powerful by undermining others ultimately fail.

"In politics, instead of undermining others to make oneself look bigger, one must focus on strengthening one's own position. Unfortunately, the trend is to pull others down and claim superiority," he said.

He added that such tactics do not succeed in the long run. "Only those who move ahead who work to enhance their own strengths. My message to all leaders is to work tirelessly to improve themselves," he said.

On the occasion of World Environment Day, Gehlot raised concerns over the Great Nicobar project, backing Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's remarks on the issue. In a social media post, he alleged that environmental damage was being justified in the name of defence and expressed concern over reported large-scale tree felling, destruction of coral reefs and displacement of local communities. (PTI)

'Elect good people, results will be good': UP CM launches 262 projects in Gonda

GONDA/LUCKNOW (UP), June 6: Taking potshots at the former Samajwadi Party government, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that before 2017 "development was confined to one village" and urged people to elect "good people".

The chief minister made these remarks at the inauguration and foundation-laying ceremony for 262 projects worth Rs 516 crore in Gonda.

"If you elect good people and a good government, then the results will be good. If wrong people are elected, then nobody will be able to save you from the consequences," Adityanath said.

"And, this used to happen. Before 2017, when a wrong government used to come, development would get confined to one village," he added.

The chief minister further said that his government got medical colleges built in various districts of the state, claiming that the previous government of Akhilesh Yadav focused only on Saifi, the ancestral village of the Yadav family.

"(When) we had to build medical colleges, we did not say that it would be built in Saifi. We said that it will be built in Gonda, Bahraich, Balrampur, Ayodhya, Basti," Adityanath said.

Recalling that Gonda was ranked as the dirtiest city in the country,

Adityanath said, "If in 2017 there was a discussion regarding the dirtiest city in the country, it was Gonda. And, today, I can say that Gonda is creating an identity for itself as one of the clean cities of the country. When a wrong government is elected, the results are wrong. Today, Gonda is clean and is moving ahead with a new identity."

"Today, you can see that Uttar Pradesh has 75 districts, around 350 tehsils, 825 development blocks, 762 urban local bodies, 14,000 wards, and more than 57,000 Gram Panchayats. Everyone is receiving the benefits of schemes without any hindrance. No one can disrupt festivals and celebrations anymore. If anyone attempts to spoil the festive spirit, not only will their present be lost, but their future will also be ruined. Now, no one can disrupt the festivities," he added.

He said that earlier obstacles were created for Ramnala celebrations, and that disturbances would erupt even before the festivities would begin. "Traders were unsafe before 2017, those in power sheltered professional goons, and the state would remain under curfew for months," Adityanath said.

Mentioning his government's achievements since 2017, the chief minister targeted previous governments,

saying, "Gonda's development had earlier fallen prey to appeasement, anarchy, nepotism, and casteism."

Before arriving at Gonda, Adityanath visited the Maa Pateshwari temple, a Shaktipeeth, in Balram district's Tulsipur, and offered his prayers, the UP government said in a statement.

He performed 'aarti' and prayed for the well-being, health, and prosperity of the state.

The chief minister also inspected the arrangements within the temple complex and greeted the devotees present.

Adityanath had arrived in Balrampur on Friday. After inaugurating and laying the foundation stones for various development projects, he spent the night at the temple.

On Saturday morning, following his prayers, he interacted with the devotees visiting the temple.

Adityanath issued instructions to ensure proper arrangements for the safety, convenience, and cleanliness of devotees within the temple premises.

He also met locals, public representatives, and seers, and subsequently departed for Gonda.

Mahant Mithilesh Nath Yogi, Mahant Ravindra Das of Kalibari (Gorakhpur), MLA Palturam, and Kailash Narayan Shukla, among others, were present on the occasion, the statement said. (PTI)

Vaishnav blames 'vikas virodhi' TMC gov't for 'stalled' railway projects in Bengal

KOLKATA, June 6: Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Saturday alleged that several railway and metro projects in West Bengal were stalled for years due to a "lack of cooperation" from the previous TMC government, and asserted that work would now be expedited following what he described as a change in the state's approach.

During a meeting with Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari at the state secretariat Nabanna, Vaishnav claimed the railway projects in Bengal had faced repeated hurdles over permissions, land issues and legal challenges under the TMC regime, which he dubbed 'vikas virodhi' (anti-development).

He also said sixty next-generation trains would be introduced for the Kolkata Metro in the next five years.

"The previous government had blocked all forms of development. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has plans for Bengal, and that is evident from the Rs 14,205 crore allotted for railway projects in the state. Under the UPA government, Bengal got Rs 4,000 crore," Vaishnav claimed.

Highlighting the pace of metro rail development in recent years, the minister said the expansion work had accelerated significantly after 2014, when Modi became the PM.

"Works for the Kolkata Metro started in 1972. In 42 years, only 28 kilometres of work were done. After

Modi assumed office as Prime Minister, the projects were expedited. In 12 years, the Kolkata Metro expanded for another 45 kilometres. This is what you call development work," he said.

Vaishnav alleged that even routine clearances had been delayed earlier, impacting key metro and railway works.

"The TMC government, unfortunately, never gave us permission for many projects. In some cases, they even moved courts," he said.

He cited the Chingrighata stretch of the Kolkata Metro lines as an example of prolonged delays.

"For the Kolkata Metro project at Chingrighata, we planned as per the Kolkata Police's advice. Despite that, the TMC moved the Calcutta High Court and later approached the Supreme Court. They did not want commuters to get the benefits of the Metro rail," he said, adding, "I had said in Parliament that the TMC is 'vikas virodhi'."

The union minister said the situation began to change after the first BJP government was formed in the state last month, enabling faster execution of pending works. "Now, when a change has come in Bengal, it has become our responsibility to fulfil the dreams of PM Modi, and we will work together," Vaishnav said.

He expressed confidence that long-pending procedural bottlenecks were being cleared. (PTI)

JMM nominates ex-minister Baidyanath Ram for RS polls

RANCHI, June 6: The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) on Saturday nominated former minister Baidyanath Ram as its candidate for one of the two Rajya Sabha seats in the state, going to polls on June 18, a party official said.

JMM general secretary and spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya told reporters that Ram will file his nomination papers in the presence of Chief Minister Hemant Soren on June 8.

On the second seat, Bhattacharya said the final decision will be taken on this by party leadership following a discussion with the Congress.

The Congress on Friday announced senior party functionary Pranav Jha as its candidate for one of the two Rajya Sabha seats from the state. The ruling JMM legislators, during a meeting chaired by the chief minister on Friday, had demanded that the party contest both the seats going to the polls.

Meanwhile, AICC observers for

the Rajya Sabha polls, Bhupesh Baghel and Ajay Sharma, on Saturday arrived in Ranchi, and they met Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, hours after JMM announced Ram as its candidate for the polls.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday approved the proposal for the appointment of Baghel and Sharma as AICC observers for the upcoming Rajya Sabha Biennial Elections in Jharkhand.

Baghel and Sharma met the CM to seek JMM's support for the Congress candidate Jha, a senior Congress leader said.

Congress minister Radhakrishna Kishore claimed that of the two Rajya Sabha seats in Jharkhand, one will go to JMM and another to Congress, as the India bloc has 56 members in the 81-member assembly.

The BJP has already announced that it will field a candidate for one of the two Rajya Sabha seats, but it has not yet announced the name of the candidate.

Tell them we are not scared: Abhijeet Dipke says as CJP holds protest demanding Pradhan's resignation

NEW DELHI, June 6: Hundreds of protesters gathered at Delhi's Jantar Mantar on Saturday under the banner of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), demanding Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over alleged irregularities in examinations and recruitment tests, with founder Abhijeet Dipke delivering the message not to be "scared".

Dipke, who called for the protest, arrived in Delhi from the United States on Saturday morning. After receiving permission from the Delhi Police, he reached Jantar Mantar, where crowds were gathering since morning.

Protesters, armed with posters demanding Pradhan's resignation, were seen wearing cockroach masks, which were being distributed at the venue. Besides demanding the education minister's resignation, the protesters also raised slogans demanding that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stop indulging in "Hindu-Muslim" politics, and hailed the motherland with "Bharat Mata ki Jai" slogans.

Dipke instructed them to only raise slogans hailing the country, Mahatma Gandhi and B R Ambedkar, while opposing communal politics.

The CJP founder said his mother cried more on his return than when he had left for the US, as she feared his arrest on coming back to India.

"This is not just the fear of my mother, this is the fear of the parents of any youngster who speaks on politics... How long will we live in fear? Tell them, we are not scared," he said.

Dipke participated in the demonstration held under heavy security. He was later joined by climate activist Sonam Wangchuk. CPI(ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, CPI's Annie Raja and activists from Left student and youth organisations also participated in the protest.

"My friends, this is a long struggle. It has been a month since we started demanding Pradhan's resignation on social media, but these individuals are so shameless that instead of taking action, they have been focussed on other distractions, like hacking our accounts and getting our posts deleted. You may be able to delete our posts, but you cannot erase us from this space," Dipke said during his address to the crowd, which energetically supported his words.

Recalling his arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport earlier in the morning, Dipke said just before his plane was about to land, he felt as though he was living his last moments of freedom. "I was fully prepared to sacrifice my freedom for this cause," he said.

The CJP founder claimed that many people have compromised themselves and "sold out" due to the fear of imprisonment. "Lekin is

desh ka chatra, yuva nahi bika hai (The youth and students of this country have not sold themselves)," he said amid loud cheers from the crowd.

Hundreds of people, mostly youngsters, turned out for the demonstration, many wearing cockroach masks and holding flowers. School students were also seen attending the protest along with their parents.

The majority of the participants were a mix of school and college students, along with young professionals.

Scores of students had gathered at the venue, chanting slogans and demanding Pradhan's resignation.

Dipke had urged his supporters to maintain discipline and ensure that the protest remains peaceful.

Wangchuk said he was impressed with the youngsters and their peaceful protest. He also appreciated the fact that the government allowed the protest to be held.

"I hope that even in the future, it will allow such creative expressions," he said.

Wangchuk thanked Dipke, calling him the "Cockroach-in-Chief", and told the protesters, "You did not keep sitting at home crying nor are you creating any ruckus on the road."

Protesters also carried copies of the Constitution and the Indian flag, while some brought flowers. The protest ended around 3:30 pm after Dipke started feeling unwell.

The protest was organised by the CJP, a youth-led online movement demanding accountability for alleged irregularities in examinations and recruitment tests, including the NEET, CBSE, CUET and SSC examinations.

Security was heightened across Delhi in anticipation of the protest. Police officials said additional personnel were deployed at the airport, border-entry points and other sensitive locations.

More than 1,000 police personnel were deployed throughout New Delhi and other strategic locations as a precaution.

Six people were detained by the Delhi Police to prevent a possible confrontation between two groups during the CJP's protest at Jantar Mantar, officials said.

The detentions were made as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order after police received inputs about the possibility of tensions between supporters and opposers of the online movement.

In the run-up to the protest, the CJP had circulated guidelines urging participants to maintain a non-violent conduct and avoid confrontation.

Dipke's latest appeal reiterated those instructions, emphasising a respectful engagement with law-enforcement personnel during the demonstration. (PTI)

Next-generation trains to be introduced for Kolkata Metro in 5 years: Vaishnav

KOLKATA, June 6: Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Saturday announced that sixty next-generation trains would be introduced for the Kolkata Metro in the next five years and hoped the railway projects in West Bengal would get a fresh impetus under the double-engine government.

During a meeting with Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari at the state secretariat Nabanna, the railway minister said only 28 km of the Kolkata Metro network was completed in 42 years, while 45 km of metro lines have been added since Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister in 2014. "In the next five years, 60 next-generation trains will be introduced for Kolkata Metro. Today, I took the Kolkata Metro. We will revamp it," he said.

The minister also said that the proposed bullet train services between Delhi-Varanasi and Varnasi-Siliguri were aimed at sharply reducing travel time. (PTI)

Ladakh records over 43 pc rise in tourist arrivals in 2026, May sees over 121 pc growth: LG

LEH/JAMMU, June 6: Ladakh has witnessed a historic surge in tourist arrivals this year, recording a growth of more than 43 per cent during the first five months of 2026, a development that authorities attributed to improved infrastructure, better connectivity and sustained efforts to promote the Union Territory as a premier tourism destination.

Known as the "cold desert", Ladakh remains one of India's most sought-after tourist destinations, famed for its dramatic landscapes, pristine lakes, ancient monasteries and adventure tourism. The region is often cut off from the rest of the country during the winter months due to heavy snowfall that blocks the Srinagar-Leh and Manali-Leh highways.

Sharing the figures on the social

media platform X, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh V K Saxena said the region registered a remarkable increase in visitor numbers, reflecting the success of initiatives aimed at boosting tourism in the high-altitude Himalayan destination.

"Delighted to share that Ladakh has witnessed a historic surge in tourist arrivals this year, reflecting the success of our sustained efforts to position Ladakh as a premier tourism destination," the Lieutenant Governor said.

According to official data, May 2026 emerged as a landmark month for tourism in Ladakh, registering an unprecedented 121.20 per cent growth with 72,834 tourist arrivals compared to 32,927 visitors during the corresponding month last year. Between January and May 2026,

Ladakh welcomed 1,17,546 tourists against 81,827 during the same period in 2025, marking a year-on-year increase of 43.65 per cent, Saxena said.

Officials said major tourist destinations, including Pangong Lake and Nubra Valley, have witnessed a sharp increase in visitor footfall. Nubra Valley, known for its sand dunes and double-humped Bactrian camels, has remained packed with tourists in recent weeks, while Pangong Lake continues to attract large numbers of visitors.

The Lieutenant Governor attributed the surge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to promote domestic tourism and the administration's efforts to strengthen infrastructure, improve connectivity and diversify tourism experiences



across the region.

He said the growth in tourist arrivals has brought renewed optimism among tourism stakeholders and local businesses dependent on the sector.

"I sincerely thank all tourists visiting Ladakh and invite people from across the country to experience the confluence of nature, adventure, peace, culture, spirituality, clean air and serene atmosphere in Ladakh,"

Saxena said.

The revival comes after a temporary setback following the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor, which affected travel sentiment and led to temporary disruptions, including airspace restrictions and travel advisories by some foreign governments last year.

With the restoration of normalcy, tourists have once again started arriving in large numbers, providing relief to thousands of residents whose livelihoods depend on the tourism industry.

Officials noted that domestic tourism remains strong this year despite global uncertainties, with destinations such as Pangong Lake, Nubra Valley and Khardung La continuing to receive steady inflows. "Hotels, homestays and tour opera-

tors are functioning with high occupancy levels".

Tourism in Ladakh witnessed rapid growth after the success of the Bollywood blockbuster '3 Idiots', parts of which were filmed at Pangong Lake. Improved connectivity, including the opening of the Atal Tunnel in Himachal Pradesh in 2020, has further enhanced year-round access to the region, they said.

From recording just a few hundred visitors when it was opened to tourism in 1970, Ladakh has evolved into one of India's leading travel destinations, attracting more than five lakh tourists annually in recent years.

The boom has significantly contributed to economic growth, employment generation and the expansion of the local service sector, they said. (PTI)

CM terms it a significant step forward for project of national importance

110 Arunachal households ink MoU in support of pre-feasibility report for Siang project

ITANAGAR, June 6: A total of 110 households in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Siang district signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Saturday in support of the Pre-Feasibility Report for the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project, officials said.

The development marked a significant milestone in the government's efforts to advance the strategic hydropower and water management initiative in the state, they said.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu welcomed the signing of the MoU, describing it as a strong endorsement from the local community for a project of national importance.

"Today, 110 households from Geku came forward and signed the



MoU in support of the Pre-Feasibility Report (PFR) for the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project.

"I congratulate and thank every family that signed the MoU. The people of Geku have shown tremendous courage and vision.

Every citizen who supports a project of national importance is a partner in nation-building," he said in a post on X. The CM said the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project is not just about power generation, but about protecting the Siang and

the communities living along its banks from "any potential threat arising from unregulated or sudden water discharges" upstream across the international border.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein said the state government will continue to extend every possible support for the socio economic advancement of the area, while safeguarding its rich cultural heritage, traditional institutions and age-old customs.

The proposed project, planned on the Siang river, features hydropower generation, water resource management, flood moderation and strengthening India's strategic water security in the eastern sector, the officials said. (PTI)

Over 70K registered unemployed in Nagaland: Guv Yadav

Yadav stresses collaborative efforts to boost employment opportunities at Kohima Job Fair

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, June 6: Nagaland Governor Nand Kishore Yadav on Saturday said as of February this year, the state recorded 70,469 registered unemployed job seekers.

Inaugurating the Kohima Job Fair 2026 at Don Bosco College Kohima, Yadav highlighted the employment scenario in the state, underscoring the need for stronger collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, industries and social organisations to create sustainable pathways to employment and livelihoods.

The job fair saw participation of more than 25 companies representing various sectors and over 500 job seekers.

Yadav noted that the turnout reflected both the aspirations of Nagaland's youth and the commitment of employers to support talent development and employment generation.

He emphasised the importance of collective efforts to address employment challenges and create meaningful opportunities for the youth of the state.

He also acknowledged the significant contribution of the Don



Bosco Job Placement Network, which became the first NGO in India to be enrolled on the National Career Service portal as a placement network under the Union ministry of labour and employment. Over the past seven years, the network has facilitated employment opportunities for more than 40,000 young people across the country through career guidance, skill training and job placement services.

Expressing gratitude to the participating employers and recruiters, the governor stated that their involvement demonstrated confidence in the capabilities and potential of Nagaland's youth while contributing to the economic growth of the state and the nation.

He thanked the organisers, partners, employers and volunteers for the successful conduct of the event.

Union minister reviews highway projects in Sikkim

GANGTOK, June 6: Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways Ajay Tamta reviewed a host of road and infrastructure projects in Sikkim and directed officials to expedite ongoing projects and fast-track the upcoming ones.

Tamta travelled along NH-10 and NH-510 and inspected development activities in Gyalshing district, where he reviewed projects such as the Ayush Hospital and Krishi Vigyan Kendra, besides assessing the implementation of various central schemes, an official release said here.

The minister also took stock of several major highway projects proposed for the state. These include the 15.30-km Rhenock-Rongli road project, which has received in-principle approval at an estimated cost of Rs 595 crore and the upgradation of a 25.75-km stretch of NH-10 with a projected investment of Rs 1,018 crore.

Proposed bypasses and realignment works between Rangpo-Rorathang and Melli-Singtam were also reviewed, with the projects aimed at easing traffic congestion and improving connectivity across key corridors, the release said.

Tamta also inspected the progress of the Gangtok Bypass and directed officials to ensure its completion by November 2026.

The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) has completed six projects covering 58 km at a cost of about Rs 1,323 crore, while seven more projects spanning 147 km and worth Rs 3,749 crore are under implementation, the release said.

The ministry's Road and National Highways Wing has completed 117 km of road projects costing Rs 1,202 crore, with another 50 km under construction and 58 km of new projects in the pipeline.

The release further said the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has constructed the 59-km Gangtok-Sherathang-Nathu La stretch of NH-310, a strategic route leading to the India-China border.

Tamta directed BRO officials to create additional lay-bys for tourist vehicles and strengthen landslide mitigation measures along vulnerable stretches.

The minister stressed the Centre's commitment to improving Sikkim's road network, saying better connectivity would boost economic growth, tourism, trade and access to remote areas. (PTI)

Sikkim: Monastery, 2 houses gutted in fire



GANGTOK, June 6: A 61-year-old monastery and two adjacent houses were gutted in a blaze in Lachen area of North Sikkim, officials said on Saturday.

The blaze erupted at Thangu Sertok Gumpa around midnight and also spread to two nearby houses before being brought under control by locals as fire tenders failed to reach the spot due to inaccessibility.

No casualty has been reported in the incident so far.

Nothing could be retrieved from the locally revered monastery, they said, adding further investigation is underway to ascertain the cause of the fire.

Built around 1965, Thangu Sertok Gumpa held immense religious, cultural and historical significance for the people of the region.

Minister and local MLA Samdup Lepcha expressed his heartfelt sympathy to all those affected by the tragedy. He conveyed his condolences and prayed for strength, courage and resilience for the families and community members during this difficult time.

The minister also assured the people of all support to rebuild the monastery and rehabilitate those whose houses were gutted. (PTI)

Arunachal: Congress urges govt to resolve DIET salary delay issue

ITANAGAR, June 6: The Arunachal Pradesh unit of the Congress on Saturday urged the state government to address the grievances of teacher educators and staffers of SCERT and district institutes of education and training (DIETs), warning that continued delays in salary payments have pushed employees to the brink of an indefinite strike.

In a statement, Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Bosiram Siram expressed concern over the ongoing agitation by the Arunachal Pradesh Teacher Educators' Association (APTEA), which has been demanding a permanent solution to the recurring delay in salary disbursement among teaching and non-teaching staff of SCERT and 11 DIETs across the state.

The association has been pressing for a resolution through a series of protests. It first observed a day-long pen-down strike on May 29, followed by a two-day strike on June 4 and 5.

Claiming that repeated representations to the authorities have failed to yield any concrete assurance, APTEA has announced an indefinite pen-down strike from June 15 under the banner of 'no pay, no work' if its demands remain unresolved.

Pointing out that the salary issue has persisted for several years, with employees allegedly facing irregular and delayed payments since 2019, the party said the prolonged delays have caused severe financial hardship, affecting employees' ability to meet household expenses, repay loans and support their children's education.

Siram said the association's primary demand is for salaries of DIET employees to be paid directly from the state exchequer.

APTEA has argued that dependence on funding mechanisms linked to centrally sponsored schemes often leads to delays and uncertainty in salary disbursement.

The Congress leader said the issue goes beyond employee welfare and has implications for the state's education system, as teacher educators play a crucial role in training future teachers and strengthening educational institutions.

"It is unfortunate that educators entrusted with shaping the future of our education system have been compelled to resort to agitation for redressal of their legitimate concerns," Siram said.

He added that delayed salary payments not only affect the livelihood of employees and their families but can also undermine the functioning of teacher-training institutions and impact the quality of education.

The APCC urged the government to immediately engage with the agitating association and resolve the issue through dialogue. It also called for better coordination among the education and finance departments and other authorities concerned to ensure timely salary disbursement and prevent such situations from recurring.

"Education is the foundation of progress and the concerns of those who serve the education sector must never be ignored," Siram said, reiterating the party's support for a fair, humane and time-bound resolution of the issue. (PTI)

AAPGA holds AGM-cum-Election in Naharlagun

HT Bureau

NAHARLAGUN, June 6: The All Arunachal Pradesh Gymnastics Association (AAPGA) on Saturday conducted its Annual General Body Meeting-cum-Election at the office of the president, AAPGA, Arunachal Front Building, near Takar Complex, Naharlagun.

The agenda of the meeting included putting the House in order by Nani Kojin, president, AAPGA; a welcome speech by Dr Byabang Rana, Vice Chairman of the Sub-Committee for AGM-cum-Election; election of new executives; declaration of election results by the Returning Officer, Advocate Takam Tayam; presidential address by Nani Kojin, Presiding Officer and a vote of thanks by Tadar Kayu, vice president, AAPGA.

The proceedings of the day started with AAPGA president Nani Kojin welcoming all the executive members who attended the AGM-cum-Election of AAPGA. Kojin thanked Advocate Takam Tayam, the Returning Officer for the election process. He also extended a warm welcome to the Observer from the Gymnastics Federation of India (GFI), Ujjal Baruah, for taking time out and travelling to Naharlagun from Assam to be part of the election process. He also specially thanked Teli Kahi, Sports Officer

serving under the Sports Authority of Arunachal Pradesh (SAA), who rescheduled some of his prior assignments to be part of this important meeting as an Observer.

Kojin thanked the Sub-Committee for AGM-cum-Election, which worked very hard over the last few months to ensure that the disaffiliation of AAPGA was removed. He expressed hope that the newly elected members of AAPGA would work tirelessly for the betterment of gymnastics in the state.

Advocate Takam Tayam, Returning Officer, briefed all the members about the rules and procedures of the election. He said that for the post of president, there was one nomination filed by Byabang Rana; for the post of General Secretary, the only nomination came from Tadar Kayu and for the post of Treasurer, the single nomination was filed by Teli Kahi. He said that since there was only one nomination each for all three positions, voting could be conducted by a show of hands and there was no need for a closed ballot as there were no multiple nominations for any post.

Subsequently, voting was conducted for the positions of president, general secretary and Treasurer and all three candidates were elected unanimously. The Returning Officer declared

Dr Byabang Rana as the president of AAPGA, Tadar Kayu as the General Secretary of AAPGA and Teli Kahi as the Treasurer of AAPGA. Their tenure will be for the 2026-2030 session.

All the executive members present at the meeting congratulated the winners and wished them success during their tenure. They also expressed hope that the new office-bearers would work hard to uplift gymnastics in Arunachal Pradesh. Kojin said that he had been at the helm of AAPGA right from the beginning and had faced many hurdles. He expressed hope that the newly elected members of AAPGA would leave no stone unturned in ensuring that gymnastics regains its glory, as there is immense potential among the young students of the state. He said it would be the responsibility of the new members to identify the right talent and guide them properly so that they can make the state proud in gymnastics.

Tadar Kayu, vice president, delivered the vote of thanks and congratulated all the newly elected members of AAPGA. He urged outgoing president Nani Kojin to continue providing proper guidance to the members so that they can work seamlessly for the betterment of gymnastics in the state.

CRPF DG discusses with Manipur Guv on roadmap to eliminate insurgency



IMPHAL, June 6: CRPF Director General Gyanendra Pratap Singh called on Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla and discussed the central force's comprehensive roadmap to eliminate insurgency and restore peace in the northeastern state.

The Friday meeting came hours after three people, including a woman were killed in an attack by armed assailants in Kangpokpi district.

The Central Reserve Police Force, in a post on X,

said, "Discussions focused on enhancing operational preparedness, strategic planning, and the @crpfIndia's comprehensive roadmap to eliminate insurgency and restore lasting peace in Manipur."

The CRPF director general has been on a three-day visit to the state from Thursday.

Manipur witnessed the killing of at least 260 people and the displacement of thousands in violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities since May 2023.

The Lok Bhavan Imphal, in a separate statement, said the CRPF officers apprised the governor of the prevailing security situation and the measures being implemented across the state.

It said emphasis was laid on strengthening security arrangements to safeguard the lives and properties of citizens, maintain peace and stability and address emerging challenges effectively.

Meanwhile, search operations have been intensified to arrest those involved in the killing of three people in Kangpokpi, police said.

At least seven houses were also gutted in a fire during the attack around 4 AM on Friday at Loibol Khullen village in Saitu-Gamphazol subdivision of the district, they said. (PTI)

Arunachal CM urges people to make tree plantation lifelong mission

ITANAGAR, June 6: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday urged people of the state to make tree plantation a lifelong mission rather than a symbolic annual exercise, asserting that environmental conservation and development must progress together for a sustainable future.

Participating in the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' plantation drive near here, Khandu said every tree planted would contribute to cleaner air, a healthier environment and a better future for the coming generations.

"Planting trees is not something we do once a year and forget. It must become a lifelong mission," Khandu said in social media post after the event.

"As the nation celebrates 12 years of transformative leadership and service under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this campaign reminds us that development and en-



vironmental responsibility must go hand in hand," he said.

Khandu also said that on the occasion of the tree plantation drive, he had the opportunity to interact with students, teachers and authorities at the Government Secondary School, Chimpu.

"The visit also provided an opportunity to hear firsthand the concerns and grievances of the school. The state government has taken note of the issues raised and will work towards addressing them," he added. (PTI)

Social service, tree plantation drive held in Daporijo ahead of Dree Festival

HT Bureau

DAPORIJO, June 6: A Social Service-cum-Tree Plantation Drive was organised on Saturday at the highway-side area adjacent to Jaring Ground, Daporijo, under the aegis of the Apatani Welfare Committee (AWC), Upper Subansiri District in aid of the forthcoming Dree Festival 2026. The programme held under the theme "Clean Daporijo, Green Daporijo", witnessed enthusiastic participation from members of the Apatani community and various dignitaries.

The event was graced by Larji Rigia Dukam, president of the Tagin Cultural Society (TCS), as the chief guest. The programme was led by the Deputy Commissioner of Upper Subansiri District, along with the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Daporijo and executive members of the Apatani Welfare Committee.

Several prominent personalities and officials actively participated in the plantation drive, including Er Tumkam Nalo, Executive Engineer, PWD Nacho, executive members of the Tagin Cultural Society, the General Secretary of the TCS Women Wing and other members of the society. Their collective participation highlighted the spirit of inter-community cooperation and environmental stewardship.

Members of the Apatani Welfare Committee, including men, women and children from the Apatani community residing in Upper Subansiri District, turned out in large numbers to support the initiative. Participants carried out a cleanliness drive and planted palm-oli saplings along the designated stretch, contributing to the beautification and greening of Daporijo township.

Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries emphasised the importance of environmental conservation, community participation and sustainable development. They lauded the efforts of the organisers in promoting ecological awareness while simultaneously strengthening communal harmony and social responsibility.

The plantation drive forms part of the broader preparations for Dree Festival 2026 and reflects the community's commitment to preserving nature and creating a cleaner, greener environment for future generations.

Rare yellow puffball mushroom recorded in Longding

Discovery underscores rich but underexplored fungal biodiversity of Arunachal Pradesh

HT Bureau

LONGDING, June 6: A striking yellow-coloured puffball mushroom was recorded during a field visit to Zedua village in Longding district by a team from ICAR-Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Longding, highlighting the hidden fungal wealth of Arunachal Pradesh.

The mushroom found growing naturally on decaying woody debris and organic-rich soil was tentatively identified as *Bovista colorata* (Yellow Puffball Mushroom) by Dr Deep Narayan Mishra, Subject Matter Specialist (Plant Pathology), ICAR-KVK, Longding. The identification was based on its characteristic yellow globose fruiting body and puffball-like morphology.

Although detailed microscopic examination and molecular characterisation are required for definitive taxonomic confirmation, a preliminary review of available lit-

erature indicates that documented records of this species from Longding district are currently lacking. As such, the observation may represent one of the earliest documented field records of *Bovista colorata* from the district and a potentially valuable addition to the known macrofungal diversity of Arunachal Pradesh.

Unlike conventional mushrooms that bear gills beneath a cap, puffball fungi produce millions of microscopic spores within a closed spherical fruiting body. Upon maturity, the internal tissue transforms into a powdery spore mass that is dispersed by wind, raindrops or physical disturbance, enabling efficient long-distance dispersal.

Ecologically, species of *Bovista* play an important role as decomposers, contributing to the breakdown of lignocellulosic plant residues, nutrient mineralisation, carbon cycling and the formation



of soil organic matter.

Young puffball mushrooms of several species are known to contain appreciable amounts of proteins, dietary fibre, essential amino acids, minerals and antioxidant compounds. Studies have also reported the presence of bioactive metabolites with antimicrobial, an-

tioxidant, anti-inflammatory and potential pharmaceutical properties.

Historically, puffball spores have been used in certain traditional cultures as natural wound-dressing materials due to their moisture-absorbing and haemostatic properties. However, experts

caution that wild mushrooms should never be consumed without proper identification, as immature poisonous mushrooms can sometimes resemble edible puffballs.

The observation highlights the rich yet underexplored fungal biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayan region and underscores the need for systematic surveys, herbarium documentation, microscopic characterisation and DNA barcoding of wild macrofungi. Such efforts are essential for understanding their ecological significance and exploring their agricultural, nutritional, medicinal and biotechnological potential.

The field visit and documentation were carried out with the active participation and support of other KVK staff members, including Vikas, Subject Matter Specialist (Horticulture) and Dr Amit Kumar, Subject Matter Specialist (Land and Water Management Engineering).

Praggnanandhaa triumphs at Norway Chess in historic first for India

OSLO, June 6: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa etched his name in the history books as he became the first Indian to win the prestigious Norway Chess title with a final-round victory over Germany's Vincent Keymer here, capping off a brilliant campaign in style.

Praggnanandhaa, who began the final round in second place with 15 points on Friday, delivered when it mattered the most, securing a classical win worth three full points to finish on 18 points and clinch one of the most coveted trophies in elite chess.

In doing so, the 20-year-old Chennai player achieved a feat that had eluded even Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand and reigning world champion D Gukesh among others, since the tournament's inception in 2013.

Competing in Norway Chess for only the second time, Praggnanandhaa endured a slow start in the elite six-player field before gathering momentum in the second half of the event to secure four wins on the trot.

His campaign was highlighted by a remarkable achievement -- defeating seven-time Norway Chess

champion and World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen twice in classical chess -- a rare accomplishment that underlined his determination to bounce back from the disappointment of an underwhelming Candidates Tournament in Paphos earlier this year.

As reigning world champion Gukesh fell out of contention in the closing stages, Praggnanandhaa ensured that India's challenge remained alive, ultimately carrying it all the way to the title.

The result was made possible after American Grandmaster Wesley So, who led the standings with 15.5 points heading into the final round, was held to a draw in his classical game against Alireza Firouzja, sending their contest into an Armageddon tie-break.

That outcome opened the door for Praggnanandhaa, who knew that a classical victory over Keymer would propel him to the top of the standings and secure a landmark title.

Although Wesley So went on to win the Armageddon tie-break, the victory was worth only 1.5 points, taking his tally to 17 points -- one short of Praggnanandhaa's winning total of 18.

Alireza, who had also entered the final round with title hopes, finished third with 15.5 points.



A beaming Praggnanandhaa revealed after the match that a pep talk from his mother back home in Chennai had lifted his spirits.

"She told me that June would bring good luck," he said with a smile -- a prediction that came true.

"I was speaking to my mother on June 1, before Alireza's game, and she was telling me, 'It's a new month, you'll play well!' It's just one of those things that mum always says, and then these four games I won. She knew something, I guess," said Prag-

gnanandhaa. Praggnanandhaa went on to string together four consecutive victories after that.

Even Carlsen, the record seven-time Norway Chess champion, was effusive in his praise for Praggnanandhaa, describing the Indian youngster's performance as "superb" throughout the tournament.

Such wholehearted admiration is not something the Norwegian legend hands out lightly -- especially not to a rival in the same generation as Gukesh -- underscoring just how impressive Praggnanandhaa's title-winning campaign had been.

"That's pretty insane. That's as clutch as it gets, and it just shows that it would have been possible for me as well with a similar finish, but yeah, that's incredible. It shows you the volatility of the system, and he is an incredible fighter, and it's fun to see him get rewarded for that," Carlsen told the broadcaster.

Praggnanandhaa later admitted, during his second visit to the "confession box", that he had missed a strong continuation that could have wrapped up the game much sooner. Despite letting that opportunity slip, he remained determined to keep probing.

His persistence eventually paid off as the pressure began to tell on Keymer. In an endgame that had ap-

peared roughly balanced, the German faltered with a series of inaccuracies, culminating in the weakening 30...h5? which fatally exposed the g5 square and tilted the game decisively in Praggnanandhaa's favour.

Meanwhile, Gukesh's disappointing campaign continued as his third appearance in the tournament ended without the breakthrough he had hoped for in a year when he is set to defend his world title against challenger Javokhir Sindarov.

In the final round, Carlsen, playing with the white pieces, defeated the 20-year-old Indian in a classical game to collect three full points. However, the victory was not enough to propel the Norwegian grand into title contention, as he finished fifth in the standings with 13 points.

Results (Round 10):

Open: Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 15.5) lost to Wesley So (USA, 17); Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 13) bt D. Gukesh (Ind,); R. Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 18) bt Vincent Keymer (11).

Women: Zhu Jiner (Chn, 16) by Koneru Humpy (Ind, 9); Ju Wenjun (Chn, 13.5) bt Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 16.5); Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 15) bt Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 10). (PTI)

Sooryavanshi in for England, Ireland series

Shreyas replaces Suryakumar as India T20 captain

MUMBAI, June 6: Winds of change swept across India's T20I set-up as Shreyas Iyer on Saturday took over the captaincy from Suryakumar Yadav, and wonder kid Vaibhav Sooryavanshi found a place in the squad for the twin tour of Ireland and England.

At 15 years and 71 days old, Sooryavanshi becomes the youngest ever player to feature in an Indian cricket team, surpassing the long-standing record held by the great Sachin Tendulkar.

Tendulkar was 16 years and 205 days when he made his Test debut against Pakistan at Karachi on November 15, 1989.

India will travel to Ireland for two T20Is (June 26 and 28), followed by a five-match T20I series against England between July 1 and 11. Shreyas has returned to the national T20 side for the first time after competing against Australia in Bengaluru on December 3, 2023.

"With regards to Shreyas, we have seen what he has done over the last few years, leading different franchises," chief selector Ajit Agarkar told media after announcing the squads for various tours.

"(He) won the final once, and from there a tougher season this year after a great start. We have seen everything that a captain possibly can (handle). His own performances have been really good.

"He was quite close to getting into the (T20) World Cup squad as well. With Surya still there, there was no room for him, so he is in my opinion a stand-out candidate with enough experience now having led in the T20 format; this is obviously a different challenge," Agarkar added.

Shreyas' impressive leadership credentials



in the IPL -- leading KKR to title in 2024 and PBKS to final in 2025 -- along with two seasons of consistent outings with the bat prompted the selectors to zero in on him to replace T20 World Cup 2026 winning captain Suryakumar.

Suryakumar not just lost the captaincy but also his place in the squad.

Agarkar said Suryakumar's dipping form over the last two seasons in some way dictated their decision to remove the Mumbaier from the T20 captaincy, but it was not the only reason.

"With regards to Surya, obviously it's a tough one having just won the (T20) World Cup. But as it happens after most World Cups, we try and reassess what your best way forward is," Agarkar said.

"(It was due to) partly his own form but also looking at the next two-year cycle, or a little bit more than two years now till the next

World Cup, we thought this was the best way forward and like I said, Shreyas is a very deserving captain."

"We deliberated on it a lot, especially when someone has led you to a World Cup win. It's not the easiest sort of discussion to have, but I don't necessarily think... at some stage, we were going to look at it. Now, whether IPL form dictated it, I'm not so sure that's the case. There were always conversations around it," he added.

Sooryavanshi is a game-changer

Sooryavanshi's inclusion was a foregone conclusion after the 15-year-old bagged the Orange Cap in IPL 2026, scoring 776 runs with a hundred and five fifties at a strike rate of 237.30 for Rajasthan Royals.

Agarkar was impressed with the Bihar boy's game-changing abilities.

"We have seen what he can do. Even in the (IPL) playoffs we saw he almost single-

handedly carried the Rajasthan Royals (into the final). For a young kid to be batting in a high pressure environment, he can be a game changer. It's commendable," said the former India pacer.

"I don't need to talk about how well he is playing and it's not just this season. He had a great start last season and to back it up for a young kid, in a competition that is as competitive and has high-pressure environment (as any), and how explosive he can be and a game-changer that he can be."

"We have got high hopes of him and I think he just has picked himself really," Agarkar added.

Tilak is new vice-captain

Middle-order batter Tilak Varma will be Shreyas' deputy, while pacer Prince Yadav, who had an impressive season for Lucknow Super Giants, was drafted for the series against England and Ireland.

Agarkar said Tilak can learn more about the job of leading a side while being the deputy to Shreyas, a clear indication of his growth in the white ball format as a key member.

Bumrah to miss England, Ireland tour

Lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah will miss the T20I series against England and Ireland, but he will come back for the Asian Games, to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4.

"We know how important he is. Plus, (given) the WTC cycle, we've still got a chance to (qualify for the final) if we play well enough over these next nine Tests..." Agarkar said. "If we can have Jasprit play majority of those games and still keep him fit and healthy, it's always a thing. There's a

lot of T20 cricket, you can always bring him back. (In the) Asian games, he will be there. The main aim is to try and keep him fit for the Test and the one-dayers," he added.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya, who is in India's ODI squad for the series against Afghanistan later this month, could not find place in any of the teams.

"Like Bumrah, if we can get him playing well and keep him fit for one-day cricket -- I do not think he has played one-day cricket for a while -- and at this point that is the main objective," said Agarkar. All-rounder Harshit Rana too has returned to the India set-up after missing the whole of the IPL for Kolkata Knight Riders owing to an injury.

Squads:

For Ireland and England T20 tours:

Shreyas Iyer (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (vc), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohammed Siraj, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

For Asian Games: Shreyas Iyer (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (vc), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

For multi-day matches in Sri Lanka: Dhruv Jurel (c&wk), Sai Sudharsan, Devdutt Padikkal (vc), Ayush Pandey, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Harsh Dube, Saransh Jain, Gurmoor Brar, Aaqib Nabi, Yash Thakur, N Jagadeesan (wk), Aman Mokhadde, Shaik Rashid, Zeeshan Ansari. (PTI)

FIBA still planning for Basketball World Cup in Qatar in 2027 as scheduled

SAN ANTONIO (US), June 6: FIBA is operating as if the 2027 Basketball World Cup will take place in Qatar as scheduled, though said Friday that it could adjust if the war in Iran or other matters force the sport's global governing body to take action.

"We have excellent partners in Qatar," FIBA's secretary general, Andreas Zagklis, said in a round-table meeting with reporters while attending Game 2 of the NBA Finals between the San Antonio Spurs and New York Knicks.

"If things arrive at that spot, I'm sure we will have very good and direct conversations, and we'll find the best possible solution for the players and the fans."

In short, Zagklis is not worried at this point. The 32-team tournament is set to begin on Aug. 27, 2027, and runs for about 2 1/2 weeks -- all happening in Doha.

"We have a board meeting of the FIBA and the (local organizing committee) of the World Cup on Monday. I will get the latest updates," Zagklis said.

"I can tell you that the organizing committee has not stopped a single day. This is a project that has been made clear to us, by the highest levels of the government, is a project of national importance. And as you know, Qatar, since I think April 1, has not been affected, impacted by the hostilities."

There have been a series of U.S.-Iran negotiations facilitated by countries in the Middle East over the last few months, including Qatar.

The World Cup in Qatar would be the first time FIBA takes the event to the Arab world, and will be a direct qualifier for seven nations into the men's basketball tournament at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. The U.S. is already qualified for LA28 as the host nation and will seek a sixth consecutive gold medal.

Qatar ultimately was the lone bidder for the 2027 World Cup.

"I can tell you the level of preparedness and importance and investment that goes into the project shows that they treat it as what it is: It's the biggest celebration of na-

tional team basketball in the world," Zagklis said.

"It will be the first time that we will have 32 teams (and) four venues within 25 minutes. It is a dream of every basketball fan to visit and watch two or even three games per day. This is our ambition, and of course, we're following very closely."

NBA Europe

Zagklis also had Olympic meetings in Los Angeles this week, and will be part of more meetings on the new NBA Europe league -- where the NBA is collaborating with FIBA -- in the coming days as well, as the list of bidders for spots in the league gets whittled down toward clubs actually being selected.

Zagklis said there is an agreement on what the new league will look like, in terms of how many games will be played in a season, a playoff structure and other logistical matters.

"We know, but I think it's not appropriate to make this level of granularity (public) before we announce," Zagklis said. (PTI)

World No. 1 Minakshi and Deepak to lead India's charge at World Boxing Cup

NEW DELHI, June 6: World No. 1 Minakshi and seasoned campaigner Deepak will spearhead India's charge at the World Boxing Cup 2026 (Stage 2), scheduled to take place in Guiyang, China, from June 15 to 21.

This is a second-string Indian team comprising boxers who finished as runners-up in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games trials. India enters the tournament on the back of an impressive run in the previous World Cup cycle, where the team consistently secured multiple medals across stages and delivered a strong overall tally in the finals, underlining its growing stature on the global stage. The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has named a well-rounded squad featuring a blend of established performers and emerging talent across both men's and women's categories.

India currently stands third globally in terms of overall top 10 ranked athletes, including a second-place position in the women's category

and fourth in the men's.

Notably, India led the world in the women's division when it comes to top 3 ranked athletes, highlighting its dominance at the elite level.

The tournament presents an opportunity for Indian boxers to gain valuable ranking points and continue building momentum in a crucial competitive season.

Speaking on the squad, BFI President Ajay Singh said, "The World Boxing Cup is an important platform for our athletes to test themselves against top international competition. The systems and structures we have put in place are now consistently translating into results, with strong performances across weight categories."

"We are seeing depth like never before, and this consistency is helping India establish itself as one of the leading boxing nations in the world."

In the women's division, Minakshi (51kg) leads a formidable lineup alongside Poonam (54kg), Prachi (57kg), and Mahi Lama (60kg).

The squad is further strengthened by Saneh (65kg), Gitimoni G (70kg), Sanamacha C (75kg), Naina (80kg), and Alfiya Taranum Akram Khan Pathan (+80kg), ensuring strong representation across weight categories.

On the men's side, Deepak (70kg) brings experience and leadership, supported by Rishi S (50kg), Nikhil (55kg), and Anmol (60kg). Abhinash Jamwal (65kg), Malsawmtluanga (80kg), Jugnoo (85kg), and Harsh Choudhary (90kg) add depth, while Sawan G (+90kg) rounds off the squad in the super heavyweight division.

The team has been training at the national camp, with preparations focused on technical sharpness, fitness, and tactical execution ahead of the tournament. India heads into the competition with sustained success at recent international events, including strong performances at the World Boxing Cup stages and the World Championships, reflecting the steady rise of Indian boxing on the global stage. (PTI)

Shreyas Iyer: The single-minded, detached leader India's high-volume T20 setup needs

BENGALURU, June 6: Perhaps no other cricketer has gone through so much turbulence and transformation between December 3, 2023 and June 6, 2026 as Shreyas Iyer, who took over the reins of India's T20 team from Suryakumar Yadav on Saturday.

Shreyas' is an extraordinary story, as it's tough for an Indian cricketer to survive a 30-month hiatus, particularly in the shortest format where talents are jostling for a space, and make a comeback, let alone as captain. So, what has the 31-year-old done in that interim to impress the Ajit Agarkar-led selection panel and head coach Gautam Gambhir?

It has to be his single-minded dedication to claw back from setbacks and create an upward moving career curve. Shreyas was looking at a bleak future after losing his BCCI central contract, along with Jharkhand's Ishan Kishan, in February 2024 for skipping domestic matches for Mumbai that season.

It took him nearly a year to earn

the contract back, and also had to go through rejections from India squads for major events like the T20 World Cup (2024, 2026) and Asia Cup (2025).

But he never sulked or vented his frustration through social media, rather focused on working on his batting and recovery from certain injuries that forced him to seek a break from red-ball cricket last year.

Ties with Gambhir

The first sign of his revival came when he led Kolkata Knight Riders to their third IPL title in 2024, working alongside team mentor Gambhir.

It might also have given the former India opener a chance to take a closer look at Shreyas' mindset and thinking. Even before that, it was Gambhir who recommended Shreyas as his successor when he stepped down from Delhi Capitals' (then Daredevils) captaincy midway through the IPL 2018.

So, the social media speculations about his muted relationship with



Shreyas could remain just that.

But in the last two years, the Mumbai man too has matured a lot as an individual and as a cricketer, and now he would certainly know how to set aside his personal choices for the larger good of the team.

Ricky Ponting, who has worked with Shreyas extensively at Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings, had given his validation of it.

"He's a much more mature player than he's probably ever been in his whole career. He's completely on top of his game now."

"He's in that little sweet spot in his life and career where, if captaincy came his way, then I think he'd make the most of it." Ponting had told PTI during IPL 2026.

The high praise was not unfounded either. The right-hander

produced two of his best seasons as T20 batter in the IPL for PBKS -- 604 runs in the 2025 season and 498 runs a year later, averaging over 50 and scored 11 fifties and a hundred.

A terrifying destroyer of spin always, Shreyas is now not ruffled by pacers either after adding an effective pull to his arsenal. That consistency might have tilted the scale in favour of Shreyas over Sanju Samson, whose brilliance is entwined with baffling inconsistency, and other worthy contenders like Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma, whose leadership skills have not yet been put under sustained test. But now, Shreyas will have to walk through the wringer, as captaining the country is a totally different kettle of fish from leading a franchise in the IPL.

He will have to face a lot of more scrutiny over team's performances, team selection and his own batting.

In that context, Shreyas' ascension to the leadership role comes at the right time. He will begin the new life

with series against Ireland and England - places that can examine a player's batting as well as astuteness as captain. Beyond that, Shreyas does not have any major T20 tournaments coming his way as the focus now shifts to next year's ODI World Cup.

The T20 iteration is in 2028, and he has good enough time in his hands to develop a blueprint for the global event, and mould a team according to his preference.

Biggest test

But Shreyas' toughest task will be to deal with expectations from a billion crazy fans. His predecessors -- Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar -- have led the team to T20 World Cup triumph, and nothing less is expected of Shreyas and even a minor blip will not be pardoned easily.

However, Shreyas has this stoic, almost detached side to his captaincy, which came to the fore when PBKS went through a tailspin in the second half of this year's IPL and missed the playoff berth. (PTI)

Rahul, Gill tons headline batting masterclass from India

MULLANPUR, June 6: KL Rahul's poise was matched by Shubman Gill's panache produced contrasting centuries as India's formidable batting line-up posted 368 for three in their bid to out-bat Afghanistan on the opening day of the one-off Test, here Saturday.

Rahul (100 off 165 balls) showed the value of defence while skipper Gill (103 batting off 143 balls) was intent-personified on a day when India decided to give a batting masterclass in Tests to an Afghanistan attack that was high on spirit but low on skill quotient.

The manner in which Gill batted, it seemed like he was playing a practice game.

The languid approach and the lazy elegance was on view as he held an already tired Afghan attack by the scruff of its neck, hitting 11 fours and a straight six. In his 41st Test, the Indian skipper now has 11 centuries.

The one who would rue missing out on a three figure mark is Sai Sudharsan (81 off 104 balls) despite getting two reprieves while Rishabh Pant was happy smashing three effortless sixes en route his unbeaten half-century off just 70 balls.

It is unlikely that India would bat more than a session and half on the second day before declaration and unleashing their spin troika on Afghanistan.

The pitch has something for the slow bowlers and it will not be a surprise does not go full distance.

For Afghanistan, Mohammad Saleem (2/67 in 13 overs) was their most successful one but the stand out fast bowler was Ziaur Rahman (1/61 in 15 overs) who troubled batters without much success.

In fact, he could have Rahul early had keeper Afsar Zazai appealed for a caught behind which the TV replays later confirmed.

Once he got the lucky reprieve, Rahul was unflappable en route his 12th Test hundred. There were cover drives and signature on-drives and a beautiful straight drive in his 11 boundaries.

Rahul was more intent on playing within himself and allowed Sudharsan to attack during their 139-run second wicket stand after Yashasvi Jaiswal (24) gifted his wicket with an innocuous tinkle down the leg-side during the first hour.

In case of Sudharsan, he was dropped once in the slips of left-arm spinner Nangeyalia Kharote and then off Ziaur as the ball flew between keeper and first slip.

Sudharsan looked comfortable against pacers while whipping them through mid-wicket and just when he was nearing his maiden Test century, he tried to play an expansive drive off an over-pitched delivery from Saleem to be nicely snapped by Zazai behind stumps.

Rahul, however was in no hurry as it took him 164 balls to get to his ton but off the next ball from Ziaur, he uppishly drove to give a catch to cover fielder.

The Gill-Pant stand was the most entertaining of the day as they added 121 runs for the fourth wicket and left a bruised Afghan attack even more battered in the scorching North India heat.

The short arm pull was a purists' delight and the cover drive had class written all over it. He and Pant ran the singles with ease as Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi spread the field in order to stop leaking boundaries.

For Afghanistan, the problem was their spin attack. With their top three world class spinners choosing to be gun for hire in T20 leagues across the world, the ones picked for this game -- left-arm spinner Kharote (0/95 in 20 overs) and off-spinner Abdul Malik (0/37 in 6 overs) simply didn't have the skills to stop the Indian batters.

They didn't go on a carnage but yet found ways to hit boundaries with alarming frequency with 42 fours and 4 sixes hit on the day. (PTI)