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- 'For those fulminating in outrage', Tharoor clarifies 'drama' remark in Nepal floods post
- Abhishek Banerjee rules out TMC return for 'traitors' who crossed over to dissident factions
- BJP eyes forming maiden govt in Mizoram in 2028 assembly polls
- Manipur ambush survivor says attackers wore camouflage uniforms



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Nepal disaster: Death toll rises to 547 ● Fear of fresh floods looms

Steps taken for return of stranded: Himanta

KATHMANDU/GUWAHATI, Aug 28: The death toll from flash floods in central Nepal rose to 547 on Friday, with more bodies recovered as search and rescue operations continue with caution due to fear of fresh floods following an increase in the water level in the Bhotekoshi River area.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) said rising water levels at the site of a devastating flash flood earlier this week increased the risk of another flood in the area.

"The water level mixed with mud has increased at the same place where the flash flood occurred on Wednesday, and there is a risk of more flooding in the area," the NDRRMA said.

The warning comes after a massive flash flood swept through Rasuwa and other parts of central Nepal on Wednesday, killing hun-



reds and causing widespread damage to settlements, roads, bridges and hydropower infrastructure.

The NDRRMA urged people involved in search and rescue operations, as well as those staying in

the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli areas for various reasons, to remain highly alert and immediately move to safer places if they face any risk.

Nepal Police on Friday said 547 bodies were recovered from eight districts of the Himalayan nation,

Two from Karbi Anglong missing

DIPHU, Aug 28: Two persons from Karbi Anglong district have gone missing following devastating flash floods in Nepal, officials said on Friday.

Three youths had travelled to the neighbouring country in search of employment when the disaster struck. Two of them have been missing since then, while the third is safe, an official of the district administration said.

The trio was employed by a company and was working at a site near the Trishul River. The missing persons have been identified as Rituparna Brahma and Montri Basumatary, while the survivor is Someswar Narzary. All three hail from the Langhing area of the district. (PTI)

with thousands still missing.

According to the police, 134 dead bodies were recovered from Nawalparasi East, 221 from Chitwan, 44 from Gorkha and 38 from Nuwakot.

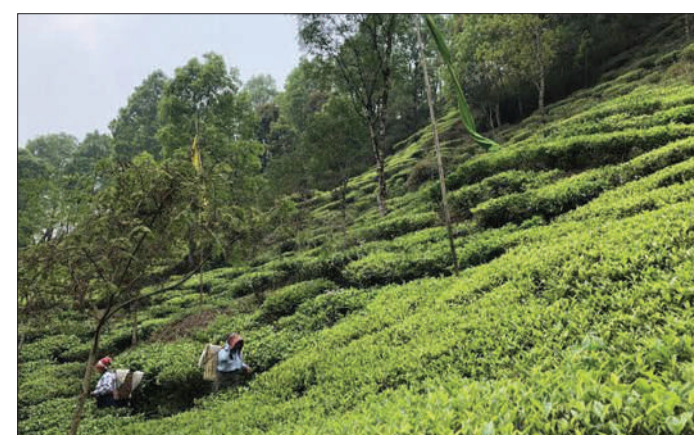
Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that efforts were underway to ensure the safety and return of those from the state, who have been stranded

due to the devastating flash floods in Nepal.

He, however, did not mention the number of missing people from the state.

"We are aware of people from Assam stranded in Nepal amid the ongoing floods. We are in touch with their families and coordinating with relevant agencies to ensure (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Tea Association of India concerned over decline in auction prices



GUWAHATI, Aug 28: The Tea Association of India on Friday expressed concern over declining auction prices in the north Indian tea industry in recent months, raising apprehensions about the sustainability of the business.

The planters' body said the tea industry was facing a difficult situation due to floods in Assam, excessive heat and severe pest and disease infestations that have hampered production during the current cropping season.

The TAI said auction prices had declined by up to 17 per cent from July to mid-August, while supplies increased marginally by 5 per cent compared to last year and were likely to decline in the coming months.

"The auction price figures of north Indian tea industry recently reflect a precarious state of affairs in the industry, coupled with the onslaught of flash floods, excessive heat and severe pest and disease infestations hampering production of the crop during the current cropping season," TAI president Shailja Mehta said in a statement.

"A grim reality is unfolding in Assam and West Bengal's tea industry, where plummeting auction prices in the last five to six weeks have sparked widespread concern, putting the sustainability of the tea industry at grave risk," she added.

The statement said the region's three prominent tea auction centres

at Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri witnessed a notable decline in tea prices from July to mid-August (Sale 27 to 34).

According to Tea Board classification, tea-growing regions of West Bengal, Assam and its neighbouring states are taken together as north India industry, while Tamil Nadu, Kerala, etc. form the south India industry.

At the Calcutta Tea Traders Association (CTTA), the average CTC sale price dropped from ₹ 291.27 in Sale No. 26 to ₹ 238.77 in Sale No. 34, indicating a drop of ₹ 53, or 17 per cent, in less than two months.

At the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC), the average CTC sale price fell from ₹ 264.89 in Sale No. 26 to ₹ 221.57 in Sale No. 34, a decline of around 15 per cent.

The STAC, Siliguri, has also registered a drop of around 8 per cent during the same period, with prices going down from ₹ 201.80 in Sale No. 27 to ₹ 182.30 in Sale no. 34.

TAI president maintained that this phenomenon cannot be attributed to oversupply.

While production figures released by the Tea Board for the current cropping season till June 2026 showed a marginal increase of around 16 million kg, or 5 per cent, in North India compared to last year, the trend had been disrupted (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Drugs worth ₹ 300 cr destroyed in Assam in last 100 days: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Aug 28: Drugs worth ₹ 300 crore have been destroyed in Assam within the first 100 days of the present BJP-led regime, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday.

The contraband was destroyed using the state's first dedicated narcotics incinerator in Nalbari district.

"Tick tock on the clock, the crackdown doesn't stop, 100 days, 100% action," Sarma said in a post on X.

"Seizures, arrests, destruction of drug networks, we are sending one message loud and clear: There is no place to hide," he added, asserting the government's commitment to catch all peddlers.

Sharing details of the recent operations with the caption "100 days of Surakshit Assam", Sarma said drugs worth ₹ 300 crore have "gone up in smoke", destroyed at Daulasal in Nalbari, using the state's first dedicated narcotics incinerator. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Five Cong members submit applications for tickets to contest Nagaon IS bypoll

GUWAHATI, Aug 28: Five Congress members have submitted applications seeking party tickets to contest the by-election to the Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency in Assam, party sources said on Friday.

Those who submitted their applications are former MLAs Sibamoni Bora and Durlav Chamua, besides Imdad Hussain, Maidul Islam Khan and Ranjit Barman.

The by-election has been necessitated by the resignation of former Lok Sabha MP Pradyut Bordoloi, who joined the BJP in March, ahead of the Assembly elections in the state held in April.

The deadline for submitting applications ended on Friday. Along with the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Jorhat Police arrest jewellery shop owner in Dhanuka case

Police recover stolen embankment materials in separate West Jorhat operation

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 28: The Jorhat Police arrested Rahul Gupta, owner of a jewellery shop in Gohat district, on Thursday night in connection with the Yash Dhanuka case.

Dhanuka, who allegedly stole gold ornaments worth several lakh rupees from a locker inside his parents' house, was arrested on August 25. The stolen jewellery was allegedly sold at Gupta's shop through two youths known to Dhanuka, one of whom is reportedly a journalist with a news portal.

Earlier on Thursday evening, police had picked up Gupta's father and brother for questioning in connection with the case.

The theft reportedly took place last month when Dhanuka's parents were out of town. Dhanuka allegedly broke open the safe after hiring a local lock seller and duplicate key maker.

Earlier this week, Dhanuka posted a confession video on social media, admitting to the crime. In the video, he blamed two other individuals for allegedly misleading him.

He also admitted to spending large amounts of cash on a woman, gifting her an iPhone and funding trips during which they stayed together outside Assam.

Meanwhile, in another incident on Thursday night, Pulibor Police conducted search operations at three houses in Malowkhat Nacharabahi village in West Jorhat.

During the raids, police recovered a large quantity of geobags and tubes that had been buried inside and outside the residential properties.

The materials had reportedly been stolen from the camps of workers engaged in repairing the Bhogdoi river embankment. The Water Resources Department (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam to revive 71 waterbodies, boost fish production and create sustainable livelihoods



GUWAHATI, Aug 28: The Assam government has launched a project to restore the state's traditional waterbodies, strengthen the fisheries sector and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities.

The ₹ 796.88-crore project, titled

Sustainable Wetland and Integrated Fisheries Transformation (S.W.I.F.T.), is supported by the Asian Development Bank and will rejuvenate 71 waterbodies across 23 districts, covering around 4,000 hectares of waterbodies, Environment and Forests minister Jayanta

Mallah Baruah said in a post on X. The initiative aims to produce 6,000 metric tonnes of fish and around 570 million fish fry annually.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said the story of Assam's 'beels' (waterbodies) is inseparable from the story of the people of the state.

"Project S.W.I.F.T is restoring these waterbodies, boosting fish production and creating sustainable livelihoods while preserving one of Assam's greatest natural assets," he said.

The project will also focus on strengthening the livelihoods of fishing communities. Around 302 boats and nets will be distributed, while 1,000 youths will receive grants of ₹ 50,000 each to support livelihood opportunities.

It will also establish 30 fish feed units and 100 fish processing units for self-help groups, strengthening the fisheries (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Arunachal students' body urges govt job agencies to enforce new recruitment norms

ITANAGAR, Aug 28: The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union has urged the state government's job agencies to strictly implement the new uniform eligibility criteria in all direct recruitments, including for examinations already in the pipeline.

Under the new norms, eligible candidates are required to possess a valid Permanent Residence Certificate of the state, an Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe certificate as an original inhabitant of the state, and working knowledge of an indigenous tribal language of the northeastern state.

In letters to the chairpersons of Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) and Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board (APSSB), the student body's chief Meje Taku and general secretary Mato Bui sought immediate compliance with the government notification.

They asked the two recruiting

bodies to ensure that the prescribed eligibility conditions are implemented without exception.

The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union said the APPSC should apply the new criteria to all future and pending recruitments for Group A, B and C posts, while the APSSB should incorporate the provisions in its upcoming and pending job notifications.

It also asked the APSSB to include the post-joining language test mechanism in its recruitment notifications and warned that any delay, dilution or selective implementation of the government order would face strong opposition from the student community.

The state government notified on Wednesday the introduction of uniform eligibility criteria for direct recruitment to posts and services under the state government and government-controlled bodies.

The decision was approved by the state (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM greets people on Sanskrit Day, recalls Kamarupa's scholarly legacy

GUWAHATI, Aug 28: Greeting people on the occasion of Sanskrit Day, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday noted ancient Kamarupa's rich tradition as a centre of Sanskrit learning and knowledge.

Recalling the contributions of Sanskrit scholar Mahamahopadhyay Anandarama Barua, Sarma said his works on the Sanskrit-English dictionary and Sanskrit grammar helped connect India's knowledge tradition with the global academic community.

"Ancient Kamarupa was a glorious centre for Sanskrit learning and the pursuit of knowledge. Its rich tradition, inscribed in stone inscriptions and copper plates, remains even today a testament to our heritage," he said. The chief minister expressed hope that the younger generation would draw inspiration from Barua's knowledge, dedication and pursuit of Sanskrit. (PTI)

The review focused on the 33 high-burden districts spread across nine states and UT

India sees nearly 80 pc decline in malaria cases, deaths between 2015-2025: Health Ministry

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: India recorded a nearly 80 per cent decline in malaria cases and deaths between 2015 and 2025, while the number of high-burden districts dropped sharply from 155 to 33, according to the Union Health Ministry.

As many as 160 districts reported zero indigenous malaria cases during 2022-2025, reflecting sustained interruption of local transmission and the impact of targeted malaria-control and elimination measures, the ministry said.

The progress was reviewed at a high-level meeting chaired by Aradhana Patnaik, Additional Secretary and Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), and attended by senior ministry offi-



cials, representatives of the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBCD),

Mission Directors of state National Health Missions and district collectors.

The review focused on the 33 high-burden districts spread across nine states and Union Territories, which accounted for 64 per cent of malaria cases and 54 per cent of malaria deaths reported in 2025.

Detailed state-wise reviews were undertaken for Mizoram, Odisha, Tripura, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

Reaffirming India's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of eliminating malaria by 2030, Patnaik called for sustained vigilance and area-specific strategies to prevent resurgence and accelerate elimination.

She stressed effective implementation (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India, Kuwait hold inaugural key dialogue in Delhi to bolster defence cooperation



NEW DELHI, Aug 28: India and Kuwait on Friday held a key dialogue during which the two sides agreed to bolster bilateral defence cooperation across a wide range of areas, including training, military exercises, industry, and research and development.

The inaugural meeting of the India-Kuwait Joint Defence Committee (JDC) was held in New Delhi.

The first meeting of the JDC marked an important step towards operationalising the objectives outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Defence Cooperation between the two countries, signed during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to

Kuwait in December 2024, the defence ministry said in a statement.

"Both countries agreed to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation across a wide range of areas, including training, military exercises, military medicine, staff talks, defence industry, and research and development (R&D)," it said.

The meeting was co-chaired by joint secretary in the ministry, Amitabh Prasad and Brigadier General Raed Alsakran of the five-member Kuwaiti delegation.

The Indian delegation comprised representatives from the three services, the Department of Defence Production, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Armed Forces Medical Services and the Ministry of External Affairs.

Ahead of the JDC meeting, Brigadier General Raed Alsakran laid a wreath at the National War Memorial here, and paid homage to the fallen heroes. The Kuwaiti delegation visited the DPSU Bhawan in New Delhi on the first day of their visit, where discussions were held with representatives of the Indian defence industry on potential areas of mutual cooperation. An industry interaction with the Kuwaiti delegation is also scheduled for the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India, Canada aim to conclude trade talks by 2026-end in bid to boost bilateral trade

WASHINGTON, Aug 28: In a bid to deepen bilateral economic and financial cooperation, India and Canada have said they are looking to conclude negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement by the end of 2026 and initiate talks on a Bilateral Investment Treaty at the earliest.

At the inaugural Economic and Financial Dialogue in Toronto on Thursday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister of Finance and National Revenue, François-Philippe Champagne of Canada agreed to support engagement between relevant authorities and stakeholders to explore opportunities relating to cross-border remittances and merchant payments.

They welcomed opportunities to broaden the use of UPI in Canada through partnerships with payment service providers, recognising that such efforts could contribute to faster, and cost-effective payments and support bilateral trade, tourism, education, and the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in both countries, as per a joint statement issued after inaugural Economic and Financial Dialogue.

The dialogue builds on the commitment made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney during their meeting in New Delhi in March 2026 to strengthen bilateral



economic and financial cooperation.

The two sides also reaffirmed their shared commitment to conclude negotiations for a Canada-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement by the end of 2026.

During the dialogue, the ministers exchanged views on global macroeconomic developments and domestic policy priorities and discussed ways to strengthen economic and investment ties.

Discussions are aimed at supporting financial and commercial linkages between the two countries and advancing the leaders' shared goal of expanding bilateral trade to

CAD 70 billion, or around ₹ 4.65 lakh crore, by 2030.

India also expressed its readiness to initiate negotiations on a Bilateral Investment Treaty at the earliest, the joint statement said.

The ministers welcomed the growing investment relationship between the two countries and recognised the role of long-term institutional capital in strengthening bilateral economic ties.

They noted the substantial presence of Canadian pension funds and other institutional investors in India and discussed ways to facilitate greater engagement between Indian and Canadian financial institutions and institutional investors.

The two sides also explored opportunities for cooperation in payments modernisation, financial stability, fintech innovation, capital markets development and efforts to address financial crime.

On global economic and financial issues, the ministers agreed to explore greater cooperation in areas of shared interest, including critical minerals, with a focus on building resilient and diversified supply chains.

Following the dialogue, Sitharaman and Champagne held joint engagements with representatives from Canada's financial services, fintech, technology, artificial intelligence, infrastructure, and energy and natural resources sectors.

The engagements highlighted opportunities for greater collaboration among businesses, financial institutions and other stakeholders in the two countries.

The ministers reaffirmed their commitment to regular economic and financial dialogue and advancing concrete cooperation and tangible outcomes in areas of mutual interest.

The next India-Canada Economic and Financial Dialogue will be held in 2027.

Sitharaman also held interaction with leading Business Chambers and Professional Alumni Associations in India-Canada corridor to explore new avenues. (PTI)

Stock markets rebound ending 2-day losing streak on buying in IT firms; Sensex jumps 331 pts



MUMBAI, Aug 28: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded on Friday after two days of losses and ended higher, tracking buying in blue-chip IT stocks and a rally in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 330.92 points, or 0.43 per cent, to settle at 77,264.51. During the day, it jumped 424.38 points, or 0.55 per cent, to 77,357.97.

The 50-share NSE Nifty settled 84.80 points, or 0.35 per cent, higher at 24,175.65.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Titan and Eternal were the major winners.

ICICI Bank, UltraTech Cement, Asian Paints and ITC were among the laggards.

"Strong gains in IT stocks helped Indian equities close higher today. The sector was supported by Nvidia's strong earnings and upbeat outlook, which reinforced optimism around sustained AI-related investments and benefited firms involved in enterprise AI deployment and workflow integration."

"However, investor participation remained selective as markets awaited comments from the Fed Chair at the Jackson Hole symposium for greater clarity on the US interest-rate outlook and global liquidity conditions," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

According to Hariselman Radhakrishnan, Founder &

CEO of HST Wealth, a Research Analyst firm, investors remained positive on IT stocks amid supportive global cues for the sector.

"Indian equity benchmarks ended higher on Friday, snapping a two-session losing streak as strong gains in technology stocks offset subdued performance across much of the broader market. Technology stocks were the session's clear outperformers, with the Nifty IT index surging 3.5 per cent as investors responded positively to supportive global cues for the sector," Radhakrishnan said.

The BSE MidCap Select index climbed 0.48 per cent and the SmallCap Select Index was marginally up by 0.02 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, Focused IT surged 3.42 per cent, Information Technology jumped 3.32 per cent, PSU Bank 1.25 per cent, Bankex 1.01 per cent, MidSmall Private Banks 0.94 per cent and Metal 0.71 per cent.

Insurance, Consumer Durables, Energy, Realty, Power and Oil & Gas were the laggards.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark declined 276.32 points, or 0.35 per cent, and the Nifty dipped 76.35 points, or 0.31 per cent.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dipped 0.17 per cent to USD 89.63 per barrel.

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

Markets in Europe were trading in positive territory. US markets ended higher on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 298.26 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Falling for the second day on Thursday, the Sensex dropped 539.35 points, or 0.70 per cent, to settle at the day's low of 76,933.59 on the monthly derivatives-expiry day.

Similarly, the Nifty50 declined 116.90 points, or 0.48 per cent, to end at the day's low of 24,090.85. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Steps taken for

their safety and earliest possible return home," Sarma said on X on Thursday.

Chief Secretary Ravi Kota said the state government had not received any information from families seeking updates about their relatives or loved ones in Nepal.

The state government has set up a flood-related emergency help desk at Assam House, New Delhi and the helpline numbers are 011-23010299/98 and 28877111 (emergency assistance numbers), 9101089151 (Anuran Medhi) and 892057057 (Vinod Kalita).

Search and rescue operations continued for the third day of the tragic incident with the mobilisation of 7,451 security personnel, including 2,391 Nepal Army personnel, a Nepal Police statement said.

An ice-rock avalanche triggered by a glacial collapse near the Nepal-Tibet border sent a torrent of water, mud and debris downstream through central Nepal on Wednesday, devastating towns and villages, washing away homes, vehicles, roads and bridges, and damaging hydropower projects.

Tea Association of India

by severe floods in Assam, excessive heat and extreme pest infestations in other tea-growing areas of the region, she claimed. She said data received from TAI member estates indicated an 8 per cent drop in crop production in July 2026, with a similar decline expected in August.

Taken together, it is estimated to lead to an overall drop of around 8 million kg in north India by the end of this month as compared to last year, the TAI chief said, adding that it is further estimated to drop in the coming months, particularly in Assam, as the submerged tea bushes due to the recent floods will take time to recover.

The export scenario is also not encouraging this year due to the recent geopolitical crisis, Mehta said.

While the tea industry registered a record export of 285.53 million kg in 2025, exports were lagging behind last year's figures by around 23 million kg, or about 18 per cent, during the January-June period, according to official Tea Board data.

The TAI expressed concern over the future of the tea industry in Assam and West Bengal amid falling auction prices and rising input costs, including wages, as well as higher outgo on account of increased bonus payments. (PTI)

Jorhat Police arrest

had brought the materials for restoring five sections of the embankment that were breached during the severe floods last month.

Drugs worth ₹ 300

In operations across nine districts in 10 days, drugs worth ₹ 472.51 crore were seized, he said. The contraband recovered included 30.7 kg heroin and 5,499 kg ganja, the chief minister added.

The state government had intensified its operations against drug cartels since Sarma had taken over as the chief minister for the first time in May 2021. (PTI)

Five Cong members

application forms, the aspiring contestants also submitted a non-refundable demand draft of Rs 1 lakh in favour of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee and a certified copy of the electoral rolls bearing their names to the party's treasurer. The date for the bypoll is yet to be announced by the Election Commission. (PTI)

Assam to revive 71

value chain and creating new income opportunities at the grassroots level.

"For generations, Assam's beels have been closely connected with the lives, livelihoods and culture of local communities. Through Project S.W.I.F.T., these vital waterbodies are set to receive renewed attention -- combining ecological restoration with economic opportunities," Baruah said. (PTI)

Arunachal students' body

Cabinet at its meeting on August 13. The new provisions also require selected candidates to clear a language proficiency test. Until the test is incorporated into the competitive examination, it would be conducted after joining service and must be cleared within the three-year probation period.

Candidates failing to clear the language test within the stipulated period will have their annual increments and promotions withheld until they qualify the test, officials said. (PTI)

India, Kuwait hold

second day of the visit, it said. India and Kuwait enjoy traditionally warm and friendly relations, rooted in historical ties that have stood the test of time.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1962.

The relationship was upgraded to a Strategic Partnership during the visit of the prime minister to Kuwait in December 2024. Geographic proximity, historical trade links, cultural affinities, and the presence of a large Indian community in Kuwait continue to sustain and nurture the longstanding and multifaceted relationship between the two countries, it said. (PTI)

India sees nearly

of District Action Plans in all 33 high-burden districts and Village Action Plans in malaria-prone villages, with interventions tailored to local epidemiological and geographical conditions.

The meeting emphasised strengthening the "Test, Treat and Track" strategy, with delays in diagnosis and treatment identified as key factors behind malaria deaths.

States were advised to intensify active surveillance and ensure uninterrupted availability of diagnostic facilities and anti-malarial drugs, particularly in hard-to-reach and vulnerable areas.

The review also highlighted the need to strengthen surveillance systems and improve the quality of malaria data. States were asked to examine unusually high Annual Blood Examination Rates (ABER) to identify possible duplicate testing, repeated entries and inclusion of asymptomatic screening.

The ministry said asymptomatic cases detected through mass screening should be reported separately and excluded from Annual Parasite Incidence (API) and ABER calculations to ensure a more accurate assessment of the malaria situation and programme performance.

Patnaik also underscored the importance of inter-sectoral coordination, noting that health interventions alone cannot address factors such as water-logging, source reduction and environmental management that contribute to malaria transmission. States were advised to strengthen coordination with Rural Development and Urban Development departments, as well as Panchayati Raj Institutions, for effective implementation of environmental and vector-control measures. Greater involvement of self-help groups, community volunteers and Panchayati Raj representatives was also encouraged to improve early reporting of fever cases, identify mosquito-breeding sites and water-logging, and support source-reduction activities. (PTI)

POCO M8x 5G launches with a massive 7900mAh battery

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 28: Xiaomi India has announced the launch of the POCO M8x 5G, described as India's first smartphone powered by the new Qualcomm Snapdragon 4 Gen 5 Mobile Platform.

The smartphone combines a 7900mAh battery, a 6.9-inch 120Hz adaptive display, everyday durability and a distinctive design, targeting users looking for extended battery life and performance.

The POCO M8x 5G is equipped with a 7900mAh battery and supports 45W fast charging, with a 45W charger included in the box.

It also supports 22.5W reverse charging, allowing users to charge compatible accessories or another smartphone.

The smartphone carries an IP64 rating for protection against dust and water splashes, while its display is protected by Corning Gorilla Glass 7i.

The device features a 6.9-inch display with an adaptive refresh rate of up to 120Hz and a 240Hz touch sampling rate.

It also carries TÜV certifications for Low Blue Light, Flicker-Free and Circadian Friendly viewing.

The rear panel features a leather-inspired finish, while dual speakers offer up to 300 per cent volume.

A side-mounted fingerprint sensor and 3.5mm headphone jack are also included.

The POCO M8x 5G is powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon 4 Gen 5 Mobile Platform, built on a 4nm process.

The smartphone comes with up to 6GB of RAM and 128GB of storage, with support for storage expansion of up to 1TB.

For photography, the device features a 50MP AI dual-camera setup with a dedicated flicker sensor.

It includes Portrait mode and Dual Video, while an 8MP front camera is provided for selfies and video calls.

The smartphone runs on Android 16 with Xiaomi HyperOS 3 and includes Google-powered features such as Gemini and Circle to Search.

It also supports Xiaomi Interconnectivity for integration with compatible devices within the Xiaomi ecosystem.

The POCO M8x 5G will be available in two variants. The 4GB + 128GB variant is priced at ₹20,999, while the 6GB + 128GB variant is priced at ₹22,999.

As part of the launch offer, customers can avail of a ₹2,000 coupon on the first day of sale, bringing the effective prices to ₹18,999 and ₹20,999 respectively. The smartphone will also be available through No-Cost EMI starting at ₹3,166 per month.

The POCO M8x 5G will go on sale from 12 noon on August 27, 2026, through Flipkart.

Forex kitty jumps USD 12.42 bn to all-time high of USD 729.3 bn

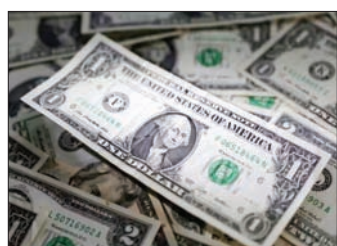
HT Bureau

MUMBAI, Aug 28: India's forex reserves jumped USD 12.42 billion to a new all-time high of USD 729.32 billion during the week ended August 21, the RBI said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the kitty had increased USD 9.905 billion to USD 716.907 billion.

The previous all-time high had stood at USD 728.494 billion was attained during the week ended February 27 this year, right before the onset of the Middle East conflict. Geopolitical tensions led to several weeks of a drop as the rupee and the RBI had to intervene in the forex market through dollar sales.

For the week ended August 21, foreign currency assets, a major compo-



nent of the reserves, increased USD 9.482 billion to USD 591.333 billion, the central bank's data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, foreign currency assets include the effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in foreign exchange reserves.

It can be recalled that the central bank and the government had last month launched a series of measures, including the FCNR(B), to attract more forex flows into the country. The country has so far received USD 72 billion under the concessional swap measures.

Value of gold reserves increased USD 2.801 billion to USD 114.218 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) were up by USD 112 million at USD 18.852 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was also up USD 26 million to USD 4.925 billion at the end of the reporting week, according to the apex bank's data. (PTI)

Adobe India partners with Assam and six other state governments to offer free access to Adobe Express

Initiative to provide digital creativity and AI skills to 7.8 million students and teachers across India

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 28: Adobe has announced a strategic initiative in India in partnership with the state governments of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Assam, Bihar and Tamil Nadu to advance digital creativity and AI skills across schools.

As part of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed with the states, Adobe will provide thousands of government schools with free access to Adobe Express for Education, a digital media application designed to engage students through projects aimed at improving learning outcomes and developing future-ready skills.

The initiative expands Adobe's K-12 reach in India to 7.8 million students and teachers across schools nationwide.

Students and teachers will also gain access to digital creativity and AI skill-building curriculum under the aegis of Adobe Digital Academy to develop proficiency in creative problem-solving, digital storytelling and AI-assisted content creation.

The initiative is aimed at supporting the National Education Policy's vision of future-ready learning.

Teachers will be trained to integrate digital creativity into classroom teaching, while students will use Adobe Express for school projects and creative expression, helping them develop skills for future careers in India's creative and digital industries.

"Through this partnership, we're bringing classroom-ready AI tools like Adobe Express directly into schools, helping students and educators develop the creative and AI skills they need for the future of work," said Mala Sharma, Global Vice-President and General Manager, Education, Adobe.

She said the partnership builds on Adobe's longstanding commitment to education in India, supports the government's National Education Policy, which em-

phasises the use of digital tools and AI to build creativity skills and future readiness, and complements the Union Budget 2026's goal of creating two million jobs in Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC) by 2030.

The initiative extends to PM SHRI schools, CM SHRI model schools, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and other government school networks, with plans to expand to additional schools and states over time. The announcement marks the latest milestone in Adobe's efforts to expand access to creativity, AI skills and digital innovation across India.

At the India AI Impact Summit earlier this year, Adobe announced that its applications, including Firefly, Photoshop and Acrobat, would be made available free of cost to students through accredited higher education institutions across India.

Adobe has also partnered with NASSCOM FutureSkills Prime, a digital skilling initiative in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), to offer complimentary access, industry-relevant courses and certificates to learners across India.

Adobe's commitment to India spans nearly three decades.

After establishing operations in 1997 as an engineering and R&D centre, India has grown into a strategic hub for the company's global innovation and product development.

The company recently announced the opening of its seventh office in India.

With more than 8,000 employees, India is Adobe's largest workforce outside the United States and contributes to more than one-fourth of the company's global innovation.

LOST

I Mayawati Das D/O Bhogirath Das have lost my Registration card of class IX bearing Registration no 15/PR/0004/761710/25 of year 2025 Anyone find please return to my following address or call me on my cello phone.

Mayawati Das,
Vill: Natunbasti
P.O.: P.S. Bakalia
Dist: Karbi Anglong
Phone- 6900909049

AFFIDAVIT

By an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Diphu Judicial Court I Smt. Jamuna Baspher D/O Lt. Hira Baspher have declared and affirmed that my actual name is Jamuna Baspher but by mistake in my AADHAAR card vide no.511761652523 it has been recorded as "Jamini Basfor" instead of "Jamuna Baspher". The name of Jamuna Baspher and Jamini Basfor are the name of one and single person. Jamuna Baspher Vill- 2no. Balijan P.O. + P.S. Bakalia Dist- Karbi Anglong

64 road accidents, 8 deaths in Sonitpur in August DRSC meeting reviews safety measures

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 28: The District Commissioner, Sonitpur, Ananda Kumar Das, chaired the monthly meeting of the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) at Conference Hall-I of the District Commissioner's Office, Sonitpur, on Friday.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Commissioner James Aind; Co-District Commissioner of Naduar Manash Kumar Saikia; Co-District Commissioner of Barchalla Rajeb Sonowal; Additional Superintendent of Police Moushumi Kalita; Chairperson of Tezpur Municipal Board Ramen Tamuli; Circle Officer of Tezpur Revenue Circle; Executive Officer of Rangapara Municipal Board; Member Secretary, DRSC and Superintending Engineer, PWRD, Ajit Kumar Medhi; along with officials from NHIDCL, PWD (National Highways Division), Transport Department and other concerned departments.

At the outset, the District Commissioner directed all concerned departments to ensure timely and accurate reporting of road acci-



dents, identification of black spots and road safety interventions.

Stressing the need for coordinated action to reduce road accidents, he reviewed, case by case, the incident data of the last two months and took stock of the assessments carried out by the concerned departments, interventions undertaken and further requirements.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of the District Highway Safety Task Force (DHSTF) mechanism in compli-

ance with the directives of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

The latest status of removal of encroachments, notices issued and other related matters were also deliberated upon.

The Committee further deliberated on traffic management measures, including strict vigilance against unauthorised parking, particularly by heavy vehicles.

Directions were issued for installation of appropriate signages indicating potholes, speed limits, no-parking zones and other neces-

sary road safety information wherever required.

The District Commissioner also instructed the DTO to intensify patrolling and conduct regular checks against overspeeding.

The Chairperson of Tezpur Municipal Board informed the meeting about the registration of e-rickshaws under the Tezpur Municipal Board.

In this regard, the District Commissioner directed strict compliance with the prescribed registration requirements and instructed that e-rickshaws be permitted to ply only within their designated areas.

He further directed that the operation of e-rickshaws on National Highways be regulated in accordance with applicable rules, keeping in view road safety and the smooth movement of traffic.

According to data shared during the meeting, including information available on the Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD) portal, 64 road accidents were reported in Sonitpur district during August 2026 till date, of which eight were fatal.

The status of case disposal under the PM-RAHAT scheme was also discussed.

Mission APSC & UPSC workshop begins in Kokrajhar

DC Kokrajhar motivates first batch of civil services aspirants

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 28: A two-day inaugural workshop of Mission APSC & UPSC, a six-month mentorship and training programme, began at the Conference Hall of the Bodoland Administrative Staff College (BASC) in Kokrajhar on Friday, marking the launch of the first batch of the initiative for civil services aspirants.

The programme has been initiated by BASC, Kokrajhar, in collaboration with the District Administration, Kokrajhar.

NTPC Bongaigaon is the sponsoring partner, while Nirman IAS is the academic and knowledge partner.

Addressing the aspirants, Kokrajhar District Commissioner Pankaj Chakravarty, who is also the Convener of Mission APSC & UPSC, welcomed the first batch and expressed hope that the initiative would help participants move closer to their goals. Chakravarty emphasised that success in civil services examinations requires more than being information-rich.

He advised aspirants to focus on relevant issues, understand current developments, keep pace with new concepts and prepare with clarity and purpose.

"Dream big and work hard," he urged, while stressing that marksheets alone do not determine success.

He highlighted grit, determination and perseverance as essential qualities in the journey towards achieving one's goals and encouraged the aspirants to make full use of the mentorship programme.

He also urged them to strive to become role models for their families, communities and the country.

The inaugural programme was attended by Anurag



Gupta, General Manager (Operations & Maintenance), NTPC Bongaigaon, and Roshan Dzungdung, Assistant General Manager (Human Resources), NTPC Bongaigaon, along with Additional Deputy Commissioners Banti Talukdar, Palash Ahom, Krishan Jyoti Deka and Suprava Roy.

Assistant Commissioners Anis Rasul Majumdar and other officials and staff were also present.

Akshat Garg, SSP, Kokrajhar, and Supriya Das, CO, 7th APBN, participated in an interactive session with the aspirants.

The workshop features interactive sessions with civil servants and experienced mentors on examination strategy, current affairs, answer writing, preparation methodology and other aspects of the civil services journey.

The six-month programme will provide regular mentorship, expert guidance, curated study materials, tests and assessments, besides online and offline learning support, with the objective of enabling aspirants to prepare more strategically and confidently for the APSC and UPSC examinations.

Two bodies recovered in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 28: The recovery of two bodies from separate locations in Kokrajhar over the past 36 hours has created a sensation in the area.

While one of the deceased has been identified, the identity of the other remains unknown.

On August 25, the Kokrajhar Government Railway Police (GRP) recovered the body of an unidentified 27-year-old man from the railway tracks in Kokrajhar.

According to sources, the body has been kept at the morgue of Kokrajhar Medical College for 72 hours to facilitate identification.

Meanwhile, another body was recovered from the Gagra River at Duramari under Kokrajhar Sadar Police Station on August 28.

The deceased was identified as 61-year-old Bishnu Brahma of Onthaigola village.

According to local residents, Brahma had gone to the nearby Gagra River at Duramari on Wednesday night to collect snails.

He reportedly drowned accidentally and died. Police are looking into both incidents.

Unidentified body found at Jagiroad Rly Station

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, Aug 28: An unidentified man, aged around 50, was found dead at Jagiroad railway station on Friday morning, police said.

The deceased was approximately 5 feet 6 inches tall and was wearing a green shirt and a blue-and-purple scarf, Jagiroad Railway Police Officer-in-Charge Rajni Kanta Bharali said.

The body was sent to Morigaon Civil Hospital for post-mortem examination and will be preserved for 72 hours to facilitate identification.

Raksha Bandhan celebrated with enthusiasm in Diphu

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 28: Raksha Bandhan, the festival celebrating the bond of love, affection and protection between brothers and sisters, was observed with enthusiasm across several households and social circles in Diphu on Friday.

Traditionally celebrated across South Asia and among diaspora communities worldwide, the festival has increasingly transcended social and cultural boundaries in Karbi Anglong, with people from diverse communities participating in the celebrations.

At the household of Mukesh Chauhan, the occasion was marked by a warm family gathering.

Younger sisters and paternal aunts tied rakhis on the wrists of Mukesh Chauhan, his younger brother and their father. The sisters prayed for the health, safety and long-term success of their brothers.

The rituals were followed by tea, snacks and fruits, adding to the spirit of family togetherness.

Raksha Bandhan was also observed within the indigenous Ronghang community, reflecting the festival's growing acceptance beyond traditional cultural boundaries.

Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Dr Tuliram Ronghang, received Raksha Bandhan blessings as several women members of his clan, Ronghangpi, tied rakhis on his wrist.

Meanwhile, the Mahila Morcha of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) East Karbi Anglong District Com-



mittee organised a special Raksha Bandhan programme at the party's district headquarters in Diphu.

Led by Mahila Morcha district president Jelina Rongpi, women party members tied rakhis to party leaders and colleagues as a gesture of mutual respect, affection and solidarity.

KAAC Executive Member (EM) Madhuram Lekthe, along with several other BJP leaders and members, attended and participated in the celebration.

Swasti Bharat Gas rural distributor hits back at alleged false charges

HT Correspondent

GOSSAIGAON, Aug 28: The management of Swasti Bharat Gas Rural Distributor, located at Dingdinga under Gossaigaon subdivision of Kokrajhar district, has expressed strong resentment over what it termed false and misleading reports circulated against the establishment.

According to the distributor, a person recently made an allegation through social media that gas cylinders were being supplied in exchange for money. Refuting the allegation, Anshuman Islahary, representing Swasti Bharat Gas Rural Distributor, described the claim as completely false and an attempt at misinformation.

Islahary challenged the person making the allegation to produce appropriate evidence if the establishment had indulged in any activity contrary to rules and regulations.

He said that since its inception, the establishment has been making continuous efforts to provide satisfactory and efficient services to consumers across the wider area.

Meanwhile, former AASU leader and another person associated with the establishment, Debashish Das, alleged that the reports were deliberately published with the intention of tarnishing the image of the institution among the public.

Assam College Principals' Council extends financial aid to flood-hit colleges

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 28: The Assam College Principals' Council (ACPC) visited several flood-affected colleges in Upper Assam that had suffered extensive damage and extended financial assistance to support their recovery efforts recently. A delegation of the Council visited Sibsagar Commerce College, Sivasagar Girls' College, Bir Lachit Borpuhan College (Sivasagar), Swahid Maniram Dewan College (Charing), Jaji Hemnath Sarma Mahavidyalaya, Nazira College and Teok Chandra Kamal Bezbaruah College. Members of the delegation expressed solidarity with the institutions and offered financial assistance, to the extent possible, to aid their rebuilding efforts. The ACPC had earlier contributed ₹5 lakh to the Chief Minister's

Relief Fund.

The outreach programme was undertaken on behalf of the ACPC by its president, Dr Dharmendra Nath, Principal of SB Deorah College; general secretary Dr Ranjan Kalita, Principal of Rangapara College; vice-president Dr Subhash Barman, Principal of Goalpara College; treasurer Dr Montu Das, Principal of Howrahgahat College; ACPC member Dr Dipen Saikia, Principal of Moridhal College; joint secretary Dr Chandrama Goswami, Principal of KRB College; vice-president Dr Bubul Saikia, Principal of LTK College; Dr Soumar Jyoti Mahanta, Principal of Sibsagar Commerce College; Dr Ranjit Gam, Principal of Ghanakanta Bora College; and vice-president Dr Dulen Saikia, Principal (in charge) of Jorhat Central College.

DC holds meeting to expedite 'Amar Mati Amar Nayak' initiative

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 28: A meeting of the District-Level Committee constituted under Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya's flagship initiative, "Amar Mati Amar Nayak," was held on Friday at the Conference Hall of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Sonitpur.

The meeting was chaired by District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das and attended by Additional District Commissioner (Education) James Aind.

The committee reviewed the status of the collection and the number of write-ups received for the 50 Nayaks and Nayikas to be featured in the student version of the initiative.

Detailed deliberations were also held on maintaining uniformity and consistency in the data across the Assamese and English versions.

The committee emphasised the timely completion and submission of the final write-ups within the prescribed timeline communicated by Lok Bhavan, Assam.

The meeting was attended by all members of the District-Level Committee, including academicians, social workers, leading citizens, journalists and the District Information and Public Relations Officer, Sonitpur.

NFR revises train services as restoration work continues in hill section

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 28: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) continues restoration work near New Harangajao station following the settlement of railway tracks on Line-1 and Line-2.

Train operations over the Lumding-Badarpur Hill Section are currently being maintained through Line-3 with enhanced safety measures.

In view of the ongoing restoration work, NFR has announced further changes to train services.

Train No 15617 (Guwahati-Dulabcherra Express), scheduled to commence its journey on August 29, has been cancelled.

Train No 15618 (Dulabcherra-Guwahati Express), scheduled to commence its journey on August 30, has also been cancelled.

Train No 15615 (Guwahati-Silchar Express), scheduled to commence its journey on August 29, has been cancelled, while Train No 15616 (Silchar-Guwahati Express), scheduled to commence its journey on August 30, has also been cancelled. Meanwhile, Train No 15650 (Narangi-Agartala Express), scheduled to commence its journey on August 29, has been rescheduled to depart from Narangi at 6:30 pm.

Train No 15641 (Silchar-New Tinsukia Express), scheduled to commence its journey on August 29, has been rescheduled to depart from Silchar at 10:10 pm. NFR said the changes have been necessitated by the ongoing restoration work in the hill section.



Free medical camp held for flood-affected people in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 28: In a humanitarian initiative, the Solar Power Division of Eastman Auto & Power Limited, in collaboration with Nagaon-based business establishment Hussain Enterprise, organised a free medical camp for flood-affected people in Sivasagar district on Friday. The camp was held at the historic Dhitaipukhuri Adarsha Higher Secondary School, where more than 300 flood-affected residents availed themselves of free medical services.

Doctors and health workers attending the camp conducted medical check-ups and distributed essential medicines among the flood-hit people. The initiative was warmly welcomed by local residents, particularly as several families continue to face difficulties in accessing healthcare following the floods.

Locals said such medical camps provide valuable support to affected communities during disasters, when access to regular healthcare services can become challenging.

Among those present at the programme were Pulak Hujuri of the Solar Power Division of Eastman Auto & Power Limited, Iqbal Hussain, proprietor of Hussain Enterprise, Ranjan Bora, Sandipan, Nazrul Hussain and Abu Sadik Kabir.

Chandrakanta Gogoi, Headmaster of Dhitaipukhuri Adarsha Higher Secondary School, village head Jadu Konwar and office-bearers of Dhitaipukhuri Mahila Mancha, including Juri Bakal, Rashmi Lahon, Julie Phukan, Barnali Bora, Purnima Boruah, Pallavi Changmai and Ankumi Borgohain, also attended the programme. Retired headmaster Pranab Burhagohain and Pradip Gogoi, manager of Shiv Mandir, along with several other dignitaries, were also present.

The initiative by Eastman Auto & Power Limited's Solar Power Division and Hussain Enterprise was described as an example of corporate social responsibility and community service aimed at supporting the health and well-being of flood-affected people.

People oppose move to remove SDMO post from Kalugaon PHC

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 27: The Salaguri Regional Students' Union and members of the general public of Salaguri Mouja have strongly opposed the Health Department's reported decision to shift the post of Sub-Divisional Medical Officer (SDMO) from Kalugaon Primary Health Centre (PHC) to Gaurisagar Block Medical Centre.

Through a memorandum submitted to the District Commissioner, Sivasagar, the students' body and local residents said the move would adversely affect access to healthcare for more than 6,000 people of the mouja. The memorandum, signed by Salaguri Regional Students' Union president Santosh Shahu and secretary Niranjan Bora, stated that Kalugaon PHC caters to 13 sub-centres in the region.

According to the memorandum, the Health Department, through a notification issued on August 10, has proposed eliminating the SDMO post at Kalugaon PHC and creating a new Medical Officer post equivalent to that of a Co-district Medical Officer at Gaurisagar Block Medical Centre. The students' body expressed concern that the proposed change would weaken the healthcare infrastructure available to people in the area.

The organisation has threatened to launch a democratic movement if the government does not reconsider and withdraw the decision.

Assam's traditional 'Puthi Chitra' gains national recognition Sujit Das's 'Dashavatar' selected for 65th National Exhibition of Art



HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 28: Assam's centuries-old tradition of illustrated manuscript painting has earned national recognition with artist Sujit Das's Dashavatar being selected for the 65th National Exhibition of Art, 2026, organised by the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.

The selection marks a significant milestone for Assam's traditional Sanchipat Puthi Chitra, which, according to the information provided, has received a place in the prestigious national exhibition for the first time.

The tradition of Assam's illustrated manuscripts is closely associated with the cultural renaissance

initiated by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva.

His Neo-Vaishnavite movement brought together literature, music, drama, dance, visual arts and manuscript traditions, contributing to the development of a distinctive cultural identity in Assam.

Das's Dashavatar has been created on Sanchipat, the traditional writing and painting material prepared from the bark of the Agar tree.

The artwork uses traditional pigments such as Hengul, Haital, Dholsmati and Neel and depicts the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu through the distinctive visual language of Assam's Puthi Chitra tradition.

The inaugural ceremony of the 65th National Exhibition of Art was held on August 21 at the Lalit Kala Art Galleries, Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi.

Vivek Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, attended the ceremony as Chief Guest, while K K Mishra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, was the Guest of Honour.

Eminent artist P R Daroz was also present.

The national recognition is particularly significant for Das, who has worked for more than 25 years

towards the preservation, documentation, practice and teaching of Assam's traditional Puthi Chitra.

His sustained efforts have helped introduce the art form to wider audiences in India and abroad.

Das received the National Junior Fellowship in 2014-15 for his work related to Assam's Puthi Chitra.

He subsequently received the National Senior Fellowship for 2025-26, further supporting his research and documentation of the rare illustrated manuscripts of Assam.

He has also trained numerous students in the traditional art form, with several of them subsequently receiving opportunities, scholarships and recognition in different areas of art education.

Das has taken Assam's manuscript painting tradition to international audiences through exhibitions and demonstrations at cultural platforms including the Nehru Centre in London, the Embassy of India in China and the High Commission of India in Kenya.

His works and demonstrations have reached audiences in nearly 35 countries.

His paintings based on Dash-

avatar, Krishna Leela and episodes from the Mahabharata, executed in the traditional Puthi Chitra style, have also found appreciation among art lovers and distinguished personalities in India and abroad.

The selection of Dashavatar has also generated renewed hope for the younger generation of artists. A tradition once largely confined to manuscripts and limited cultural spaces is now gaining visibility on a major national platform.

Through ART VILLAGE, Nagaon, and educational and cultural initiatives undertaken in association with Nagaon University, efforts are being made to promote training, documentation, preservation and wider exposure for the traditional art form.

The development has also prompted hopes that Assam's Sanchipat Puthi Chitra, like Madhubani painting of Bihar and Patanchitra of Odisha, will gain a stronger identity on the national and international art scene.

The selection of Dashavatar can thus be viewed not merely as an individual achievement for Sujit Das, but as an important step towards reviving, preserving and nationally positioning an artistic tradition rooted in Assam's cultural heritage.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A fool can throw a stone in a pond that 100 wise men cannot get out
- Saul Bellow

HAL-Safran deal on chopper

India has built fighter aircraft, warships, tanks and some of the world's most sophisticated missiles, but one weakness has repeatedly haunted its defence-industrial ambitions: engines. The country has been able to design and manufacture airframes, yet propulsion technology has remained heavily dependent on foreign suppliers. The latest agreement between the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and French aerospace giant Safran could begin to change that equation—at least in the helicopter sector. HAL and Safran Helicopter Engines have signed the final contract through their 50:50 joint venture, SAFHAL Helicopter Engines, to jointly design, develop, manufacture, supply and provide lifecycle support for the new 3,500–4,000 shaft-horsepower Aravalli helicopter engine. The engine is intended for HAL's forthcoming 13-tonne Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) and its naval version, the Deck-Based Multi-Role Helicopter (DBMRH). Production is planned in India, at Tumakuru in Karnataka. The significance goes well beyond one engine or two helicopter programmes. For decades, India's helicopter industry has relied on imported propulsion technology. Safran itself is already deeply embedded in India's military helicopter fleet, with more than 1,200 Safran helicopter engines in service with the Indian armed forces. Its Shakti/Ardiden family powers important Indian helicopters including the Dhruv, Prachand and other platforms.

The Aravalli represents a different model. Instead of HAL buying a finished foreign engine and installing it in an Indian helicopter, the two companies are developing the powerplant jointly and intend to manufacture it in India. That means India moves further up the value chain—from purchaser and assembler towards designer, manufacturer and eventually exporter. That distinction matters because an aircraft engine is not merely another component. It is among the most technologically demanding products in aerospace. Turbine blades, high-temperature materials, combustion systems, precision machining, coatings and sophisticated control systems require capabilities accumulated over decades. The financial attraction is equally important, although neither HAL nor Safran has publicly disclosed the unit price of the Aravalli engine or the total value of the development contract. It would therefore be misleading to claim a specific percentage reduction in engine costs.

The economic benefit will come from localisation. If the engine is manufactured domestically, India will not have to spend foreign exchange on importing complete engines for every helicopter. Local manufacture can also reduce transportation, import, inventory and long-term sustainment costs. More importantly, India will have greater control over spares, repairs, overhaul and upgrades. For a military operator with hundreds of helicopters, lifecycle cost can be considerably more important than the original purchase price. A locally produced engine also means that an Indian helicopter grounded because of an engine problem should, in principle, be less dependent on foreign supply chains and overseas approvals. That is strategically valuable in wartime.

From sporting excellence to a developed India

National Sports Day is not merely an occasion to pay tribute to the memory of a legendary hockey player; it is a day to awaken India's sporting consciousness, inspire its youth and place sports firmly at the heart of nation-building. Observed every year on August 29, the day commemorates the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand, the legendary hockey wizard of India. Sports are not merely a display of a nation's physical prowess; they reflect its confidence, discipline, teamwork and global stature. As India advances with the vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, integrating sports into the mainstream of national development is no longer an option—it is a necessity. Healthy citizens, disciplined youth, world-class athletes and a vibrant sporting culture are among the essential foundations of a developed India.

Born on August 29, 1905, Major Dhyan Chand was a legendary figure who used his hockey stick not merely to score goals but to etch India's name on the world sporting map. His contribution to India's historic Olympic gold-medal triumphs in 1928, 1932 and 1936 remains unparalleled. His game represented a remarkable blend of exceptional skill, patriotism, discipline and dedication. Celebrating National Sports Day in his honour is, therefore, a reminder of a sporting philosophy in which hard work matters more than talent and national glory matters more than individual achievement. Dhyan Chand's legacy continues to inspire athletes to understand that the ultimate purpose of sport is not merely to win medals, but to bring honour and pride to the nation.

Today, sports have emerged as an important dimension of India's national strength. There was a time when sports were rarely considered a serious career option alongside education or employment. That mindset is changing rapidly. Beyond cricket, Indian athletes are making their presence felt globally in athletics, badminton, wrestling, boxing, shooting, weightlifting, hockey, table tennis, archery, chess and several other disciplines. Neeraj Chopra has demonstrated through his Olympic triumph in athletics that India can become a global force in track and field. P. V. Sindhu, with two consecutive Olympic medals in badminton, has become a role model for an entire generation. Manu Bhaker, D. Gukesh, Mirabai Chanu, Nikhat Zareen, Lovlina Borgohain, Avani Lekhara, Har-



manpreet Singh and many other athletes have showcased the remarkable breadth of Indian sporting talent.

India won seven medals at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and six at Paris 2024. Although the medal tally is still some distance behind that of the world's leading sporting nations, the breadth, depth and competitive strength of Indian sports are steadily expanding. The achievements of Indian athletes at the Paralympic Games have been particularly inspiring. They have shattered the myth that

physical limitations determine the limits of human achievement. India's real success lies not merely in the number of medals but also in the changing social landscape of sport. Young athletes from small towns, villages and remote regions are increasingly representing India on international platforms. This represents an important democratisation of sport in the country.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sports have increasingly been recognised as an important instrument of youth empowerment and national development. Initiatives such as Khelo India have accelerated the identification of talent and the development of sports infrastructure at the grassroots, school and university levels. Through the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), promising athletes are provided targeted support to enhance their prospects of winning medals at the Olympics. The Khelo India Youth Games and university-level competitions have created valuable competitive platforms for young athletes. Greater emphasis is now being placed on training, nutrition, international exposure, modern equipment, sports science and financial assistance. This indicates that India's sports policy is no longer confined to organising competitions; it is moving towards creating a comprehensive sporting ecosystem—from identifying talent at an early age to developing

athletes capable of competing with the best in the world.

When India celebrates the centenary of its independence in 2047, the vision of a developed India cannot be defined merely by a high GDP, modern infrastructure, advanced technology and world-class cities. The true meaning of a developed India will lie in healthy citizens, energetic youth, a mentally resilient society and a confident nation standing tall on the global stage. Sports will play a decisive role in achieving this vision. Sports can protect young people from substance abuse, sedentary lifestyles and aimlessness. They teach punctuality, goal-setting, perseverance, leadership and the courage to rise again after defeat. A sports field is a school of life, where ability, discipline and performance ultimately determine success. Economic development can become truly meaningful only when it translates into healthy and productive human capital. A fit India is the foundation of a productive India and a stronger India.

The power of sports extends far beyond the playing field. Sports also build bridges across national boundaries and cultures. International competitions create opportunities not only for healthy rivalry but also for mutual respect, friendship and human understanding. When Indian athletes stand on the global podium with the tricolour flying high and the national anthem playing, millions of Indians experience a shared sense of pride and unity. In this sense, sporting achievements also strengthen India's soft power and project the country as a young, confident and talented nation. Yet, India still has a long way to go before it can emerge as a true sporting superpower. Quality playing fields, trained coaches, sports-science centres, nutritional support and modern equipment must reach villages and smaller towns across the country. Sports development must go beyond a handful of popular disciplines and embrace the full spectrum of Olympic sports as well as India's traditional games. Schools need to provide adequate time for physical activity, identify promising talent at an early age and give sports equal dignity alongside academics. Special attention must also be given to women athletes, para-athletes

and talented youngsters from economically weaker sections by ensuring safe, inclusive and equal opportunities.

The most important transformation, however, must take place in our mindset. In sport, defeat is not failure; it is preparation for the next victory. If this attitude becomes part of education and everyday life, India's enormous youth potential can produce extraordinary results. Sports are also creating employment and driving new economic opportunities. Stadiums, sporting equipment, sports technology, fitness industries, broadcasting, tourism, coaching, sports medicine and data analytics are opening new avenues for growth. Sports-based start-ups and technological innovations are also expanding rapidly. Investment in sports, therefore, is not merely expenditure on athletes; it is an investment in future human capital and the emerging sports economy.

National Sports Day gives us an opportunity to make a clear national commitment: Every child should play, every young person should stay fit, and every talent should receive an opportunity to flourish. India needs a sporting culture in which parents do not regard sports as a waste of time, schools do not treat them merely as an extracurricular activity, and society does not celebrate athletes only after they win medals. If India aspires to become one of the world's leading economies by 2047, it must also aspire to become a leading sporting nation. Economic strength and sporting strength are mutually reinforcing. Young people who learn to set and pursue ambitious goals on the playing field develop the confidence and resilience to achieve greater goals in life.

National Sports Day, therefore, is not merely a day to pay homage to Major Dhyan Chand. It is a day to awaken India's youth, make sports an integral part of life and transform sports into a national movement for building a developed India. The brilliance of Dhyan Chand, the determination of Neeraj Chopra, the perseverance of P. V. Sindhu, the confidence of Manu Bhaker and the dreams of thousands of emerging Indian athletes must become part of one collective national resolve. The India of 2047 should not merely be economically prosperous; it should be physically healthy, mentally resilient, disciplined in character and triumphant on the world's sporting fields. That is the true message—and the greater mission—of National Sports Day.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Lalit Garg

Assam's tea economy - present and future

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Tea is one of the Assam's most important economic activities, linking agriculture, rural employment, transport, processing, trade and exports. The tea plant has become deeply connected with Assam's economic identity, particularly in Upper Assam, where districts such as Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Sivasagar and Golaghat have developed strong tea-growing economies. Assam remains the largest tea-producing state in India. According to recent Government of India data, Assam produced 687.76 million kg of tea in 2025, accounting for about 50.20 per cent of India's total tea production. This makes the condition of Assam's tea industry important not only for the state but also for India's overall tea economy. The scale of production also explains why changes in weather, labour costs, market prices and export demand in Assam can influence the wider Indian tea market. The industry has also changed considerably from its traditional plantation structure. Large tea estates remain important, but small tea growers have become a major part of the production system. Government records and recent research show that small growers are now spread across many districts of Assam, with particularly strong concentrations in Upper Assam. This transformation has made tea cultivation more decentralised and has brought thousands of small farmers into a sector that was once dominated by large plantations. For many rural families, tea is not simply a commercial crop but a major source of household income. It also creates employment for workers involved in plucking, field maintenance, transportation, processing, packaging and related activities. The tea economy therefore supports a broad network of livelihoods beyond the boundaries of individual gardens. At the same time, its economic importance creates a serious responsibility for policymakers. A large production figure by itself does not guarantee prosperity. The real strength of Assam's tea economy must be judged by the income received by growers, the wages and living conditions of workers, the productivity of gardens, the quality of tea, the stability of markets and the ability of producers to compete in domestic and international markets. Assam's tea industry has considerable strength, but its future depends on whether this traditional economic foundation can be converted into a more productive, profitable and sustainable modern industry.

One of the most important changes in Assam's tea economy has been the rise of small tea growers. Their expansion has altered the social and economic structure of tea cultivation in the state. The Assam government describes small tea cultivation as an emerging sector in which farmers, including many young people, have entered commercial tea production on relatively small plots of land. Recent research has found small tea growers across 27 districts, with large concentrations in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Sivasagar and Golaghat. This development has created new opportunities for rural entrepreneurship. A farmer does not necessarily require a large colonial-era estate to participate in the tea economy. A few acres can become a productive tea garden if the farmer has suitable land, planting material, technical knowledge, labour and access to a processing facility. However, the small-grower model also exposes the weaknesses of the existing value chain. Most small growers produce green leaf but do not possess their own processing facilities. They therefore depend heavily on bought-leaf factories or larger gardens for processing and marketing. The Assam government itself notes that small growers commonly sell their green leaves to nearby large plantations and bought-leaf factories. This creates an unequal relationship because the farmer bears many cultivation risks while having limited control over processing, branding and final marketing. Recent studies have identified price volatility, erratic weather, forced sales and the influence of intermediaries among the major difficulties facing small growers. Labour costs and shortages of skilled workers are also becoming important constraints. The economic challenge is therefore not simply to increase the number of small tea gardens. The priority should be to improve their productivity and bargaining capacity. Farmer Producer Organisations, self-help groups, cooperative processing units and small modern tea factories can help growers move further up the value chain.



The Government of India's Tea Development and Promotion Scheme specifically supports the formation of SHGs and FPOs among small growers and provides assistance for mini tea factories. If implemented effectively, such measures can help transform small growers from suppliers of low-value green leaf into producers with greater control over processing, quality and market access.

The biggest weakness in Assam's tea economy is the gap between production and profitability. Tea is a labour-intensive crop, and its economic performance depends heavily on the cost and availability of labour. Traditional tea estates also carry substantial responsibilities related to worker housing, healthcare, education and other welfare measures. These responsibilities are important and should not be treated simply as business costs because the social structure of plantation communities has been built around them. At the same time, rising input costs, ageing bushes, declining productivity in some gardens and changing climatic conditions put pressure on producers. The experience of 2024 demonstrated the seriousness of the climate challenge. Assam produced 649.84 million kg of tea in 2024, down from 688.33 million kg in 2023. Heatwaves and floods affected production during the harvesting season, contributing to the national decline in tea output. Tea bushes are particularly sensitive to changes in rainfall and temperature because the quality and quantity of fresh shoots depend on weather conditions. Excessive rain can disrupt plucking and transportation, while prolonged heat and drought can reduce growth and damage plant health. Climate change therefore represents a direct economic risk for Assam's tea industry. The response cannot be limited to short-term relief after extreme weather events. Gardens require better water management, drainage, soil conservation, shade management, climate-resilient planting material and improved agricultural practices. Research and extension services have an important role in this transition. Institutions such as the Tocklai Tea Research Institute and Assam Agricultural University have historically contributed to scientific research and technical support for tea cultivation. The next stage should focus more strongly on climate adaptation, precision agriculture, efficient use of fertilisers and water, pest management and rejuvenation of old plantations. Productivity also matters because higher production per hectare can reduce the pressure created by rising costs. Recent research on small tea growers in Assam found positive relationships between production and the use of key agricultural inputs, while also identifying resource gaps that affect productivity. A stronger tea economy therefore re-

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quires a combination of better technology, better farm management and better labour productivity rather than an exclusive focus on expanding cultivated area.

Market conditions present another major challenge. Assam produces large quantities of tea, but producing a commodity and building a strong brand are two different economic activities. Assam tea has global recognition, yet a considerable portion of the industry still operates within a commodity-oriented market where prices can fluctuate sharply. India's overall tea

export performance improved in 2024. The country exported 254.67 million kg of tea during the year, compared with 231.69 million kg in 2023, while export value increased to about ₹7,111 crore. More recent government figures indicate that India exported 262.98 million kg of tea worth ₹7,817.58 crore in 2024-25. These figures show that international demand remains an important opportunity. However, Assam cannot depend only on increasing export volume. The future lies in obtaining better prices through quality, product differentiation and stronger branding. Assam is particularly well placed to develop premium orthodox tea, specialty tea, organic tea and other high-value products alongside the large CTC segment. Government data notes that CTC tea dominates domestic consumption, while orthodox, green and specialty teas occupy strategically important positions in export markets. This provides a clear direction for diversification. Assam's tea identity can be strengthened through geographical branding, traceability, quality certification, modern packaging and direct access to consumers. The Guwahati Tea Auction Centre and other marketing institutions remain important, but digital commerce has opened additional possibilities for producers who can build strong brands. A small tea grower who sells only green leaf remains vulnerable to local price fluctuations. A producer who processes, packages and markets a distinctive finished tea can potentially capture a much larger share of the final value. This does not mean that every grower should independently establish a factory. Collective processing and marketing through FPOs, cooperatives and producer groups can provide economies of scale. Assam's tea economy must gradually move from a volume-driven model towards a value-driven model. The state has a natural advantage in the reputation of its tea, but reputation alone cannot guarantee income. Quality must be consistently maintained, and the economic benefits of that quality must reach growers and workers.

The future of Assam's tea economy ultimately depends on balancing production, profitability, labour welfare, environmental sustainability and market competitiveness. The industry cannot remain dependent on its historical reputation while ignoring structural changes in agriculture and global markets. Assam's tea gardens face competition from other producing regions, rising production costs, climate uncertainty and changing consumer preferences. At the same time, the state possesses considerable advantages: a globally recognised tea identity, a large production base, experienced workers, research institutions, established processing infrastructure and a growing community of small growers. The government has already recognised the importance of strengthening productivity, quality, exports and producer organisations. Under the Tea Development and Promotion Scheme, the Tea Board reported allocation of ₹152.76 crore for Assam-specific activities during 2021-22 to 2025-26, with ₹150.20 crore utilised up to October 2025. The next challenge is effective implementation and ensuring that assistance reaches the people who actually produce the tea. Small growers require easier access to institutional credit, planting material, technical advice, insurance and reliable markets. Workers require decent wages, secure living conditions, healthcare, education and social protection. Large gardens require support for technological modernisation while maintaining their social responsibilities. Environmental sustainability must become part of the core business model rather than an additional concern. Assam can also use tea tourism, heritage gardens, specialty tea experiences and direct-to-consumer marketing to connect the economic value of tea with the state's cultural identity. The objective should not simply be to produce more kilograms of tea. It should be to create greater value from every kilogram produced and distribute that value more fairly across the chain. Tea has given Assam a distinctive place in India's economic and cultural landscape. The future of this economy will be decided by how successfully the state combines its traditional strengths with scientific agriculture, responsible labour practices, climate resilience, modern processing and stronger branding. Assam's tea economy has already demonstrated its scale. The more important task now is to ensure that this scale produces stable livelihoods, competitive businesses and sustainable rural development for the generations that will inherit the tea gardens.

Welcome to the age of extreme job anxiety

By: Zoe Williams

The personal experience of long-term unemployment is one people rarely share, for completely understandable reasons. There's a bit of superstition that saying it out loud will bed it in, and there's always one person in 100 who will choose to explain away the misfortune as your own personal failing.

Even if they're clearly in the grip of superstitions of their own – trying to ward off your fate for themselves – it's hard not to take criticism personally in such a personal situation. The conventions of human interaction are that you shouldn't really mention a cloud unless you have a silver lining handy. For instance: after the financial crash in 2008, I remember hearing a couple interviewed on the radio who had both been made redundant when the private school they worked for closed down. After describing months of fruitless job applications, the wife ended saying they'd been able to spend much more time in their allotment,

and she reckoned their rocket yield alone had saved them a small fortune. That, I thought, is a remarkable and yet probably universal commitment to looking on the bright side.

So when someone breaks the omertà – as Stacey Duguid did on Instagram three weeks ago – the conversation explodes like any that's been waiting a long time to happen.

Duguid, 52, after a varied and high-achieving career in fashion and journalism, has spent more than a year sending out 150 job applications, many of which don't even get replies. When she said that out loud, thousands of women messaged her with similar experiences. Accordingly, it has been taken as an "older woman" or, more bluntly, a perimenopause story, which is borne out by the data – 30% of women aged 50 to 64 are economically inactive in the UK, against 22% of men – but I'd want to see more field work before I'd settle for hormones as the main reason.

Age-wise, this is also peak time for

the "sandwich years". They're called that to describe a person trapped between childcare and elderly parents, and the term is not especially accurate, since childcare and end-of-life care are as different from one another as two bits of bread are similar. But as euphemisms go, it works, because what could be more practical and manageable than a sandwich?

By contrast, keeping regular working hours while remaining available for the sudden and irregular crises that attend the end of a life is completely impossible. My sister quit her job while our mum was dying, and it was only because she did that I didn't have to. In other words: yes, the gender split makes sense, but no, more HRT probably isn't the silver bullet, and don't even start looking for a lining. This is a silver-free scenario.

A man sitting in an office, holding a box of red tools with shelves full of books behind him

'You can't make billions without hurting people': Cory Doctorow on Elon

Musk, the AI bubble and bosses' cruel fantasies

For many at the start of their careers, things are just as bad. Government analysis last month insisted that entry-level positions were declining in line with the rest of the job market, but the general feeling that AI is wiping out starter jobs is backed up by research. The sectors worst hit are the most AI-friendly – software engineers, accountants, legal assistants, data analysts. A year ago, figures showed new graduate vacancies had dropped by a third since the arrival of ChatGPT. Applicants themselves describe the harrowing experience of being rejected in less than the time it would have taken for any human to read their application – in other words, by AI.

This creates a pipeline problem for employers, who will eventually land in a world where there's no one to fill the middle tier of their staff hierarchy with the experience of having done the grunt work at the bottom. But being able to say "serves you right", not even to a person



but to a sector, lacks some quality of emotional satisfaction.

Can ageism be the issue, in a system that punishes the workforce at both ends, and traps everyone who has a job in a terrorised, scarcity mindset? Is AI really on the brink of making all human endeavour obsolete, or have AI companies just made some vast claims for it that shortsighted employers are choosing to believe, ultimately at their own expense? We'll never find out in generational or gender silos, and the code of silence isn't helping, either. It's important to keep your skills updated, the employment coaches always say – the trait this modern world demands is openness. Only in talking about worklessness does it become clear: it's not a you problem, it's an everyone problem. (Courtesy: The Guardian)

Assam Veterinary Recruitment 2026 – 200 Veterinary Field Assistant (VFA) Posts

Name of Post	Veterinary Field Assistant (VFA)
No of Posts	200 posts
Qualification	HSSLC (Science) passed with Biology
Age Limit	18 to 40 years
Application Fee	Nil
Start Date	3rd September 2026
Last Date	23rd September 2026

Assam Veterinary Recruitment 2026

Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, Assam has released a recruitment notification for the recruitment of 200 Veterinary Field Assistant (VFA) and its allied cadre posts under the Directorate of A.H. & Vety, Deptt. Assam, Guwahati-3. Candidates having HSSLC (Science) passed with Biology subject can apply for these posts latest by 23rd September 2026.

Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for detailed official notification, educational qualification, age limit, salary details, and application procedure to be followed.

Assam Veterinary Vacancy Details

Name of post: Veterinary Field Assistant (VFA) and its allied cadre posts
No of posts: 200 posts
Advertisement No: E-543943/71 Dated 27th August 2026
Name of Department: Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, Assam
Name of Directorate: Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Assam, Chenikuthi, Guwahati-03

Scale of Pay: Pay Band of Rs. 14,000/- 70,000/- + Grade Pay of Rs. 6,200/- plus other allowances as admissible from time to time.

Category-wise Vacancy Break Up

Category	No of posts
Unreserved	112
OBC/MOBC	73
SC	5
ST(P)	10
ST(H)	Nil
Total posts	200

If you are looking for other VFA Recruitment in Assam, you may visit our page of KAAC VFA Recruitment.

Eligibility Criteria of Assam Veterinary Recruitment

Citizenship: The candidate must be an Indian Citizen as defined in Article 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India and must be a permanent resident of the State of Assam. As proof of domicile, the candidate must upload a copy of a valid Permanent Resident Certificate issued in Assam for educational purposes.

Age Limit

Age of the candidates should not be less than 18 years and not more than 40 years of age as on 01.01.2026. Candidates may note that the age of the candidates will be calculated on the basis of the HSLC Pass Certificate/HSLC Admit Card/Certificate issued by a recognized Central/State Board/Council where age/date of birth is clearly reflected. No other documents shall be accepted in lieu thereof for the purpose.

Age Relaxation: Permissible relaxations in upper age limit for different categories are as under:

Category	Age Relaxation
SC / ST	5 years
OBC-NCL	3 years
PwBD	10 years
Ex-serviceman	2 years

Educational Qualification

Candidates need to pass HSSLC (Science) with Biology as a subject from any recognized Board/ Council/University.

Application Fee

There is no application fee for candidates belonging to any category. Candidates can submit their online applications free of cost.

Selection Process

To select eligible candidates for recruitment to the post of Veterinary Field Assistant or an equivalent post, an OMR-based written examination will be conducted. The exam will have a duration of 120 minutes and will carry 100 marks, consisting of 100 questions covering the following subjects:

Paper	Subject	Marks
1	Biology	40
2	Chemistry	20
3	Physics	20
4	General Awareness	20

The standard of questions will be of HSSLC (Science) level.

Mandatory One Year Training

Selected candidates will be required to undergo one year of mandatory training in Elementary Knowledge of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science at the School of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Assam, Ghungoor, Silchar, or its extended campuses under the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department. Candidates must successfully complete and pass the training before they can be appointed to the post.

How to Apply for Assam Veterinary Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these posts by visiting Official Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for VFA Posts.

- Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section.
- Click on the "Online Application Form".
- Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.
- Now review the entire form to ensure accuracy of submitted data.
- At the end, submit the application form and take a print out of the application form.

Important Dates of Assam VFA Recruitment 2026

- Starting date of submission of application: 3rd September 2026, 10 AM
- Last date of submission of application: 23rd September 2026, 11.59 PM

MSSV Nagaon Recruitment 2026 – 19 Faculty Posts

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya (MSSV), Nagaon has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 19 Faculty Posts for the Four-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) - B.A. B.Ed. and B.Sc. B.Ed. at Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya (MSSV), Raidongia, Nagaon, Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for information related to educational qualification, experience, salary structure, etc and apply here.

MSSV Nagaon Vacancy Details

1. Head of the Department (HOD) (Professor/Associate Professor in Education)
No of posts: 1

Eligibility Criteria:

- (i) Postgraduate degree in Sciences or Mathematics or Social Sciences or Languages.
- (ii) M.Ed.
- (iii) Ph.D. in Education
- (iv) Ten years of teaching experience in a teacher education institution for Professor and eight years for Associate Professor.

2. Assistant Professor (Liberal Discipline & Pedagogy)

No of posts: 12

Eligibility Criteria:

- (i) Post-Graduate degree in Sciences (Physics or Chemistry or Botany or Zoology or Life Sciences or Bioscience) or Mathematics or Social Sciences (History or Geography or Political Science or Economics) or Languages (English or Modern Indian Languages or Classical Languages) with minimum fifty-five percent marks or its equivalent grade.
- (ii) B.Ed. degree with minimum fifty-five percent marks or equivalent grade.
- (iii) National Eligibility Test or State Level Eligibility Test or Doctor of Philosophy in Education or in the concerned subject as prescribed by the University Grants Commission for these categories of posts.

3. Assistant Professor (Educational Studies)

No of posts: 4

Eligibility Criteria:

- (i) Postgraduate degree in Education (M.Ed.) with minimum fifty-five percent marks or equivalent grade
- (ii) With National Eligibility Test or State Level Eligibility Test or Doctor of Philosophy in Education or another qualification prescribed by University Grants Commission for these categories of posts.

4. Assistant Professor (Health & Physical Education)

No of posts: 1

Eligibility Criteria: M.P.Ed. with minimum 55% marks.

5. Assistant Professor (Art Education)

No of posts: 1

Eligibility Criteria: Postgraduate Degree in Performing Arts/Visual Arts with minimum 55% marks.

How to Apply for MSSV Nagaon Recruitment?

Candidates should send their duly filled-in application in the prescribed format, along with self-attested copies of all relevant certificates and mark sheets, experience certificates, proof of date of birth, caste certificate (where applicable), and any other relevant testimonials

The duly filled-in application in the prescribed format, along with all supporting documents, should reach the following address:-

To,
The Registrar,
Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya(MSSV),
Haladhar Bhuyan Path, Kalongpar,Nagaon – 782001,
Assam, India.

The envelope containing the application should be superscribed as: "Application for the Post of _____ for Four-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya(MSSV)" OR

Candidates may also submit their application by email. The application, along with all supporting documents, should be scanned and combined into a single PDF file and sent to armssvnagaon@gmail.com.

The subject line of the email should be: "Application for the Post of _____ for Four-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya(MSSV)".

Important Dates of MSSV Nagaon Vacancy 2026

- Starting date of submission of application: 26th August 2026
- Last date of submission of application: 3rd September 2026

Assam Anganwadi Recruitment 2026 – 31 Anganwadi Worker & Helper Posts @ Hojai

Office of the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), ICDS, Jugijan, Hojai has released a recruitment notification for the recruitment of 31 Anganwadi Worker and Anganwadi Helper (Sahayika) vacancy in various Anganwadi centres. Any 10th and 12th pass candidates can apply for these posts latest by 31st August 2026.

Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for detailed official notification, educational qualification, age limit, salary details, and application procedure to be followed. Last date of submission of application for these posts is 30th September 2026.

Anganwadi Vacancy Details

1. Anganwadi Worker

No of posts: 15 posts

Educational Qualification: Candidates must have passed Higher Secondary (Class 12th). If HS passed candidates not available in a particular area, then HSLC/AHM passed candidates will also be considered as eligible.

Remuneration: As per Govt. rules.

2. Anganwadi Helper

No of posts: 16 posts

Educational Qualification: Candidates must have passed HSLC/ AHM. If HSLC/AHM passed candidates not available in a particular area, then Class IX passed

candidates will also be considered as eligible.

Remuneration: As per Govt. rules.

Other Criteria of Anganwadi Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates age should be between 18 years to 44 years as on 1st January 2026.

Resident-ship: The candidate who apply for the post of Anganwadi Worker/ Anganwadi Helper shall be a permanent resident residing in the concerned Anganwadi Centre survey area where Anganwadi Centre is located.

The residential proof of the candidate for the post of Anganwadi Worker/ Anganwadi Helper must be issued by the Gaon Pradhan/ Ward Member/ President of local Gaon Panchayat.

How to Apply for Assam Anganwadi Recruitment ?

Applicant must submit their applications in the prescribed application form for which the office of the Child Development Project Officer, ICDS, Jugijan, Hojai may be contacted.

The filled up application will be received in the office of the Child Development Project Officer, ICDS, Jugijan between 11 AM to 3 PM till 31st August 2026.

Documents to be Submitted With Application Form

Candidates have to submit the attested copies of the following mentioned documents along with the filled application form as required.

Educational Qualification Certificates and Marksheets.

Residency Certificate. # Address Proof.

Age Proof.

Medical certificate by Govt. Medical Practitioner.

Caste Certificate (If Applicable).

Recent Passport Size Photograph.

Disability Certificate (If Applicable).

Experience Certificate (If Applicable).

Important Dates of Anganwadi Worker Hojai Recruitment 2026

Starting date of submission of application: 17th August 2026

Last date of submission of application: 31st August 2026

Selection Process of Anganwadi Recruitment

The selection of Anganwadi Worker and Anganwadi Helper (Sahayika) will be completed based on their merit i.e. HSLC/HSSLC score and interview as prescribed within departmental rules and regulations. Candidates are suggested to keep in touch and check official notice board regularly as the list of valid applicants and date of interview/ exam (as applicable if any) may be displayed on the office notice board only.

Dr. Radhakrishnan School Dibrugarh Recruitment – 15 Posts

Dr. Radhakrishnan School of Arts, Commerce and Science, Dibrugarh has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 15 Faculty and other posts. Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for detailed official notification, educational qualification, age limit, salary details, and application procedure to be followed.

It is an excellent opportunity for the candidates looking for Private Jobs in Dibrugarh, Private Jobs in Assam, School Jobs in Assam, Warden Jobs in Assam, etc

Candidates may submit their applications on or before 07th September 2026 through online or offline, in both modes.

Dr. Radhakrishnan School Dibrugarh Recruitment Details

1. VICE PRINCIPAL

No of posts: 01

Salary: Commensurate with qualification and experience.

Educational Qualification: Postgraduate degree from a recognized university.

Experience: Minimum 5–8 years of relevant experience in school education, preferably with experience in a leadership/administrative position. Experience in a CBSE school will be preferred.

2. TGT SCIENCE

No of posts: 02

Pay: 12,000/- to 35,000/-(Salary will be commensurate with MERIT and EXPERIENCE)

Educational Qualification: M.Sc in Physics / Chemistry / Biology D.El.Ed / B.Ed Degree should be must.

Experience: 2-3 years in teaching III to VI Classes

3. TGT COMPUTER SCIENCE & A.I.

No of posts: 02

Pay: 12,000/- to 35,000/-(Salary will be commensurate with MERIT and EXPERIENCE)

Educational Qualification: B.Tech / B.E / M.Tech / M.Sc / MCA in Computer Science. D.El.Ed / B.Ed Degree should be must.

Experience: 2-3 years in teaching III to VI Classes.

4. HR EXECUTIVE

No of posts: 02

Pay: 10,000/- to 25,000/-(Salary will be commensurate with MERIT and EXPERIENCE)

Educational Qualification: MBA in Human Resource.

Experience: 2-3 years in the field of HR.

5. WARDEN

No of posts: 04

Pay: 9,000/- to 20,000/-(Salary will be commensurate with MERIT and EXPERIENCE)

Educational Qualification: Graduate in any discipline.

Gender: Male

6. WARDEN

No of posts: 04

Pay: 9,000/- to 20,000/-(Salary will be commensurate with MERIT and EXPERIENCE)

Educational Qualification: Graduate in any discipline.

Gender: Female

Application Fee: Nil.

How to Apply for Dr Radhakrishnan School Dibrugarh Recruitment ?

Potential candidates having the requisite qualification & experience can submit their (CVs) using following email id or submit the same at the front office of Dr. Radhakrishnan School of Arts, Commerce & Science, Amolapatty, Dibrugarh, Assam – 786001 on or before 07th September 2026.

Email id: hrrkschool@gmail.com

'For those fulminating in outrage', Tharoor clarifies 'drama' remark in Nepal floods post

'But I do regret the choice of a word that could be so easily misinterpreted'

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: Panned for using the word "drama" in a post on the Nepal flash floods, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Friday clarified that the term is also defined as "a state, situation or series of events involving intensely clashing forces" and that is the sense in which he intended it.

Tharoor, however, said he regrets the choice of a word that could be so easily "misinterpreted".

"For all those fulminating in outrage about my use of the word 'drama' in my first tweet from Nepal, the word does not only mean something theatrical. It is also defined as 'a state, situation or series of events involving intensely clashing forces'," the Thiruvananthapuram MP said on X.

"That's the sense in which I intended it. But I do regret the choice of a word that could be so easily misinterpreted," Tharoor said.

His remarks came a day after he was panned for describing the



Nepal flash floods as "drama that had taken place in the hills" and overlooking the nuance of the words.

The comment led to a veritable backlash on social media, with one post questioning the "poor choice of words for someone with such a rich vocabulary" and others labelling him insensitive.

Expressing concern over the disaster in an X post on Thursday, Tharoor said, "Took off for Kathmandu yesterday, blissfully un-

aware of the drama that had taken place in the hills and caused such catastrophic damage."

He went on to say, "A severe, sudden flash flood struck northern Nepal's Rasuwa district near the Tibet border, causing widespread destruction along the Bhothe Koshi and Trishuli rivers. Global warming and/or an earthquake in Tibet may have caused a large chunk of a glacier to break off and fall into the valley below, experts surmise."

The Thiruvananthapuram MP had said he learned on arrival about the loss of life and the fact that some 2,000 or more people are estimated to be missing.

Raging floodwaters destroyed at least 19 motorable bridges, washed away roughly 40 kilometres of the Betrawati Rasuwagadhi highway, and heavily damaged eight operational hydropower projects, Tharoor had said.

"I fully support the Indian government's immediate pledge of relief assistance. Nepal needs all the help it can get," he had said.

"My heart goes out to the victims and their loved ones, who include large numbers of Indian tourists, including a hundred performing the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra. Prayers for the missing; may they be rescued soon," the Congress leader had said.

Notwithstanding the larger message, many social media users picked on his use of words, "blissfully unaware of the drama that had taken place in the hills". (PTI)

Abhishek Banerjee rules out TMC return for 'traitors' who crossed over to dissident factions

KOLKATA, Aug 28: TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Friday said not a single "traitor", who crossed over to the dissident factions to "protect their backs", will be allowed to return to the party.

Addressing a rally, organised on the occasion of the foundation day of Trinamool Chhatra Parishad, the party's students' wing, Banerjee also highlighted the importance of "youth power" to alter the course of national politics and asserted that students of the country have forced 'Delhi zamindars' to bow before their might.

"Although our supreme leader Mamata Banerjee has the final say on the matter, I say this with utmost conviction: Not a single traitor who flourished under the TMC and left the hands of our workers in these testing times to save their backs will be allowed to return to our party," the leader said, endorsing an earlier appeal made in his speech by party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh.

"Those who joined the "BC" (Balish-Chata, literally "pillow-lacking", indicating the Ritabrata



Banerjee-led dissident faction in the state Assembly) group to protect themselves and are now enjoying perks from BJP would receive no concessions from us in future," he added.

Banerjee's remarks assumed greater significance following the recent notices issued by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to 20 rebel TMC MPs who had merged with the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI).

The MPs have been asked to respond within seven days to the disqualification petition filed by Diamond Harbour MP under the anti-defection provisions of the Constitution.

The notices were served on Tuesday, coinciding with the Supreme Court's decision to issue notices to the MPs in connection with Abhishek Banerjee's plea seeking a time-bound direction for the Speaker to decide on their disqualification. In a veiled attack on the BJP, Banerjee stressed the role of the students in taking on "anti-people policies" of regimes at both the Centre and the state.

"The country has entered such a phase where students' agitations have rocked the nation. The zamindars of Delhi have been practically forced to bow their heads before the might of students and youth," he said. (PTI)

Punjab govt employees burn CM Mann's effigy over 'refusal' to hold meeting

HOSHIARPUR (PUNJAB), Aug 28: Punjab government employees on Friday burnt an effigy of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and raised slogans against him in Hoshiarpur to protest his alleged "indifferent attitude" and refusal to meet with employee representatives, union leaders said.

The protest was organised outside the civil surgeon's office by the Joint Coordination Committee, formed by the Punjab Employees and Pensioners Joint Front and the Sanjha Mulazim Manch, Punjab.

The protesting employees also burnt copies of a government letter issued regarding the mass casual leave observed by employees on August 27, as well as copies of a post on X made by the chief minister on Thursday, in which he said that holding a meeting and continuing a protest could not take place simultaneously, the leaders said.

Addressing the protesters, the union leaders criticised what they described as Mann's "arrogant attitude" towards employees and demanded the immediate

implementation of the Punjab and Haryana High Court's decision regarding payment of dearness allowance (DA). They also demanded that the government resolve the other demands listed in their memorandum, they said.

The leaders expressed gratitude for the large turnout of employees during the protest and the mass casual leave on August 27.

On Thursday, work was affected in various government departments and OPD services remained suspended in public hospitals in Punjab as over three lakh government employees went on a statewide strike pressing for their demands that included release of pending dearness allowance.

A scheduled meeting between Chief Minister Mann and representatives of the employees' bodies in Jalandhar was cancelled after he made it clear to the protesting employees that talks would be held only when they call off their strike.

The employees refused to call off their strike, insisting on holding an unconditional meeting. (PTI)

Nepal flash floods tragedy should serve as warning for Kashmir valley, says Mirwaiz

SRINAGAR, Aug 28: Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Friday said the Nepal tragedy should serve as a warning, and called for urgent protection of the valley's "fragile ecology" by creating a balance between development and environmental preservation.

Addressing the Friday congregation at the historic Jamia Masjid here, Farooq said the devastation being witnessed in Nepal and across the Himalayan region should deeply concern all.

"These are not isolated events. They are warnings of how vulnerable our mountain ecosystems have become as glaciers collapse."

"We express our heartfelt solidarity with the people of Nepal at this difficult time, and pray for those who have lost their lives, for the safety and early recovery of the many people who remain missing, and for strength and relief for all those affected," he said.

The Mirwaiz said Jammu and Kashmir is part of the same fragile Himalayan belt.

"We are already seeing more intense rainfall, cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides. Climate change is undoubtedly a major factor, but we must also ask



whether our own pattern of development is making the situation more dangerous".

He said that gifted with the natural beauty of mountains, lakes and rivers, Kashmir attracts tourists and travellers and is a source of sustenance to a large population here.

"But the manner in which we are recklessly exploiting this ecology for commerce and in the name of development is very worrying. Mountains are being cut and blasted for roads, trees are being felled, hotels and buildings are coming up in ecologically sensitive areas and natural drainage channels are being disturbed."

"If this continues without proper scientific and environmental safeguards, we are creating conditions for far greater disasters in the future," he said.

Equally worrying is the continued encroachment of wetlands, lakes and flood channels, he said.

"I appeal to people not to occupy or build upon these areas. Wetlands are not unused land; they are natural buffers that absorb excess water and protect human settlements," he added.

Referring to the famous Dal Lake, the Mirwaiz said that its condition tells all how prolonged encroachment, construction and environmental neglect can damage a precious natural system.

"It is shrinking day by day while we look the other way as if it's no concern of ours," he said.

He asserted that it is a matter of serious collective responsibility.

"Authorities, planners, businesses and citizens all have to recognise that in a fragile Himalayan region development for infrastructure and tourism carries serious consequences. We have to strike a balance between ecological preservation and human intervention in the name of progress," he said. (PTI)

One-year extension to learn Marathi removes livelihood threat, say taxi, auto unions

MUMBAI, Aug 28: Autorickshaw and taxi unions on Friday welcomed the Maharashtra government's decision to grant them a year to acquire working knowledge of Marathi, saying the extension removes the immediate threat to their livelihoods.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced the timeline extension after a delegation met him at the Sahyadri Guest House on Thursday, halting immediate action against non-Marathi drivers and giving them more time to learn the language.

Notably, the announcement came a day after Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde handed certificates to around 20,000 autorickshaw and taxi drivers who had completed a language course in Mumbai.

The BJP-led state government had announced in April that non-Marathi drivers must learn basic Marathi, and set a deadline of August 15 while organising Marathi classes for them.

Prem Singh, leader of the Mumbai Taximen's Association, said the one-year extension would give taxi drivers sufficient time to acquire working knowledge of Marathi.

He said many taxi drivers were over 60 years of age and found it difficult to learn the language within a short period, although several of them already understood Marathi well.

"Now that they know it is mandatory, they will acquire the required skill within a year. As a union, we will also make arrangements to help drivers learn the language," Singh said. (PTI)

SC panel expresses dismay over VC's 'failure' to attend hearing

KOLKATA, Aug 28: The National Commission for Scheduled Castes has written to Visva-Bharati Vice Chancellor Provir Kumar Ghosh, expressing dismay over his "failure" to appear before it in connection with alleged irregularities in the implementation of reservation policy in the recruitment process, a varsity official said on Friday.

According to the letter, a hearing was convened on August 20 before NCST member Dr Partha Biswas in connection with the alleged lapses in the reservation policy implementation for the appointment of a deputy registrar.

"The vice-chancellor was asked to appear before the commission, but he could not attend the scheduled hearing. Other administrative-level officials of the central university were present there," the varsity official said.

The letter, dated August 27, was addressed to the vice-chancellor and the additional secretary of the higher education department, he said.



The commission said the vice chancellor's absence from the hearing had been viewed "very seriously" by its member.

It directed the authorities concerned to ensure the personal appearance of the VC before the commission on the next date of hearing.

Asked about the next hearing, the university official said the date has not been intimated by the commission.

The NCSC cautioned the vice

chancellor to take the matter seriously and ensure "strict compliance" with the directions.

The commission warned that in the event of non-compliance, the panel may exercise its "powers under Article 338(8) of the Constitution of India, including powers of a civil court to summon and enforce the attendance of persons and require the production of documents and records before it".

The Visva-Bharati spokesperson confirmed that the VC's office had received the communication from the NCSC but maintained that the "recruitment decision was made in the presence of all members of the board and not unilaterally by the VC".

"Representatives of the Centre were present during the interview process for the recruitment of a deputy registrar. Our recruitment process was transparent. The VC might have been preoccupied, and he could not attend the commission's hearing. But representatives from the university were present during the hearing," he said.

The varsity spokesperson said once the letter has come, the central university will respond to the commission in accordance with law. Complainant Liton Biswas claimed that the deputy registrar post was reserved for the Scheduled Caste category and the recruitment process "lacked transparency".

Biswas told PTI that the varsity authorities had not responded to the summons of a "constitutional body like the NCSC commission". (PTI)

Ladakh LG orders crackdown on food safety violations; warns 8,800 FBOs

LEH/JAMMU, Aug 28: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has ordered a strict crackdown on food safety violations across the union territory of Ladakh, warning nearly 8,800 food business operators (FBOs) of stringent action, including penalties of up to ₹ 10 lakh and imprisonment in serious cases, officials said.

The directive, aimed at safeguarding public health and ensuring compliance with statutory food safety standards, was issued by the administration on the directions of Saxena. Ladakh has 428 FSSAI licence holders and 8,355 FSSAI registration holders, they said.

The administration has made it mandatory for all FBOs to comply with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and ensure that food manufactured, processed, stored, transported, distributed or sold in Ladakh is safe, wholesome and conforms to prescribed standards, they said.

"Food safety is not merely a regulatory requirement; it is a fundamental responsibility towards the health and well-being of every cit-



izen. Every Food Business Operator must ensure that the food served to our people is safe, hygienic and of the prescribed standard. There will be zero tolerance for any such violations that put public health at risk," Saxena said.

He, however, stressed that enforcement would remain fair, transparent and firmly grounded in law. All restaurants, hotels, eateries and other food businesses have been prohibited from manufacturing, storing or selling food that is unsafe, sub-standard, misbranded, adulterated, contaminated or beyond its shelf life or expiry date.

The FBOs have been directed to obtain and prominently display valid FSSAI licences or registrations, maintain prescribed hygiene

and sanitary standards, prevent cross-contamination, ensure safe storage of food and raw materials, maintain appropriate temperature and cold-chain conditions, use potable water and ensure proper waste disposal and pest control.

They have also been asked to use food-grade equipment, utensils and packaging material, maintain records and documentation, procure ingredients from reliable and legal sources and comply with applicable labelling requirements.

Licensed FBOs must maintain and implement an appropriate Food Safety Management System (FSMS), while food handlers are required to maintain high standards of personal hygiene and undergo appropriate food safety and hygiene training.

The Food Safety Department has been instructed to intensify inspections, sampling and analysis of food, and undertake seizure or detention of food articles, prohibition on sale or distribution of unsafe food and suspension or cancellation of licences wherever legally warranted. (PTI)

'Murder of freedom of expression': Cong leaders slam Penguin India on Sonia memoir row

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: Several Congress leaders on Friday lashed out at Penguin Random House India, asking what is preventing it from publishing Sonia Gandhi's memoir in India when it is being published worldwide by its imprint and wondered whether there was any "pressure" from the government.

They also said the publisher's "refusal" to publish the autobiography is a "murder of freedom of expression" and a matter of grave concern.

Their reaction came after Penguin Random House India issued a statement saying it is not the publisher of Gandhi's memoir "Belonging: A Journey of Love".

Earlier this month, American publisher Alfred A Knopf, an imprint of Penguin Random House, announced that the book would be released on November 10.

"Penguin Random House India is not the publisher of Belonging in India. Any suggestion

that Penguin Random House India decided not to publish Belonging because the author declined editorial changes does not accurately reflect the circumstances," Penguin India said.

Its statement followed a report in the Indian Express which claimed that the publisher backed out after Gandhi refused "editorial changes" to the manuscript.

Reacting to the development, senior Congress leader and former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot said the Penguin Worldwide Company is ready to print Gandhi's upcoming book in its original form across the world, but Penguin Random House India wants to make changes to launch it in India.

"After all, what is this reason or pressure that prevents them from printing in India what is being printed worldwide? Mrs. Sonia Gandhi Ji's life is an example of sacrifice and dedication. (PTI)

BJP leaders flay suspension of govt teachers for participating in RSS route march

HUBBALLI, Aug 28: Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Friday accused the Karnataka government of acting with "hatred" in suspending two government school teachers for participating in RSS route marches, and demanded that the action be withdrawn.

Backing the action, state Home Minister Priyank Kharge sought to know why the government teachers participated in the event of an "unregistered organisation", apparently referring to the RSS.

Joshi also questioned the government's priorities, asking whether it should focus on tracing missing IAS officer Jnanendra Kumar Gangwar, who is wanted in alleged large scale irregularities in Karnataka Public Service Commission, instead of suspending the teachers.

"Today, IAS officer Jnanendra Kumar Gangwar is missing. Is the government's job to catch him, or is it to suspend two teachers for participating in the activities of the RSS," Joshi told reporters here.

The Education Department had suspended two teachers from Yadgi district—Gururaj Joshi and Anna Saheb Deshmukh for attending the RSS route march pending departmental inquiry.

The department held that their participation in RSS Patha Sanchalana prima facie violated provisions of the Karnataka Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 2021.

Joshi said courts had previously struck down attempts to restrict government employees from participating in RSS activities. (PTI)

Delhi LG Sandhu, CM Rekha Gupta celebrate Raksha Bandhan, greet people on festival

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: Delhi Lieutenant Governor TS Sandhu and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta celebrated Raksha Bandhan on Friday and greeted people.

Gupta celebrated Raksha Bandhan with children living on the streets at the Mukhyamantri Jan Sewa Sadan and interacted with them, listening to their dreams and aspirations.

According to an official statement, the children tied rakhis to Gupta during the interaction.

The chief minister interacted with the children about their education, interests, and future goals. She assured them of the Delhi government's support for their education and overall well-being.

The chief minister emphasised that every child should have the opportunity to dream and receive the necessary support to achieve those aspirations. Officials said they admitted some of the children in the group to schools on the officials' instructions.

"This sacred festival of affection, trust, and duty is the strength of our fa-



miliar values. May this holy bond bring happiness, prosperity, and warmth to every home, and may the love between brothers and sisters remain forever unbreakable," Gupta said in a post on X and greeted people.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Sandhu celebrated the festival at Lok Niwas, where female personnel from his security team tied rakhi to him.

"A touching moment at Lok Niwas Delhi today, as women from my secu-

rity team tied rakhi, filling the day with warmth, affection and joy," he said in a post on X.

He said the women's heartfelt gesture beautifully captured the spirit of Raksha Bandhan, a celebration of love, trust, and togetherness and a reminder that these bonds strengthen our sense of community beyond individual relationships. The LG extended his warm wishes to all on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. (PTI)

Manipur ambush survivor says attackers wore camouflage uniforms



IMPHAL/SENAPATI, Aug 28: A survivor of the ambush in Manipur's Kangpokpi district that killed four Naga civilians on Friday said the attackers were wearing full camouflage uniforms.

Forty-four-year-old Gaikamang Ringkangmai was admitted to the Senapati district hospital with a bullet injury to his left arm.

He was rescued by security forces from the ambush site.

Ringkangmai told reporters, "I am from Makui village. Yesterday, there were six of us in a vehicle. We frequently travelled by that route. We were going to Senapati

district when we were ambushed by militants. Four of our colleagues died on the spot, while two of us escaped."

He added, "I received bullet injuries on my arm but jumped from the vehicle and ran to hide in the bushes."

He claimed that the attackers were positioned in pairs wearing full camouflage uniforms.

"They had red ribbons tied to the top of their rifles, from which they continued firing," he added.

The other person who survived the ambush has been identified as Japou MK.

W Charenamei, younger brother of deceased Wisobou Charenamai, chairman of the Chawangking Village Authority, demanded speedy justice.

He told reporters, "We don't seek any revenge against the militants. We just want the facts to be established and swift justice for our murdered brothers."

At least four members of the Naga community were killed, and one was injured when armed militants ambushed their vehicle in a forested region of Kangpokpi district of Manipur on Thursday morning.

The militants attacked the vehicle in an isolated area between Makui Ashang and Thabamba Naga villages around 8.30 am, killing the four on the spot, they said, adding that one of the deceased was the principal of a private school.

Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh instructed security officials in the state to arrest and initiate action against those involved in the killing in the Kuki-majority district. (PTI)

BJP eyes forming maiden govt in Mizoram in 2028 assembly polls

AIZAWL, Aug 28: The BJP's Mizoram unit president Dr K Beichhua on Friday claimed that the party will emerge as the "brightest alternative" for the people in the state and form its maiden government in the 2028 assembly polls.

The northeastern state is now ruled by the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) which came to power in the previous assembly election in 2023.

Addressing a party programme here, Beichhua said the BJP central leadership was committed to helping the Mizoram unit expand its base and bring development benefits from the Centre to the state.

He said the Mizoram unit had recently participated in a national-level meeting in Delhi chaired by newly appointed BJP president Nitin Nabin, where various issues concerning the state were discussed with central leaders.

Beichhua said the central leadership had appreciated the activity report submitted by the Mizoram unit for his first year as state president, attributing the recognition to the unity and cooperation of party workers.



"The central leadership will help us so that the BJP can form a government in Mizoram in 2028 and ensure that genuine development reaches the people from the Centre without burdening them," he said.

Claiming that the BJP was the party with the strongest prospects of forming the government at the Centre and in Mizoram, Beichhua sought greater support from young

people, saying the party was working to bring more youth into active politics. Referring to recent Gen Z-led developments at the national level, he said that Nitin Nabin and his team were working to bring about organisational and political reforms and provide greater opportunities for young people.

Beichhua claimed the BJP was gaining support from the youth and expressed hope that young people seeking development and employment opportunities in Mizoram would join the party.

He said that people had been assessing the ZPM government's performance for nearly three years but had not seen the changes they had expected.

"If things continue in this manner, it will be difficult to have much confidence in the government's performance," he claimed.

Beichhua also criticised other opposition parties, saying the Congress had already been tested by the people and the MNF had failed to regain public confidence.

"The BJP is the brightest alternative for Mizoram's development. The NDA government is currently in power at the Centre and is expected to return to power in the next Lok Sabha polls. Mizoram must therefore be aligned with the Centre so that the state can achieve comprehensive development," Beichhua said. He also urged people of Mizoram to support the BJP to bring in more development in the state. (PTI)

Miscreants trigger bomb blast at BJP MLA's residence in Manipur



IMPHAL, Aug 28: Unidentified miscreants triggered a bomb blast at the residential compound of BJP MLA Sapam Ranjan Singh in Manipur's Imphal West district in the early hours of Friday, police said.

No one was injured in the explosion, which left a small crater on the ground and caused minor damage to the walls of the compound.

Sapam told reporters, "Today around 1.30 am, a loud explosion was heard at the rear side of my residence, which almost shook the house. Police were informed and they came to my place and conducted an inspection," the Konthoujam MLA said.

Singh, who is also the government spokesperson, said, "Under the prevailing situation in the state, I want those responsible to clarify such violent acts. What is the gain and the purpose of such an act? I strongly condemn it and don't want such things to happen."

Asked whether he had received any previous threats, Singh said there were none.

He had returned on Thursday from outside the state and met his workers in the evening, he said.

In a social media post, Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh said, "Visited the residence of MLA Dr Sapam Ranjan Singh at Konthoujam Mayai Leikai following a bomb blast at his residence early this morning."

"I strongly condemn such a senseless and barbaric attack on the residence of a people's representative. This act of violence is an attack on our democracy and the perpetrators will be brought to justice soon," he said. (PTI)

58 FIRs registered over cognisable offences along NH-202 in Manipur's Ukhrul: Police

IMPHAL, Aug 28: A total of 58 FIRs were registered over incidents involving cognisable offences along National Highway 202 in Manipur's Ukhrul district since clashes broke out between Kuki and Naga communities in February, police said.

The district police made the disclosure in a status report filed on August 25 before the Manipur High Court in connection with a PIL, seeking directions to ensure safe and uninterrupted movement of civilians and vehicles carrying essential supplies along NH-202.

"The District Administration and District Police, Ukhrul recognise NH-202 as the vital economic and supply lifeline for Ukhrul and Kamjong districts connecting with Imphal," the report said.

It said "prompt, firm and impartial legal and operational measures" were being continuously enforced to ensure free movement of vehicles, prevent road blockades and maintain public safety along the highway.



"All cognisable offences reported along NH-202 (Mahadev-T M Kasom stretch as mentioned by the petitioner) have been registered promptly at Litan Police Station. Since the onset of the conflict on February 8, 2026, 58 FIRs have been registered," the report said.

Two of the cases have been transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), including one involving victims from the Kuki community and another involving victims from the Tangkhul community, it said.

"Due process is underway to refer other cases," the police said.

To ensure security and facilitate movement along the highway, two companies of the CRPF, nine companies of the BSF, eight columns of the Army/Assam Rifles and personnel of the Manipur Rifles have been deployed, they said.

The security forces are conducting road-opening operations, area domination and providing escorts for the safe movement of civilians and transportation of essential commodities, they added. (PTI)

Individuals who don't want peace must be identified: Manipur CM

IMPHAL, Aug 28: Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Friday said individuals in the state who did not want peace needed to be identified.

Singh made the remarks at a guest lecture titled 'On Manipur Situation: Prevailing Trust Deficit and the Path Towards Trust-Building', organised by the Assam Rifles.

The CM said before the outbreak of violence in May 2023, he regularly travelled to the hill areas and witnessed an atmosphere of peace, harmony and co-operation among communities.

The violence, however, fundamentally changed the situation in the state, he said.

On the prevailing trust deficit, Singh said it could not be overcome merely through discussions or rhetoric but required sustained interaction, dialogue and understanding among communities.

Stating that restoration of peace is the foremost priority, Singh said the government would

not compromise on this objective and that justice would be delivered to the victims.

He also said during his visits to various relief camps and hill districts, he interacted with people from different communities and found that their common desire was to live in peace and return to their respective homes.

Singh also said certain individuals and groups who seek to spread conflict must be identified.

"There are people who do not want peace. We have to identify and correct them because common people want peace," he said.

Singh also acknowledged the role of police, Assam Rifles and other security forces in protecting lives during the crisis and that members of different communities had also helped one another to save human lives during the difficult period.

He said Assam Rifles and other security forces helped in the evacuation of 47,000 people to safer places during the conflict. (PTI)

Task force set up to provide relief to Sikkim residents affected by Nepal floods: Official

GANGTOK, Aug 28: The Sikkim government has constituted a task force for providing relief and necessary assistance to those from the state, who may be stranded or missing in Nepal flash floods, an official said on Friday.

The task force, with Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority Director Prabhakar Rai as its chairman, will coordinate with the Centre, the Indian Embassy in Nepal and several other agencies to obtain information about the state's residents affected by the disaster, he said.

"It will collect, compile and verify information regarding persons reported missing, stranded, injured, deceased or otherwise affected in the incident," the official said, citing a notification issued on Thursday.

The task force will establish communication with the families of affected Sikkim residents and facilitate the exchange of verified information regarding their status and whereabouts, he said. (PTI)

8 Mansarovar pilgrims stranded in Tibet after flash floods, all safe

GANGTOK, Aug 28: Eight Sikkim residents, who were on the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra, were stranded in Tibet after a flash flood hit the region two days ago, the state disaster management authority said on Friday. They have been contacted and found safe, it said.

The Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA) said, "The eight pilgrims crossed the Nepal-China border on August 25 and were in Saga County on the Tibet side when a glacial lake outburst flood/flash flood struck the region on August 26, disrupting their movement."

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang spoke to all eight pilgrims over the phone on Thursday to inquire about their safety and well-being, the SSDMA said.

The pilgrims were reported safe at Saga County, even as movement in the region remained affected by the disaster, it said.

"The eight people from East Sikkim have been contacted and found to be safe," the SSDMA said, adding that the state government has constituted a task force to coordinate, monitor and facilitate assistance to Sikkim residents affected or stranded by the flash floods.

The task force is coordinating with the Ministry of External Affairs and maintaining contact with affected residents and their

families, the statement said.

The SSDMA has also set up a 24x7 helpline at the State Emergency Operations Centre for families seeking information or assistance. The helpline numbers are 03592-201145, 03592-202461 and 03592-2025256. The Nepal-Tibet border region continues to grapple with the aftermath of the devastating flash floods, which left large areas cut off and disrupted movement along the pilgrimage route, the SSDMA said.

The death toll from flash floods in Nepal rose to 538 on Friday, with more bodies recovered as search and rescue operations continue with caution following the threat of fresh flooding due to an increase in the water level of a lake formed by avalanches on the border with Tibet.

Search and rescue operations continued for the third day of the tragic incident with the mobilisation of 7,451 security personnel, including 2,391 Nepal Army personnel, a Nepal Police statement said.

An ice-rock avalanche triggered by a glacial collapse near the Nepal-Tibet border sent a torrent of water, mud and debris downstream through central Nepal on Wednesday, devastating towns and villages, washing away homes, vehicles, roads and bridges, and damaging hydropower projects. (PTI)

Tripura CM says post-mortem report indicates DGP's death was suicidal

AGARTALA, Aug 28: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday informed the Assembly that the death of DGP Anurag Dhankar was "suicidal in nature", as indicated by the post-mortem report.

The statement came after Leader of Opposition Jitendra Chaudhury raised the issue in the Assembly and sought a probe by a sitting high court judge into the unnatural death of Dhankar. A 1994-batch IPS officer of the Tripura cadre, Dhankar was found dead in his office at the police headquarters on July 20.

When Speaker Rampada Jamatia tried to prevent the Chaudhury from raising the issue, agitated CPI(M) legislators rushed to the well of the House and raised slogans, disrupting the proceedings. The stalemate lasted for a few minutes before Saha rose in his seat and expressed his readiness to make a statement on the issue.

"The post-mortem report indicates the death of the DGP was by hanging and suicidal in nature. The report has become part of the evidence in connection with the case. An impartial probe is on," he said. (PTI)

Bodies of four Naga civilians killed in Manipur ambush retrieved

IMPHAL/SENAPATI, Aug 28: The bodies of four Naga civilians killed in an ambush in Manipur's Kangpokpi district were retrieved on Friday morning, a day after the attack, officials said.

The four were killed and another person injured when armed assailants attacked a vehicle in an isolated area between Makui Ashang and Thanamba Naga villages around 8.30 am on Thursday, they said.

One of the deceased was the principal of a private school.

Security forces had attempted to retrieve the bodies on Thursday evening but could not reach the site due to an alleged blockade and disruptions at a village along the route, officials said.

A security team comprising state police personnel reached the ambush site on Friday morning and retrieved the bodies, which were being taken to Senapati district headquarters, they said.

On Thursday night, a large number of people gathered at Senapati district headquarters and staged a protest, demanding that the bodies be brought to the Naga-majority district.

Meanwhile, village volunteers fired several rounds in the air as a mark of respect when the bodies reached Thonglang Atongba in Kangpokpi district, officials said.

Following the killings, Chief Minister Y



Khemchand Singh chaired a high-level security meeting and directed security forces to identify, arrest and take action against those involved in the attack.

The United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of the Naga community in the state, accused two militant outfits -- Kuki National Front (P) and Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) -- of being involved in the ambush.

The deceased have been identified as Tadsongbou Ringkangmai, the founder and principal of a private school, M Wijnam, Anil Wijnam, and Wisobou Charenamai, the chairman of the Chawangking Village Authority. The injured person has been identified as Gaikamang Ringkangmai.

All five victims belong to the Liangmai Naga community. (PTI)

Raksha Bandhan at 14,140 feet: Women tie rakhis to troops guarding India-China border

GANGTOK, Aug 28: Raksha Bandhan took a patriotic turn as Sikkim's high-altitude border areas as women from across the country tied rakhis to Army, ITBP and SSB personnel deployed to guard India's frontiers.

According to a press release by event organiser Hemant Yadav Foundation, the festival was celebrated at strategically important locations, including Nathu La Pass on the India-China border at an altitude of 14,140 feet, ITBP Sherathang at around 13,900 feet and SSB headquarters at Ranipool.

The initiative brought together 26 young women from six states, along with students from Sikkim University and Harkamaya College of Education.

The women tied rakhis to the personnel and expressed gratitude for their service, describing the soldiers and security personnel as brothers and protectors of the



country.

Foundation founder Dr Hemant Kumar Yadav said Raksha Bandhan was not merely about the bond between siblings but also embodied love, trust, responsibility, protection and national unity.

"Today, from an altitude of 14,140 feet, we are conveying Raksha Bandhan greetings to more than 1.4 billion citizens of India," Yadav said.

The participating women said meeting troops serving in difficult terrain and extreme conditions left them with a deep sense of pride and gratitude.

Yashoda Sharma of Sikkim said witnessing soldiers guarding the country at such a high altitude was both inspiring and humbling, while Priyanka Kaur of Assam said standing with Army personnel so close to the India-China border

made her feel that "the entire nation is present here together".

Smriti Rekha Khuntia of Odisha highlighted India's diversity, saying protecting the country's unity and integrity was a collective responsibility.

Another participant described the occasion as an opportunity to stand "not merely to celebrate Raksha Bandhan, but to honour those who protect the nation that we call our home."

Madhumita Barman of West Bengal said the country extended far beyond individual states and regions.

"We salute our soldiers and all those aware citizens who are working to unite the country," she said.

The foundation, a national-level social organisation, works in youth development, national integration, social harmony, environmental protection, health awareness and community development. (PTI)

Nagaland church body renews clean election campaign

KOHIMA, Aug 28: The Nagaland Baptist Church Council on Friday renewed its campaign for clean elections, calling for an end to vote-buying, coercion and other electoral malpractices and urging voters to treat their franchise as a moral and civic responsibility.

Launching the Clean Election Movement (CEM) here, its general secretary Rev. Mar Pongener said the council's campaign was not a new initiative but a renewed commitment to continue its fight for ethical and responsible elections.

Pongener acknowledged the widespread view that "clean election will never be possible in Nagaland", but said growing public awareness and resistance to old practices showed that change was possible.

He said the deeper problem lay in the changing understanding of money, leadership, power and responsibility.

"When voters expect money,

gifts, personal benefits or other immediate advantages in exchange for their votes, elections become transactions rather than exercises in choosing responsible leadership," he said.

He warned that the impact of corrupt elections extended well beyond polling day, contributing to corruption, favouritism, nepotism, misuse of public resources, weak accountability and erosion of public trust.

He called on churches to educate voters against selling their votes and urged citizens to reject money, gifts, alcohol, favours and other inducements.

"Clean election begins in our hearts, homes, churches, and communities," he said, adding that the church must also demonstrate integrity within its own institutions.

Calling for a shift "from programmes to a movement", Pongener said awareness campaigns alone were insufficient to transform electoral culture. (PTI)

NERIST student from Bengal killed in Arunachal accident

ITANAGAR, Aug 28: A final-year engineering student of NERIST died after his two-wheeler crashed into a road divider on NH-415 in Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district, police said.

The deceased has been identified as Gagan Paul, a native of Cooch Behar in West Bengal. Paul was a final-year student of agricultural engineering at the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST).

ICR Naharlagun Additional SP Rishi Longdo said a police team conducting routine checking in front of Nirjuli police station spotted Paul at the accident site around 4.30 am on Thursday.

"The police team rushed to the spot and found the student lying injured on the road after his gearless scooter collided with the divider," police said on Friday. The victim was evacuated in a police vehicle to the Tomo Riba Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (TRIHS) in Naharlagun for treatment. (PTI)

Takeaways for India: Rise of Padikkal, Suthar; questions linger on bowling in Tests

COLOMBO, Aug 28: India arrived in Sri Lanka three weeks ago with several questions surrounding its Test team but Devdutt Padikkal's assured batting at number three is the biggest gain, while Manav Suthar has made a strong case to take over the baton from Ravindra Jadeja as the team's lead Test spinner for the next decade.

The management may also be delighted to see the efforts of batters, who copped fair bit of flak for their inability to tackle spin against New Zealand and South Africa at home, against Sri Lankan tweakers.

Padikkal was at the forefront of India's charge against spinners.

The Sri Lankan batters resorted to sweep and its varieties to nullify Indian spinners in the series, but Padikkal used a different method — astute back foot play and precise foot-work.

His early coach Mohammed Naseeruddin threw light into the Karnataka batter's approach.

"We were working in that area before

the series. If you stay in the crease then it is tough to play against spinners. So, we were training to get as close to the ball as possible, or come out and drive," Naseeruddin told PTI.

That diligence brought the desired result in the two-match series as Padikkal was adjudged player of the series for his 328 runs across three innings at an average of 109.33. It included two hundreds as well.

It seems that Padikkal has now put to bed the question on the best choice for the No. 3 slot for the foreseeable future, even when B Sai Sudharsan returns from his injury.

"If he continues to bat like this, then we will certainly give him (No. 3 slot)," skipper Shubman Gill said in half-jest during the post-match press conference on Thursday.

Dhruv Jurel offered India a technical detour in terms of tactical flexibility down the order. Originally a wicket-keeper-batter, Jurel now plays as a specialist batter at No. 6 behind Rishabh



Pant.

Jurel has this envious ability to accelerate seamlessly from deep hibernation or calmly navigate through the rough seas.

In Galle, he made a quick 51 to build on Padikkal's hundred and at the Sinhalese Sports Club, the 25-year-old first supported an aggressive Pant before

moving on to get a hundred for himself.

Then there is this comfort factor against pacers and spinners alike. During his hundred in the second Test here, Jurel faced 101 balls from spinners and milked 56 runs.

The pacers tried to bounce out him but shelved that play after bowling just seven bumpers, as Jurel peeled 15 runs

off those deliveries. Now, he is India's chameleon at No. 6, shape-shifting as per conditions and situations.

"Dev and Dhruv have brought in a lot of solidity and a lot of confidence in our batting line-up, for sure. I always feel if you put up runs in Test matches, three and a half, four sessions, you're always in the game.

"We've got bowlers that can make up 20 wickets. As long as we keep putting 350-400 runs consistently on the board, we'll always be in the game. It's very pleasing to see that we are doing that," said Gill.

Similar to Jurel, left-arm spinner Suthar too understood the need to tweak his craft as per conditions.

At Galle, there was a bit of drift, bounce and turn for Suthar to exploit, resulting in a match-winning 10-wicket haul.

But the SSC offered all of it at a much slower pace and Suthar had to adapt. Across 63 tough overs, he grabbed six wickets in the drawn encounter.

At Galle, he bowled in the mid-80 speed range, but here he had to crank up another 10 kmph to get some purchase out of a dull track.

India's spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule was satisfied with Suthar's effort.

"It is an experience for Manav. This is his third Test. He's going to get different situations. He knew they are going to charge at him. He's a learning cricketer. What we like about him is his resilience. He always gives 100%," said Bahutule.

Prasidh Krishna too offered a shard of positivity as he bowled with unrelenting pace and intensity across the four innings.

However, he also had to do the cover-up job for lead pacer Mohammad Siraj, who appeared to be bowling sans his usual verve and amassed just four wickets.

While Gill ruled out any injury scare for the Hyderabad pacer, Morne Morkel thought Siraj added a lot of value to the Indian bowling unit as its leader. (PTI)

Making of Dinusha: From sister borrowing money to buy first bat to sweeping away India at SSC

COLOMBO, Aug 28: Sonal Dinusha wanted to be at the nets within hours of single-handedly preventing what seemed like an imminent Indian win in the second Test here. Celebration, after all, was hardly a distraction for the Sri Lankan, who picked the sport to distract himself from the harsh realities of his life.

Dinusha averaged a phenomenal 140 in the two-Test series, scoring 420 runs with three hundreds, two of them in the battle-of-attrition that was the drawn second Test. India, however, won the series having clinched the opener in Galle.

It was a remarkable performance from the five-Test old all-rounder, whose first bat was a gift from his sister. She borrowed money to buy it for him as the family mostly lived in financial distress.

"He was interested in basketball too as many children are in Sri Lanka. He used to train very seriously. But his school coach Susantha Felix Dias drafted him into the cricket team after watching him play casually. He did not have a cricket bat or other gear," Dinusha's trusted coach Ashan Priyanjan told PTI in an interview.

"His sister borrowed some money and bought a bat for him, his first cricket bat. The family did



not have much money and whatever it has earned now is because of Dinusha. It's their only income.

"He is very attached to his father, mother and siblings. I think he is attached to cricket in the same way," he said.

A few days before the Test against India started, Dinusha had dialled Priyanjan. The conversation was short and precise.

"He said 'Sir, India has all varieties of spinners. Need to prepare well'. This was the main point of our discussion. He calls me before every game," Priyanjan said.

They headed to the familiar surroundings of the Colombo Cricket Club (CCC). Priyanjan brought in left-arm and off-spin bowlers and Dinusha practiced his sweep and reverse sweep for hours at nets.

It was reflected in his immacu-

late batting against Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Manav Suthar (all left-arm spinners) and Saransh Jain (an off-spinner).

Dinusha scored 420 runs across the Galle and Colombo Tests, and 173 of them came through sweeps.

In that process, he also overtook Joe Root (160 runs) for scoring most runs while playing sweep against spin in a Test series.

Priyanjan was not surprised to see the success Dinusha had against Indian spinners, which he says was not solely because of their pre-tour training sessions.

The will to prepare hard is ingrained in the 25-year-old from early years.

"I first saw him first as a school cricketer. He was playing for De La Salle school then and their team did training at the CCC where I

was coaching. He was 11 or 12 then but even at that age, his enthusiasm and dedication to cricket was remarkable," he said.

Priyanjan then gave an example of Dinusha's clarity of thought.

"I told him once that he needs to have a good sweep shot to be successful against spinners because he will play a lot of cricket in Asian countries. From that point onwards, he practised that shot for some two hours at nets, just sweep," he said.

But how did this deep commitment to cricket take shape inside Dinusha?

Priyanjan said cricket was the left-hander's distraction from penury at home.

Soon, Dinusha graduated to one of the most prestigious institutions in Sri Lanka -- the Mahanama College where he met another one of his formative coaches Sonal Dulshan Alwalage.

Alwalage was immediately impressed by Dinusha's talent and willingness to work on his game.

"He is a very humble and hard-working person. He had a tough childhood, and therefore he always has his feet on the ground. Now, he is like a member of my family," Alwalage, now a Level 2 coach with Sri Lanka Cricket, said.

But the close bond between them never came in the way of some hard training sessions. (PTI)

Future perfect for India women's hockey after World Cup turnaround: Savita Punia

AMSTELVEEN (NETHERLANDS), Aug 28: India's women's hockey team has found a new belief in itself, veteran goalkeeper Savita Punia said after the side finished fifth at the ongoing World Cup, their best result in more than five decades.

The result marked a strong turnaround for India, who had failed to make the cut for the Paris Olympics 2024 and also had a tearful exit from the semi-final race at the recently-concluded World Cup here.

The experienced Savita, who has 319 international caps, in an interview to PTI, says the biggest change is not merely in the results but in the atmosphere inside the dressing room.

"After the arrival of coach Sjoerd Marijne and all the new support staff, we decided to have fun, laugh, talk and chat off the field. It wasn't like this before," said Savita, who is one cap away from equalling India's record for most international appearances.

"We kept our thoughts to ourselves, but today every player speaks very openly to each other. Whatever I feel, I can frankly tell the team.

"The coaching staff has created such an environment that we feel a deep sense of doing our best. It's visible in the eyes, in the workouts and in the practice of all the players."

After missing the last four following their goalless draw to Aus-



tralia, India defeated higher-ranked Germany 3-1 to finish fifth -- their best result since 1974.

Savita's emotional reaction in the dugout after missing the semis berth became one of the most viral images of the tournament.

She cried again after the match against Germany.

"Standing behind the goalpost, I was thinking that if I had played even 50 per cent of the hockey I played against Germany against Australia, we would have reached the semi-finals," she said.

"That day I cried out of sadness, but today it was tears of joy. I received many messages saying that it was not nice to see you crying on TV. People also said that no one had imagined that the team would play the fifth-place match."

Savita, who also missed a medal at the Tokyo Olympics, admitted that the disappointment hit hard.

"But perhaps I also needed time to recover from that shock. That evening we all discussed that there

was nothing left to lose. If we wanted to show what we are capable of and earn respect, we should finish fifth at any cost so the world could see that we only lost one match and that Indian hockey was truly improving," she said. The fifth-place finish has given Savita fresh hope, even though the pain of missing out on a medal remains.

"We lost a medal at the Tokyo Olympics, and now the World Cup as well. But I'm happy that we're on the right track and will qualify for the Los Angeles Olympics by winning a gold medal at the Asian Games."

"Our attacking hockey is very good, and that's our strength. We want to leave with our heads held high. We have to participate in the Asian Games and take a good feeling from here. We will continue with what we have done well and work on our shortcomings."

The senior goalkeeper believes the team's ability to stay focused on its own game, rather than being overwhelmed by the opposition or the occasion, has been another major factor behind the turnaround.

"As a senior, I have seen many ups and downs. Experience teaches me how to keep my morale high and overcome difficult situations. We didn't lose focus and were disciplined. We strategised match by match and didn't think about the results. We focused on our hockey and will continue to do so in the future," she said. (PTI)

Ashwin tears into Pant, rejects 'once-in-a-generation' tag for keeper-batter



NEW DELHI, Aug 28: Former India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has questioned Rishabh Pant's shot selection and decision-making during the recent Test series against Sri Lanka, saying the flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter has not yet lived up to the expectations placed on him.

Pant, backed by the Indian team management for the wicket-keeper's role in the two-Test rubber, finished with 168 runs, including two half-centuries. But his aggressive approach and shot selection continued to attract scrutiny, with Ashwin making it clear that he expects more from a player who has now played over 50 Tests.

"My expectation from Rishabh Pant hasn't been fulfilled till now. I am very sorry. Sonal Dinusha had his strike rate up there. But the difference is high-risk options. When you have the game in your hand, these are all statements: 'That's how Rishabh plays.' It is about what your team needs," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel 'Ash Ki Baat'.

Ashwin, who retired from international cricket last year, argued that Pant's attacking style cannot become an excuse for poor decision-making, particularly when a Test match is at a critical juncture.

"Rishabh played a class knock in Sydney and Brisbane, but you couldn't have won that match without Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur. It takes 11 cricketers to build a Test and win it in the last session of the game, but it takes only one moment of foolishness to lose a Test," he said.

Ashwin also rejected compar-

isons between Pant and former India opener Virender Sehwag and Australia great Adam Gilchrist, two players renowned for their aggressive approach in Test cricket.

"I am just talking about the times when these chances are being taken when the game is on the line. I love Rishabh the player. It is about playing situations in this format," he said.

"Sehwag and Gilchrist played high brand of cricket, but these two don't get edged out while dancing down to Marco Jansen when your team is trailing by 500 runs. Don't place these marketing lines in front of me ever again."

Ashwin was equally critical of the notion that Pant deserves special backing because he is considered a "once-in-a-generation" player.

He said the same level of faith should be extended to other young Indian players, including Yashasvi Jaiswal, while urging Pant to shoulder greater responsibility given his experience.

"Don't give one player special treatment. This once-in-a-generation player backing, then give it to everyone. Jaiswal is also such a player," Ashwin said.

"All I'm saying, Rishabh, is that he is experienced; he has played 50 Tests. He needs to take responsibility. Don't come up with this 'once-in-a-generation' argument. It is because of his decision-making that he's not playing the other two formats. The day you tell him the truth, he will be an all-format player for India."

Ashwin's remarks come after Pant's 168-run outing against Sri Lanka, where he made two fifties.

For Ashwin, Pant's ability is not in question but it is the timing of his aggression that needs to change.

"I love Rishabh the player," he said, while insisting that the wicketkeeper-batter must learn to distinguish between playing his natural game and playing what the situation demands in Test cricket. (PTI)

Rashid wins Telangana Open, ends seven-year-long title drought

VIKARABAD, Aug 28: Veteran golfer Rashid Khan ended a seven-year wait for victory with a closing five-under 67 that handed him the Telangana Open title here on Friday.

The 35-year-old Delhi golfer (66-67-65-67) finished at 23-under 265 to secure his 15th professional title.

The three-strokes win at the Vooty Golf County was his 11th victory on the DP World PGTI. He collected ₹ 15 lakh and moved up to sixth on the PGTI Order of Merit, taking his season earnings to ₹ 44,95,509.

Delhi's Honey Baisoya (72-65-66-65) produced the best final-round score among the leading contenders, making nine birdies and two bogeys in a seven-under 65. He finished runner-up at 20-under 268.

Baisoya, winner of the World Players Championship in February, earned ₹ 10 lakh for his runner-up finish. He now occupies third place

in the season rankings with total earnings of ₹ 51,72,092.

Gurugram's Veer Ahlawat (68-68-68-65) also closed with a 65 to share third place at 19-under 269 with overnight leader Angad Cheema (70-61-65-73).

Rashid's previous PGTI victory came at the Players Championship in 2019.

After enduring a difficult seven-year spell, the two-time Asian Tour winner and three-time PGTI Order of Merit champion described his return to the winner's circle as an emotional moment.

"I can't describe how I'm feeling right now," said Rashid.

"It has been seven years since my last win, and I struggled a lot with my game during that period. I went through many ups and downs, but I also learned a great deal. Once you come through a phase like that, you understand what you need to do," he added. (PTI)

'People don't always know the real story'

Marijne defends pre-World Cup leave

AMSTELVEEN, Aug 28: India women's hockey team chief coach Sjoerd Marijne on Friday insisted that his pre-World Cup leave did not compromise the team's preparations, asserting that he remained involved in every aspect of the build-up to the tournament in which India finished a creditable fifth.

Marijne's decision to take leave before the World Cup came under scrutiny in a section of the media.

The Dutchman, however, said the team's preparation remained on track with the support of his coaching staff.

"I have seen every training, match, done meetings and had personal contact with the players, so it was not that I didn't know what was going on," Marijne told PTI in an interview after India's World Cup campaign.

"People don't always know the real story and that's fine as long as we know what we have done and we covered everything. Besides this also the staff which was there and helped them to prepare for the World Cup," he said.

For Marijne the fifth place is not the destination. His message to the team after its transformation from an injury-hit side to a



competitive World Cup unit is to maintain the hunger.

"It has been a journey with many ups and this is what we have to continue, but that's only possible when we stay hungry and eager to get the best out of ourselves and not take things easy."

"Keep raising the bar, and expect more and more from the team. Growing is a daily process and also staying connected with each other," he said.

Quick start in second stint

Marijne, who returned for his second stint with the Indian team in January, said the situation was markedly different from his first tenure, with several players now possessing experience of facing higher-ranked opposition and playing major tournaments.

"This is a team which has players who already had played against high-ranked teams and experienced to play big tournaments. In the beginning we didn't have this and these girls also knew me, how I coach and prepare the team. They already had shared this with the younger girls. This made it easier to have a quick start," he said.

The coach said his immediate task was to rebuild the team's identity, restore discipline and shift the focus from individuals to the collective.

"The main challenge was to make again a team and change the mindset to 'we' instead of 'I' and bring back discipline," he said.

Marijne also feels he returned as a more mature coach, having spent the intervening years working with and guiding other coaches.

"I have been in India, I know better how things are working and what works with coaching an Indian team. I have guided coaches the last years and that also helped me to reflect myself and become a better coach," he said.

India's World Cup showing has also generated a positive response at home, something Marijne hopes will translate into greater interest in women's hockey.

"If I see the reactions, people are positive and follow the team. I hope we inspire young kids to also start playing hockey," he said.

He also backed the Women's Hockey India League as a key component of the team's continued development, pointing to the confidence Indian players gain from facing international stars in the competition.

"The World Cup is an example that players play with more confidence against players which they know from the HIL," he said. (PTI)