

p3 CUSU clarifies move to hand over space to outside party

p9 Meet discusses steps to check rhino poaching

p15 Sunil Chhetri announces retirement

NEWS Capsule

Lightning deaths

MALDA, May 16: At least 11 people were killed on Thursday after being struck by lightning in different places across Malda district of West Bengal, an official said. An ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each has been announced for the victim families. - PTI

Voter turnout

NEW DELHI, May 16: The cumulative turnout in the first four phases of the Lok Sabha elections has been recorded at 66.95 per cent, the Election Commission said on Thursday, adding 45.10 crore of the nearly 97 crore electors have voted so far. - PTI

Hoarding toll

MUMBAI, May 16: An absconding director of the advertising firm which installed the collapsed hoarding in Mumbai's Ghatkopar was arrested on Thursday from Rajasthan, while the death toll in the crash mounted to 16. - PTI

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While others have gone digital, he is still breaking doors and locks.

Xi, Putin hint at settlement to end Ukraine war

Both sides believe that for "a sustainable settlement of the Ukrainian crisis, it is necessary to eliminate its root causes."



BEIJING, May 16: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday hinted at a political settlement to end the Ukraine war, saying he expects peace and stability will return to the European continent, shortly after his talks with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin as the two leaders vowed to counter any attempt by the US to hinder their strategic ties.

Putin received a grand welcome upon his arrival here earlier in the day on his first foreign visit after winning the fifth term in office in March for wide-ranging talks with Xi

to reset the burgeoning China-Russia strategic ties for the future.

"China hopes that peace and stability will return to the European continent at an early date, and stands ready to play a constructive role to this end," Xi said at a joint press conference with Putin after their talks.

A joint statement issued after Putin-Xi talks said that both sides believe that for "a sustainable settlement of the Ukrainian crisis, it is necessary to eliminate its root causes."

In a veiled criticism of the US, which is pressuring Beijing to end its strategic ties with

Russia, the joint statement said relations between China and Russia do not target any third countries, therefore they will counter any attempts to hinder such cooperation.

"The two sides note that the relationship between Russia and China has progressed to a more advanced interstate cooperation compared to the military-political unions of the Cold War era as it is not bloc or confrontational in nature, nor does it target any third countries," Russia's new agency Tass quoted the document as saying.

» SEE PAGE 2

Protest over Centre's move to fence India-Myanmar border

Organisation of Mizo tribes warns of 1966 revolt redux

CORRESPONDENT

AIZAWL, May 16: The Zo Reunification Organisation (ZoRO), serving as the voice for ethnic Mizo tribes across Myanmar, India and Bangladesh, has issued a stern caution to the Central government, evoking memories of the tumultuous 1966 revolt in Mizoram.

Speaking at a massive rally, peacefully staged at the Mizoram-Myanmar border village of Zokhawthar in Champhai district on Thursday, ZoRO general secretary L. Ramdinliana Renthlei conveyed a grave message.

He warned that should the Central government persist with its plans to erect a border fence and discard the Free Movement Regime (FMR), the youths might be left with no recourse but to take up arms once more, in reference to the Mizos Uprising of 1966 when Mizo youths led by Laldenga waged war against India.



Indian citizens shake hands with Myanmar nationals during a rally against scrapping of the Free Movement Regime, at Indo-Myanmar Friendship Gate, at Zokhawthar in Mizoram. - PTI

Renthlei lamented the Central government's obstinacy in the face of vehement opposition from the Mizos.

Echoing Renthlei's sentiments, ZoRO president R Sangkawia attributed nefarious intentions to certain entities seeking to fracture the unity of the 'Zofate' - the ethnic Mizo community. Sangkawia emphasised the inher-

ent unity of the Zofate across geographical boundaries, emphasizing that a nation transcends physical demarcations.

Further strengthening ZoRO's stance, adviser to Chief Minister Lalmanpuia Punte, also vice president of ZoRO, underscored the indivisibility of communities straddling the Mizoram-Myanmar border. Punte categorically re-

jected the boundaries imposed by the British colonial rulers and criticised the Indian government's acquiescence to such delineations. He highlighted the Mizoram Legislative Assembly's resolution opposing border fencing and the abandonment of the FMR.

» SEE PAGE 2

Bangladesh top destination for medical studies

SANJOY RAY

GUWAHATI, May 16: Bangladesh has become one of the top destinations for budding doctors from Assam and other parts of the Northeast, with nearly 400 students securing 'Student Visas' in the past five years. The Assistant High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Guwahati revealed that in the last academic year alone, over 100 students were issued student visas.

This shift in educational migration patterns is attributed to factors such as ease of admission, quality of education, and notably, the affordability of tuition fees.

According to Ruhul Amin, Assistant High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Guwahati, the cost of medical education in Bangladesh, averaging around Rs 30 lakh for a five-year course, is significantly lower compared to Indian private medical colleges, rendering Bangladesh an attractive option for aspiring doctors.

Additionally, the familiarity of food habits, language, cul-

The cost of medical education in Bangladesh, averaging around Rs 30 lakh for a five-year course, is lower compared to Indian private medical colleges

ture, and geographical proximity further enhance Bangladesh's appeal.

Amin informed that Bangladesh has 37 government medical colleges and 72 private colleges, offering ample opportunities for medical education. The 72 private medical colleges of Bangladesh have over 6,500 seats.

Nearly, 12,000 Indian students are currently studying in different medical colleges

of Bangladesh and the number continues to be on the rise. The Bangladesh Government, in the year 2022, has slashed the foreign student quota by 5 per cent to allow more local students to be admitted to the colleges.

Following this, the Bangladesh Private Medical College Association has recently asked the Government to roll back the quota to 50 per cent given the economic benefits.

"As Bangladesh continues to emerge as a premier educational hub, the trend of Assamese students pursuing medical studies across the border is expected to continue, reshaping the landscape of medical education in the region," opined a senior physician of Gauhati Medical College and Hospital.

Director of Medical Education, Assam, Dr Anup Barman said that the private medical colleges of Bangladesh have largely succeeded in catering to hopes of the middle-class family.

» SEE PAGE 2

BHU study finds 'adverse events' on Covaxin takers

NEW DELHI, May 16: Nearly one-third of 926 individuals who received Bharat Biotech's anti-Covid vaccine Covaxin reported 'adverse events' of special interest, or AESI, according to a one-year follow-up study conducted by a team of researchers at BHU.

Serious AESI, which included stroke and Guillain-Barre syndrome, was reported in one per cent of individuals, in the study conducted by researchers from the Banaras Hindu University (BHU), which looked at the long-term safety of the BBV152 (Covaxin) vaccine in adolescents and adults, claimed.

Guillain-Barre syndrome is an autoimmune disorder which causes weakness in nerves in the arms and legs.

The study, conducted from January 2022 to August 2023, stated that nearly 50 per cent of the sample size complained of infections during the follow-up period, predominated by viral upper respiratory tract infections.

However, Bharat Biotech in a statement in response to the study, said, "Several studies have been executed on the safety of Covaxin, and published in peer-reviewed journals, demonstrating an excellent safety track record". The study involved 635 adolescents and 291 adults, who received the BBV152 vaccine.

Published in the journal Springer Nature recently, the study comes against the backdrop of UK pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca admitting its Covid vaccine can cause rare side-effects of blood clotting and lowering of platelet count in a UK court.

» SEE PAGE 2

Plan to set up model schools in interior areas of State

Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan, an autonomous body, was formed to provide qualitative and national standard education to students in the remote areas of the State.

R DUTTA CHOUDHURY

GUWAHATI, May 16: The Assam Government is planning to set up new model schools under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to provide quality education to the students of the interior areas of the State.

The chairman of the Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan, Dr Nani Gopal Mahanta told *The Assam Tribune* that at present, 56 model schools are functioning in different remote

areas of the State and the aim is to establish new schools to increase the number of model schools to 126.

Replying to a question as to why the Government decided to establish model schools under the CBSE by overlooking the State boards, Mahanta pointed out that most of the parents prefer the CBSE and that is why, private schools are flourishing in Assam. He said that the model schools of the State Government take a minimum fee of Rs 300 per month, which

is much lower than the fees charged by the private schools. He said that after the establishment of the model schools, many parents shifted their wards from private schools to the Government model schools and in fact, several private schools have already closed down.

Mahanta said that the students of the model schools are performing well and this year, the pass percentage was over 96 per cent.

» SEE PAGE 2

Assam forests facing destruction due to unsolved border disputes with Arunachal

SIVASISH THAKUR

BEHALI (Biswanath), May 16: The failure of the State government to settle nagging boundary disputes with Arunachal Pradesh has triggered widespread destruction of Assam forests along the border. The biodiversity-rich Behali reserve forest (RF) in Biswanath district straddling the Assam-Arunachal border exemplifies best how the Assam government's inertia has bled the pristine forest.

The State government had issued a notification (preliminary) for declaring Behali RF as a wildlife sanctuary, fulfilling a long-standing demand of conservation circles and raising hopes for its long-term survival.

A gazette notification published on May 4, 2022, recognised an area of 157.25 sq

km under Borgang Forest Range in Sonitpur East Forest Division in Biswanath district as Behali Wildlife Sanctuary.

The sanctuary area comprises mostly the 140-sq km Behali RF besides Chenglijan RF. However, a sizeable section of the forest has been under encroachment from Arunachal Pradesh, and more worryingly, the ongoing organised encroachment has intensified in recent times.

While the failure to settle the boundary row has put a dampener on the proposed wildlife sanctuary status for Behali, forest department sources told *The Assam Tribune* that only a small northern stretch is plagued by a genuine border dispute and the rest of the area under encroachment actually falls under Assam.

» SEE PAGE 2



Behali reserve forest

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Family Members
Mrs. Deepali Bora (Wife)
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Mrs. Dipanju Bora (Daughter in law)
Mr. Himangshu Goswami (Son in law)
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CD/Obituary/P/PP004479/1

IN MEMORIAM



TASMIN SAHARIA (Tina)
03-04-2012 - 17-05-2019
Five years has passed since you have left us leaving behind all your sweet memories... We miss you every moment of our lives. Your presence continues to surround us. Life is never been the same since we lost you. On this day we remember you with tears and pray to Almighty that Your Soul rest in eternal peace in Heaven...
Abba, Amma and all family members, Sixmile, Guwahati

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We are and will be part of INDIA bloc at nat'l level: Mamata

TAMLUK (WB), May 16: A day after announcing that she would extend outside support to the Opposition front INDIA after it comes to power, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today said that she is very much part of the anti-BJP alliance at the national level and would continue to be in it.

While addressing an election rally at Tamluk, Banerjee said that the TMC is not in alliance with the CPI(M) and the Congress in West Bengal.

"At the all-India level, some people have misunderstood my statement yesterday. I am very much part of the INDIA alliance. The INDIA alliance was my brainchild. We are together at the national level and will continue to be together," she said.

Banerjee alleged that the West Bengal units of both CPI(M) and Congress, who are part of the INDIA alliance, have joined hands and helped the BJP in the State. "Do not count on the CPI(M) and the Congress in

Bengal. They are not with us, they are with the BJP here. I am talking about that (INDIA bloc) in Delhi," she said.

Banerjee on Wednesday said her party will extend support to the Opposition INDIA bloc from outside to form the government at the Centre. Expressing scepticism about the BJP's ambitious target of achieving 400 seats in the Lok Sabha elections, she said that people will reject them.

"The entire country has understood that the BJP is a party full of thieves. We (TMC) will support the INDIA bloc from outside to form a government at the Centre. We will extend our support so that in Bengal, our mothers and sisters never face a problem... And those who work in the 100 days' job scheme, also do not face problems," Banerjee had said.

The TMC had walked out of the INDIA bloc in West Bengal in January but asserted that she would continue to be part of the Opposition

bloc at the national level.

The TMC supremo was addressing a rally in Tamluk, under which comes the Nandigram Assembly constituency from where she had lost to the BJP in the 2021 State polls.

Today she vowed to avenge the defeat as she asserted that the poll results didn't reflect the people's mandate.

Banerjee said, "The BJP won by disconnecting power supply at the counting centre on the day of counting on May 2, 2021."

"The mandate was stolen by the BJP through unscrupulous means. They disconnect the power supply at the counting centre. I had moved court against it. But either today or tomorrow, I will avenge my defeat," she said.

The anti-land acquisition movement in Nandigram in 2007 against the then Left Front government was instrumental in the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress' rise to power in 2011 in Bengal. - PTI

Protest over ...

(Contd from page 1)
The rally drew thousands from both sides of the border, including refugees seeking shelter in Zokhawthar and neighbouring villages, alongside residents from various districts, including Aizawl and Champhai.

Under the banner of "Unau kan ni, inthen then kan ni lo" (United by blood and cannot be parted), the rally resonated with a profound message of unity. Even those unable to physically join the rally at Zokhawthar village expressed their solidarity, participating in Khawmawi in Myanmar's Chin state, across the border. Mizoram shares a 510-km-long border with Myanmar's Chin state and the Mizos share ethnic ties with people belonging to the Chin community.

Xi, Putin ...

(Contd from page 1)
According to the statement, Russia and China reaffirmed their resolve to defend their legitimate rights and interests and block any attempts to impede normal development of bilateral ties, and any interference in the internal affairs of the two nations or to impose restrictions on their economic, technological and foreign policy potential.

Putin's visit to China, the second since last October, follows Xi's just concluded European Union tour to France, Serbia and Hungary where the Chinese leader came under pressure from EU leaders not to sell arms to Russia. The US too is mounting pressure on China not to sell arms to Russia.

While Xi, 70, regards his ties with Putin, 71, as counter to the US' increasing hostility towards China, which Beijing says is aimed at countering its rise, there is unease here over the Russian leader's continuation of the Ukraine war.

Though Beijing has not publicly supported Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the "no-limits" China-Russia strategic partnership has come under intense scrutiny from the US and its allies, who have imposed sanctions on Moscow and repeatedly called Beijing to use its leverage to bring the war to an end. - PTI

BHU study ...

(Contd from page 1)
"Close to one-third of the individuals developed AESIs. New-onset skin and subcutaneous disorders, general disorders, and nervous system disorders were the three most common disorders observed in adolescents after receiving the vaccine," the study said.

The participants were interviewed telephonically about long-term adverse events of special interest after one year of vaccination. New-onset skin and subcutaneous disorders (10.5 per cent), general disorders (10.2 per cent), and nervous system disorders (4.7 per cent) were the common AESIs in adolescents.

General disorders (8.9), musculoskeletal disorders (5.8 per cent), and nervous system disorders (5.5 per cent) were the common AESIs in adults.

Menstrual abnormalities were noticed in 4.6 per cent of female participants.

Ocular abnormalities and hypothyroidism were observed in 2.7 per cent and 0.6 per cent of participants. Four deaths (three female individuals, and one male individual) were reported in adults, the study added. All four had diabetes, hypertension in three, and a history of pre-vaccination Covid-19 was present in two of them.

Stroke was the main contributor to two deaths and one fatality was due to post-Covid-19 rhinocerebral mucormycosis, which supposedly disseminated after vaccination as reported by the caregivers.

The fourth death happened in a woman with multiple episodes of unconsciousness

post-vaccination, the aetiology of which remained unidentified till death. In the absence of a definite causality association, no conclusions can be drawn from these events, the study said.

"Interestingly, adults receiving three doses and those receiving one dose of BBV152 were respectively at four and two times higher risk of AESIs compared with adults receiving two doses of the Covaxin," the study said. A booster dose mechanistically enhances the production of anti-Spike antibodies above that produced by the second dose. Significant cross-reactivity has been shown between anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies and diverse human antigens and this can explain the multi-system AESIs witnessed in the study participant, it said. - PTI

Plan to set ...

(Contd from page 1)
Giving a background of the creation of the model schools, Mahanta revealed that Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan, an autonomous body under the Department of School Education, Government of Assam was formed to provide qualitative and national standard education to students in the remote areas of the State.

The main objective of the model schools is to provide quality and affordable modern education, including a

strong component of inculcation of values, awareness of the environment, physical education, etc. to the talented children predominantly from rural areas without regard to their family's socio-economic condition.

In addition to education, efforts are made for the mental well-being of the students by engaging the services of mental health providers, the Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan seeks to provide effective prevention, early intervention, diagnostic and treat-

ment services to the students.

Mahanta pointed out that stories of great personalities create an indelible imprint on the minds and hearts of kids inspiring them to follow in their footsteps. To inspire the students, one single day of every month has been dedicated as the 'Guest of The Month' where a prominent personality who has made remarkable contributions in their respective fields is invited to the school to motivate the students.

Assam forests ...

(Contd from page 1)
"Pending a final settlement of the boundary dispute, the State government can declare the rest of the forest as a wildlife sanctuary leaving the small disputed stretch. Dilly-dallying with the matter will only encourage further encroachment," sources added.

Nature's Bonyapran, an NGO which has documented the flora and fauna of Behali RF, asserts that a resolution to the dispute should have the Survey of India map as the basis.

"There has to be a give-and-take approach with Arunachal Pradesh. The Assam government can consider leaving a 1.5-km stretch (from the Arunachal border) from the east of Tarachu river up to Bihmari/Buroi and bringing inside the sanctuary an equal area towards the north of Dikal-Radhachu. This will ensure that the sanctuary area remains the same," Sankar Dutta, secretary general of the NGO said.

The NGO, which has also moved Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on the issue, further reasoned that some Arunachali families occupying the forest at Lower Tarachu, Kachubil, Townbil and Bormai can be rehabilitated on the north of Behali near the lower Arunachal side.

"While the areas under encroachment are big, the population of the encroachers is rather small and those can easily be relocated in some available open areas. We can settle the boundary dispute through a give-and-take approach even without compromising on the overall integrity of Behali RF," Dutta said.

The NGO, in its memo to the Chief Minister, stressed that with the effects of climate change now starting to manifest, conservation of Behali in its entirety assumes tremendous significance.

"Behali falls in a global biodiversity hotspot and is also a prime elephant habitat. Its

remarkable faunal and floral diversity apart, its strategic location linking it with Kaziranga National Park and Pakke and Nameri Tiger Reserves further enhances its importance for maintaining contiguity over a larger landscape so essential for long-term wildlife conservation. It has been an important corridor for regular wildlife movement, especially elephants," Ranjit Kakati, a research scholar (zoology) at Gauhati University and a member of Nature's Bonyapran, said.

Behali RF which comprises wetland semi-evergreen subtropical forests account for 308 native plant species - several of those endemic to Behali - besides 49 mammal species, over 280 bird species, 23 snakes, 12 turtles, 11 lizards, 12 amphibians and 275 butterfly species.

Significantly, Behali accounts for a number of endemic species rarely associated with a single stretch of forest.

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CORRIGENDUM AGAINST TENDER NOTICE NO. COM/2024/MAR/03 DATED 27-03-2024
Corrigendum-01 has been issued against Tender No. CE/COM/K/J/BLS/2024/04. For details please visit www.irops.gov.in
Chief Engineer/Con/5
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
(Construction Organisation)

PROVISION OF STATION BUILDING ALONG WITH IMPROVEMENT OF CIRCULATING AREA

E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/77 of 2024; Dated: 09-05-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work:
SN.1. Brief Description of Item: Provision of station building along with improvement of circulating area in connection with development of Agartala station under the jurisdiction of DENV. **Tender Value:** ₹29,70,47,339.63; **Earnest Money:** ₹16,35,300.00. E-tenders will be closed at 15.00 hrs. on 10-06-2024. The complete information with tender documents of above tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs of 10-06-2024 in website http://www.irops.gov.in.
DRM/Works, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
(Service Organisation)

Doctor suspended over sexual harassment of girl students

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 16: Dr Tirtha Dyuti Choudhury, Reader of SJN Homeopathic Medical College & Hospital, has been placed under suspension following an inquiry over an alleged case of sexual harassment of two of his girl students.

Stating that the preliminary inquiry established the commission of the alleged offence, an official release said that in response to the show-cause notice served to the offender, "the delinquent Reader of SJN-HMCH has not been able to put forward any cogent reason justifying his innocence".

"Therefore, in view of the aforementioned gross misconduct committed by Dr Tirtha Dyuti Choudhury, Reader, Department of Organon of Medicine, SJN Homeopathic Medical College & Hospital, is placed under suspension with immediate effect pending drawal of disciplinary proceedings. "During the period of suspension, Dr Choudhury will be paid subsistence allowance as per rule, and he is barred from carrying out private practice or any other employment, business, profession or vocation as stipulated... until further orders," the official order said.

"During the period of suspension, the headquarters of Dr Tirtha Dyuti Choudhury shall be Guwahati and he shall not leave his headquarters without obtaining the written permission of the Principal i/c, SJN Homeopathic Medical College & Hospital," it added.



The first batch of Haj pilgrims leaving from the Haji Musafirkhana to the LGBI Airport ahead of their departure for Saudi Arabia, on Thursday. — UB Photos

Sikkim Statehood day celebrated at Raj Bhavan

GUWAHATI, May 16: As part of the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, Raj Bhavan Assam celebrated the Statehood day of Sikkim on Thursday, stated a press release.

Addressing a gathering at the conference hall of Raj Bhavan, chief guest Brig. Ranjit Borthakur (retd) underscored the pivotal role Sikkim plays in India's strategic landscape, given its geographical proximity to international borders. He spoke on the burgeoning tourism industry which, according to him, has led to surge in tourist footfall and the rise in revenue collection. He said that work on railway connectivity is going on fast-track mode that will enhance Sikkim's connectivity.

He also commended the admirable qualities of the Sikkimese people, highlighting their humility and unwavering support to all especially outsiders. He emphasized the significance of civilian backing in achieving national objectives, stressing that victory in any conflict isn't solely determined by military might but also the solidarity and cooperation of the people. He lauded the Sikkimese people for their role in bolstering the defence and progress of the country.

Sikkim Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya sent his warm wishes on the occasion.

Nugalgarh Refinery Limited's independent director Sudip Pradhan and Sikkim House ARC Jashoda Chetri also spoke on the occasion.

CUSU seeks to clarify row over varsity space to outside party

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 16: The Cotton University Students' Union (CUSU), in a statement on Thursday sought to clarify the row over the alleged move of the university authorities to hand over space within the campus to an outside party — State Bank of India.

The CUSU said that following a proposal from the SBI for allotment of space for starting some utility, the Vice Chancellor placed the matter in the Executive Council meeting.

"The Executive Council, subsequently, after rounds of discussion, advised the formation of a committee taking all

the stakeholders into consideration. Subsequently on May 13, 2024, a notice was issued by the authority to look into the matter referring the Executive Council resolution to it. The notice also speaks about scrutinizing the possibilities of allocation of space in the university premises, e.g., canteen, coffee house, photostall, pharmacy, etc., which usually are an integral part of the educational institutions," it said.

"But to our utter dismay, this news was circulated in a distorted manner, ultimately defaming the glory of the institution," the statement added. Terming as "unfortunate" the controversy which has led

to confusion among the public, the CUSU said that an unnecessary hue and cry has been raised over a notification, which in any case was not final.

The CUSU said that allowing space to outside parties for starting facilities was a common practice with such institutions, as almost all educational institutions across the country are approached for letting out space for temporary or permanent establishments of banks, canteens, etc.

It said that the incident was created in the absence of the Vice Chancellor who was in Banaras Hindu University, performing an official duty as given by the President of India.

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TOPPERS



SHRABANI BHATTACHARYYA
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FATIMA AKHTAR
 94.2%



PRIYA ROY
 93.60


STUDENTS SECURED 80% AND ABOVE IN AISSEE


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AISSEE 2023-24 Results TOPPERS


SHRABANI BHATTACHARYYA
 97%


FATIMA AKHTAR
 94.2%


PRIYA ROY
 93.60

STUDENTS SECURED 80% AND ABOVE IN AISSEE

 SACHIN KUMAR 93.20%	 HANNAH SHARMA 92%	 TANU AGARWAL 90.60%	 HRITESHTHAPALIA 90.60%	 TAHSIN ZIA CHOUDHURY 90%	 KRITIKA HARLALKA 90%
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Aishwarya Rai Bachchan at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, on Thursday.—PTI

Imran Khan appears before court via video link

ISLAMABAD, May 16: Incarcerated former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday appeared before the Supreme Court via a video link in a case about changes in the anti-corruption laws.

The development comes after Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Tuesday while hearing an appeal by the government against annulment of certain changes in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) laws by the previous government had ordered the authorities to present Khan virtually for his statement.

Khan, 71, had challenged the tweaks in the NAB laws and the top court in September last year had accepted his plea which reopened dozens of cases of alleged corruption against some leading politicians, including Nawaz Sharif.

A five-member Supreme Court larger bench, headed by

Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi heard the case.

Khan appeared as a petitioner through video link in the case, but the hearing was not live streamed unlike the current practice, which had been in vogue since the top judge started it last year after becoming the chief justice.

Consequently, Khan's followers could not see him live for the first time since he was arrested in August last year.

However, his party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) shared a picture of the purported video call, with a laptop screen showing Khan seated in a room wearing a light-blue shirt, and seemingly uninterested as he rested his face on his hand.

The party in a statement said

that there was no live stream from the apex court as the registrar maintained that it was the prerogative of the bench to decide if or not the hearing is to be broadcasted live.

"Judicial process demands fairness and openness, (and) transparency can only be ensured through public view of proceedings. Refusal to stream proceedings advances unfairness and non-transparency and must be condemned. CJ has changed the process unilaterally and has discredited his own decision that brought him fame soon after he took over," Khan's party said.

Khan has been charged in several cases, including cypher and unlawful marriage, and has remained imprisoned even though he had obtained bail in some other cases.

"Earlier today, on the orders of the Supreme Court, ar-

rangements were completed at the Adiala Jail for the appearance of the PTI founder," a jail source said.

Khan was arrested in August last year and since then has been incarcerated, first in the Attock Jail and now in Adiala Jail and out of sight.

His appearance in court comes a day after two courts granted him relief in separate cases, including the Al-Qadir Trust matter. A division of the high court led by Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri granted him bail in the RS 60 billion case, while Judicial Magistrate Suhail Bilal Ranjha also acquitted him in a case registered against him at the Khanna police station in connection with the Azadi March in 2022. The cases against Khan and other party leaders were registered over violation of Section 144. — PTI

China, Cambodia begin 15-day military exercises

SVAY CHOK (Cambodia), May 16: Cambodia and China began 15-day military exercises on Thursday as questions grow about Beijing's increasing influence in the Southeast Asian nation.

About 1,315 Cambodian military personnel and 760 Chinese are participating in the regular "Golden Dragon" including three Chinese and 11 Cambodian ships.

As the first stage of the exercises got underway at a Cambodian military base with a forested and mountainous training area about 90 kilometers (55 miles) northwest of Phnom Penh, Cambodian army com-

mander in chief Gen Vong Pisen thanked China for providing new equipment and helping to upgrade military facilities, including the Ream Naval Base.

The United States and others have worried that China's involvement in building a new pier at the Ream base could lead to it becoming a new outpost for the Chinese navy at a strategically important location on the Gulf of Thailand. As the Golden Dragon exercises began, two Chinese warships had been docked at the pier for more than five months, stoking those concerns.

Cambodia has insisted, however, that its constitution prohibits the deployment of for-

ign military forces on its territory, and the Defense Ministry said the two Chinese corvettes were just "testing" the pier and were on hand to participate in the Golden Dragon exercises, whose second phase will include maritime maneuvers near the Ream base.

Vong Pisen, speaking alongside Adm Gao Xiucheng from the Chinese military's Southern Theater Command, underscored Cambodia's official position, saying the country would "not allow any foreign military base on our territory."

At the same time, he acknowledged China's contribution to helping Cambodia upgrade its military capabilities

and said the exercises would help build deeper cooperation and trust between the forces of the two countries.

The two military officers inspected troops and an array of armored fighting vehicles, artillery and other equipment ahead of the start of the maneuvers.

The Golden Dragon exercises have been held on a regular basis since 2016, around the same time that Cambodia canceled similar exercises with the United States known as Angkor Sentinel.

Cambodia is China's closest ally in Southeast Asia, while China is Cambodia's most important ally and benefactor, with a strong influence on its economy. — AP

Several wounded in Switzerland knife attack

GENEVA, May 16: Several passers-by were injured in an indiscriminate knife attack in the northern Swiss town of Zofingen, according to the local police.

Police said on social media on Wednesday evening that the perpetrator had been apprehended by special forces after hiding in a building for two hours.

The victims had been transported to the hospital with stab wounds. Xinhua news agency quoted police as saying.

A large-scale police operation continued in the evening. The authorities advised people to avoid areas near the local train station. — IANS

Boat strike causes oil spill, partial collapse of bridge

HOUSTON, May 16: A barge slammed into a bridge pillar in Galveston, Texas, on Wednesday, spilling oil into surrounding waters and closing the only road to a smaller and separate island that is home to a university, officials said. There were no immediate reports of injuries, although officials said one person on the barge was knocked into the water and quickly rescued.

The tugboat was pushing bunker barges, which are fuel barges for ships, Flores said. The accident resulted in oil spilling from the barge into the bay and crews were working to clean it up, he said. The barge, which is owned by Martin Petroleum, has a 30,000-gallon capacity, but it's not clear how much leaked into the bay, said Galveston County spokesperson Spencer Lewis. He said about 6.5 miles (10.5 kilometers) of the waterway was shut down as a result of the spill.

Pelican Island, which is connected to Galveston by the bridge, is home to a large shipyard, Texas University of Galveston, and Seawolf Park, a former immigration station that now attracts tourists to its iconic fishing pier and decommissioned US Navy vessels.

Fire trucks drove over the bridge as workers and law enforcement officials looked at the remnants of the collapsed rail line. Aerial footage showed

knocked one man off the vessel and into the water, but he was quickly recovered and was not injured, said Galveston County Sheriff's Office Maj Ray Nolen.

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Fire trucks drove over the bridge as workers and law enforcement officials looked at the remnants of the collapsed rail line. Aerial footage showed

a large piece of broken concrete and debris from the railroad hanging off the side of the bridge and laying on the barge that officials said rammed into the passageway.

Flores said the rail line only serves as protection for the structure and has never been used.

A statement posted on the City of Galveston's Facebook page said there were no reports of injuries and that the island is currently inaccessible to car traffic.

"Engineers from the Texas Department of Transportation are also enroute to inspect the roadway and determine if there is damage," the statement said. "The bridge will remain closed until it is deemed safe to use."

One business, Baywatch Dolphin Tours, said they were seeking the university's approval to shuttle people off the island and were planning how to provide a long-term service while bridge repairs are underway.

Opened in 1960, the Pelican Island Causeway Bridge was rated as "Poor" according to the Federal Highway Administration's 2023 National Bridge Inventory released last June. — AP

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Applications are invited from intending eligible candidates, who are citizens of India as defined in Article 5 and 6 of the Constitution of India, in the Standard Form of application for filling up vacant posts (highlighted in the table) in the establishment of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Majuli, Assam.

The qualification, eligibility criteria and reservation are set forth in the table against the post after taking into due consideration the relevant rules of government as amended from time to time.

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How to Apply:

- Candidates who will fulfil the requisite eligibility criteria must submit their applications in the Standard Form of application published in the Assam Gazette Part-IX and fill the form with BLOCK LETTERS using Black/Blue ball pen only. Candidates shall affix one (1) Recent passport size coloured photograph in the specified box and submit another two (2) Passport size photographs with the application form and put signature in the box specified,
- The filled up "Application form" along with the copy of age certificate, educational qualification certificate, caste certificate from competent authority, employment exchange registration certificate, forwarding, in case of application through proper channel, experience certificate, if any must be sent by post to the **Office of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Majuli, P.O. Garamur Satra, Pin-785104, Dist. Majuli (Assam)**, or may be dropped in the **"Drop Box for applications"** kept in the Office of the undersigned. The Documents furnished with the application must be self attested by the candidates himself/herself.
- Candidates have to produce their original testimonials regarding educational qualification, date of birth, caste certificate, working experience (if any) at subsequent stages as and when asked for.
- Applications made in any other mode except as indicated above shall be summarily rejected without any communication. Incomplete applicants in any respect will be rejected without assigning any reason thereof. No applications will be accepted, received after the last date of submission of applications through any mode. The authority shall not be responsible for any delay by the postal authority.
- Applications should reach the office of the undersigned during office hours on working days **on or before 31.05.2024**.
- The candidate should not be less than eighteen (18) years of age and not more than forty (40) years of age as on 01.01.2024. The upper age limit is relaxable by –
 - 5 years for ST and SC candidates, i.e. upto 45 years as per Government Notification No.ABP/6/2016/51 Dated Dispur, the 2nd September, 2020 issued by Department of Personnel, Government of Assam.
 - 3 years for OBC/MOBC candidates, i.e. upto 43 years as per Government Notification No.ABP/6/2016/51 Dated Dispur, the 2nd September, 2020 issued by Department of Personnel, Government of Assam.
 - EWS Candidates must produce income and assets certificate of the family issued by the office not below the rank of circle officer as per provision of para 5 of Govt. OM No. ABP.07/2019/4 Dated 31.02.2019.
- Applicants who are already in Government service shall submit their applications through proper channel, They shall have to produce No Objection Certificate at the time of document verification and release order at the time of joining from the present employer, if selected.
- No TA/DA will be admissible to the candidates for appearing in the interview/viva-voce.
- Candidates will be responsible for any mistakes made by him/her in the application form.
- The individual call letters will be sent to the eligible candidates through **E-mode i.e. Whatsapp & E-mail**. The mode of selection will be on interview/viva-voce consisting of 30 marks. The candidates have to mention their **Whatsapp Number and E-mail ID** at the top of the applications.
- Candidates are advised to visit the official website (<https://majuli.dcourts.gov.in/>) of Majuli District Judiciary regularly to get updated information.
- If any candidate is found canvassing directly/indirectly, his/her candidature will be rejected.

**Sd/- Chief Judicial Magistrate
Majuli**

Janasanyog/D/774/24/17-May-24

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE,
UDALGURI
DISTRICT, UDALGURI ASSAM**

The above is photograph of Tulika Rabha (39 Yrs.), W/o-Saitya Rabha, Vill: Barbari Pathar, PS: Panery, Dist: Udalguri who has been missing 03.04.2024 from her house.

This refers to Panery PS GDE No-14, Dtd. 05.05.2024 and this office Man Missing Register Entry No. 66, Dtd. 07.05.2024.

Descriptive Roll of the Missing Person:

- Complexion : Fair
- Age : 39 Yrs.
- Height : 5.2 Feet
- L/known : Assamese
- Wearing : Sador Mekhela

All efforts may be made to trace out/recover the above noted missing person at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to this office at the following helpline numbers for further necessary action: 6026901138 (Cell Phone).

**Sd/- Superintendent of Police
Udalguri, Assam**

Janasanyog/D/787/24/17-May-24

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE,
UDALGURI
DISTRICT, UDALGURI ASSAM**

The above is photograph of Moiron Nessa (30 Yrs.), W/o-Md. Fazol Ali, Vill- Aminpara, PS- Rowta, Dist- Udalguri who has been missing 27.04.2024 from her house.

This refers to Rowta PS GDE No-15, Dtd. 29.04.2024 and this office Man Missing Register Entry No. 56, Dtd. 07.05.2024.

Descriptive Roll of the Missing Person:

- Complexion : White
- Age : 25 Yrs.
- Height : 5 Feet
- L/known : Assamese
- Wearing : Salwar

All efforts may be made to trace out/recover the above noted missing person at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to this office at the following helpline numbers for further necessary action: 6026901138 (Cell Phone).

**Sd/- Superintendent of Police
Udalguri, Assam**

Janasanyog/D/779/24/17-May-24

Ex-PM Lee lauds SICCI

SINGAPORE, May 16: The Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) has helped strengthen economic links between Singapore and India by providing local firms with market outreach and advisory on the Indian market, former Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has said.

"These efforts have helped us to benefit from India's tremendous growth potential," Lee said in a farewell letter to the SICCI after relinquishing the premiership on Wednesday in a political leadership renewal process of the People's Action Party which has ruled the prosperous city-state for six decades.

He noted SICCI's significant contribution to Singapore's economic growth, highlighting, "You helped many local Indian firms grow their businesses through transformation, innovation, and overseas expansion.

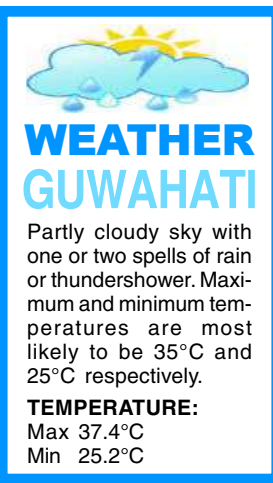
SICCI has also been a close partner of the government, providing valuable feedback on government policies, said Lee who led Singapore for 20 years and now sits as a senior minister in the Cabinet headed by Lawrence Wong – sworn in on Wednesday as the fourth Prime Minister of the city-state.

"For instance, when we negotiated the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agree-

ment (CECA), SICCI gave useful inputs which guided our negotiators to improve its provisions," said the 72-year-old Lee, who served as the third prime minister of the city-state, now established as an Asian financial hub with globally-linked trading centres.

The chamber has also played a big role in the community, supporting charities and social projects to uplift those in need, he noted in the letter to SICCI chairman Neil Parekh.

"I am grateful for SICCI's support to the government and the Indian business community in all these years," he said, urging the chamber to support Prime Minister Wong. — PTI



WEATHER GUWAHATI

Partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershower. Maximum and minimum temperatures are most likely to be 35°C and 25°C respectively.

TEMPERATURE:
Max 37.4°C
Min 25.2°C

Talk, prog for young innovators today

GUWAHATI, May 16: The Department of Geology, Royal School of Environmental and Earth Sciences is organizing day-long event titled 'Terra Talk - Encouraging and enabling the youth through productive discussions' on May 17.

The event aims to foster intellectual discourse and engage young minds through stimulating competitions that enhance communication and critical thinking skills. Highlights of the event include an all Assam inter-school/college debate competition, and an idea pitch competition, offering young innovators a platform to showcase their ideas and compete for recognition. - Staff Reporter

Birth centenary programme of Amalendu Guha

GUWAHATI, May 16: The first of a series of events organized to mark the birth centenary of historian, poet and litterateur Dr Amalendu Guha will be held at Alumni Hall of Cotton University on May 19 at 5 pm.

Organizing committee president Dr Hiren Gohain and working president Nitya Bora said the event will feature a lecture by Gyan Pujari, while Dr Amarjyoti Choudhury, Dr Bipuljyoti Saikia, Samindra Huzuri, Sameer Tanti, Gautam Bhattacharjee, Nilima Thakuria Haque, Shankar Saikia, Kushal Dutta and Arindam Borkotoky will feature in the 'Guha' Kabitar Shradhanjali' programme. - Staff Reporter

Pensioners' meeting held

GUWAHATI, May 16: The 10th biennial general meeting of the Guwahati branch of the Government Pensioners' Association, Assam was held on May 13 in the Pensioners' Bhawan auditorium at Chandmari.

Presided over by association president Prof Balindra Kumar Sarma, the meeting constituted a new executive body for a period of two years. The 25-member executive body would be headed by Prof Balindra Kumar Sarma as president, Annadacharan Bhuyan as vice president and Dinul Islam as general secretary. - Staff Reporter

Dengue Day observed

GUWAHATI, May 16: National Dengue Day was observed at Ulubari HS School on Thursday, during which an awareness meeting was held along with a quiz competition among the students.

National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVDC), Assam, State Programme Officer Dr Bikaj Ranjan Gogoi, Assistant DHS Filaria Dr K Nath, State Dengue Nodal Officer Dr Bobeeema Sarma, State Public Health Consultant Dr Liza Panda, East Guwahati MO in-charge Dr Mayuri Sarma, Ulubari UHC MO in-charge Dr Mrigakshi Sarma, DMO Kamrup Metro Mrinal Talukdar, Ulubari HS School Principal Nilakhi Baruah, and Kamrup Metro DVBD Consultant Dr Swapnali Saikia were present in the meeting. - Staff Reporter

Show cause notices to 2 AIUDF MLAs

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 16: The All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) has issued show cause notices to two of its legislators - Suzam Uddin Laskar of Katlicherra and Nijam Uddin Choudhury of Algapur - for their alleged involvement in "anti-party activities".

Addressing a press conference here, AIUDF general secretary (organization) Aminul Islam asserted that there is no dissidence in the party and that the Badruddin Ajmal-led outfit is united. "Two of our party MLAs, Suzam Uddin Laskar of Katlicherra and Nijam Uddin

Choudhury of Algapur, made some social media posts as well as remarks before the media during the past couple of days. That has come to the attention of the party. There were also allegations of the duo being involved in various anti-party activities during the ongoing (Lok Sabha) elections. Their recent posts and remarks have proved that they are involved in anti-party activities. We have noticed that they have extended help to other parties despite being members of the AIUDF. Therefore, the party has issued show cause notices to both of them and sought their replies within the next five

days as to why they should not be suspended from the party," Islam said.

He said that the AIUDF adheres to certain policies and principles and the decisions taken by the party are binding upon all its members.

"They violated the party's rules and tarnished the image of our party and our party president. That is why the party has been forced to take this decision. If we do not receive any satisfactory reply from them within the next five days, then the party will take appropriate action against them as per our party's constitution," Islam said.

Asked if the party is facing

any dissidence, he said, "Since the inception of the AIUDF, the party has faced several obstacles. But we have always managed to overcome such situations. There is no leadership crisis in the AIUDF or any possibility of a split in the party. The party is united."

Islam asserted that inner-party democracy is the norm in the AIUDF. "Our party president Badruddin Ajmal never takes decisions on his own. He always consults the party members," he added.

Asked about the party's expectations in the Lok Sabha polls, he said that the party was hopeful of victory in Nagaon and Dhubri seats.



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Rabies cases on the rise in Guwahati

Dog population management with anti-rabies vaccination only solution: Dr SS Dutta

SANJOY RAY

GUWAHATI, May 16: Is Guwahati staring at a potential public health crisis in the form of rabies?

Post-mortem examinations have revealed that more than 20 free roaming dogs in Guwahati have been diagnosed to be suspected cases of rabies in the last six months, which, according to experts, is an alarming figure, largely attributed to a surge in stray dog populations coupled with insufficient vaccination coverage.

The 'unprecedented' uptick in reported cases of rabies among stray dogs and instances of human exposure has now put almost every neighbourhood of Guwahati at risk!

The alarming revelation, according to experts, is just the tip of the iceberg since the discovery was made during routine examinations of the limited number of deceased stray dogs who were brought to the College of Veterinary Science, Khanapara.

Concerns have further been amplified by ever rising instances of dog bites not just in Guwahati but across the State.

More than 55,000 individuals fall victim to dog bites in Assam



File photo

every year, majority of them from stray dogs.

Information accessed by this correspondent revealed that rabies has reportedly claimed nearly 25 human deaths during the last five years, and doctors are of the opinion that the human deaths due to rabies are mostly under-reported.

Efforts to access information from the ISDP cell of the National Health Mission related to human deaths due to rabies, have,

however, turned futile.

In a series of alarming incidents reported over the past few weeks in Guwahati, rabid dogs have unleashed a reign of terror across various neighbourhoods, targeting unsuspecting pedestrians.

In one of the latest incidents, a deranged stray dog attacked and bit two unsuspecting individuals including a Judge in Guwahati's Lamb Road area and the animal was later found to be rabid.

"Getting chased by a pack of

dogs has become a common occurrence for me while coming back from office at night. This is posing a serious risk to residents' safety. Alarming sightings of aggressive canines have created an atmosphere of concern and fear," said Dheeraj Goswami, a resident of Christianbasti area.

Dr Sashanka Sekhar Dutta, the managing trustee and founder of JBF, contends that dog population management with anti-rabies vac-

ination is the only solution to this havoc. There are clear guidelines and Supreme Court orders for the ABC (Animal Birth Control) and ARV (Anti-Rabies Vaccination) programme, but unfortunately, this concern remains neglected in the State.

Dr Dutta has requested the Government machinery to take appropriate steps to implement this programme.

"With incidents of dog bites cases continuing to be on the rise in Guwahati and elsewhere, the looming threat of rabid dogs in our neighbourhood has left the community, especially the kids, vulnerable," a Guwahati-based veterinarian said requesting anonymity.

Even as the concerns mount, the magnitude and gravity of the problem apparently continues to be undermined by the authorities concerned, with the citizens alleging lack of urgency.

Unfortunately, although the menace of dog bites continues to torment Guwahatians with their population increasing manifold, no census of the animal has been done till date.

In fact, Guwahati does not even have a dog squad or a shelter home which speaks volumes of the indifferent attitude of the Gu-

wahati Municipal Corporation.

Dr Kailash Chamua of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation said that since 2014, as many as 22,197 stray dogs have been sterilized and administered anti-rabies vaccination.

However, there is no data available about the exact number of free roaming dogs that have been given anti-rabies vaccine till date.

Similarly, Dr Sankar Lahkar of the Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary informed that in the year 2022-23, around 38,500 doses of vaccine were administered on pet dogs across 25 districts, except the Sixth Schedule districts. The number in the year 2023-24 stands at 31,300.

"There has always been a constant rise in the number of rabies cases, but, of late, there seems to be an unprecedented spike, especially in Guwahati. We have to escalate the level of awareness about rabies, which remains a problem which was never given due attention despite its severity. The looming spectre of a rabies outbreak underscores the need for a coordinated drive by both government and non-government agencies," a source in the Health department said.

NAAC peer team visits RG Baruah College

GUWAHATI, May 16: A NAAC peer team comprising Prof Mohammad Khalid Azam as chairperson, who is Professor, Department of Business & Management, Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh; Prof Mantu Saha as Member Coordinator who is Professor, Department of Mathematics, the University of Burdwan, West Bengal and Dr Mamta Muthal as a member, who is former principal, GH Raisoni Institute of Information Technology, Maharashtra, visited RG Baruah College

on May 14 and 15, 2024 for its third cycle assessment. This was stated in a press release.

The dignitaries were welcomed by principal Dr Pranjit Kumar Nath, the students and staff of the college and soon after, the departmental power-point presentations began. All the academic departments gave their power-point presentations and interacted with the NAAC peer team. Thereafter, the team visited all the academic departments where departmental records and files were

checked. They also interacted with students from various departments including alumni of the college.

In the post lunch session, the peer team interacted with parents of students. A cultural programme was held in the evening where various folk dances of Assam were showcased by the students. The next day, the peer team visited various cells of the college like Women Studies Cell, Information and Career Guidance Cell, NSS, Extension Education Cell, Red Ribbon Club and Anti-

Sexual Harassment Cell including IQAC, computer laboratory, ICT rooms, Library, Girls' and Boys' common rooms, NCC, playground, office room, student union room, sports cell, exam control room, physical facilities like drinking water, canteen, ramp and rainwater harvesting. Various pros and cons with future suggestions were given to each of the units. An exit meeting was held where suggestions were given for improvement and, with this, the two-day NAAC peer team visit concluded.

International Museum Day celebrations tomorrow

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 16: The Regional Science Centre (RSC) Guwahati (North East Zone headquarters) is going to celebrate the International Museum Day (IMD) at its premises here on May 18 with various activities for students.

The theme of IMD 2024 is 'Museums for education and research' and the day is marked for museums to showcase their significance as cultural pillars.

As part of the celebrations, an art competition for students in different groups will be held at 10 am.

For students of classes 3 to 4, the topic will be 'A boat on a river', and for students of classes 5 to 7, the topic will be 'A science model', while students of classes 8 to 10 can choose any exhibit or object or scenery in the RSC Guwahati campus and draw the same on the spot.

It will be followed by an essay writing competition on the subject 'Museums for education and research' for students of classes 8 to 10.

At 11.15 am, there will be a science show, followed by an open house science quiz. A prize distribution ceremony will be held at 11.55 am. There will be a science film show at 12.10 pm. Entry will be free for all participants.

A maximum of 40 students for the art competition and five students for the essay writing competition from each school will be allowed to participate.

The participants have been requested to bring their own pencils, colours, hard board, erasers, etc., and report at the venue at 9.45 am on May 18.

Bid to revolutionize aquaculture landscape in NE

GU, CIBA aim to address challenges and unlock opportunities for aquaculture development

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 16: With an objective towards advancing aquaculture practices in the Northeast, Gauhati University (GU) and the Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), Chennai, have joined hands through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The agreement, signed during a formal ceremony at the conference hall of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) at GU on May 15, aims to revolutionize the aquaculture landscape in the region.

The MoU, facilitated by the Aquaculture & Biodiversity Centre at GU, outlines several key objectives to be achieved through collaborative efforts. The collaboration between GU and CIBA is aimed to catalyze transformative changes in the aquaculture sector of the Northeast. By leveraging expertise, resources, and innovation, the partners aim to address existing challenges and unlock new opportunities for sustainable aquaculture development.

Foremost among these objectives is the provision of hands-on training to aspiring youth in the Northeast

supplementary feed formulation for both food and ornamental fishes. This initiative seeks to empower local communities by imparting essential skills and knowledge in aquaculture techniques.

Additionally, the partnership will focus on the dissemination of Plankton-plus technology, aimed at increasing plankton productivity in cultivable ponds.

By introducing innovative methodologies, the collaborators aim to enhance the overall productivity and sustainability of aquaculture practices in the region.

Post-harvest technology and the development of probiotics for aquaculture are among the other areas earmarked for joint exploration and development.

Speaking on the occasion, GU Registrar Hemanta Kumar Nath emphasized the significance of promoting local knowledge and technology through collaborative efforts, envisioning a global impact stemming from regional advancements.

CIBA director Dr Kuldeep Lal lauded the proactive initiatives led by Prof Dandadhar Sarma and his team at the Aquaculture & Biodiversity Centre, GU. Dr Lal highlighted the immense potential of Assam to emerge as a major hub for the aquaculture industry, owing to its strategic geographic location and conducive climatic conditions.

The ceremony was also attended by IQAC, GU director Prof Bhaven Tanti, and deputy director Prof Dhrubajyoti Saharia along with faculty members from the Department of Zoology.

Awareness programme among railway passengers held



Senior officials of RPF and SBI distributing leaflets at the Guwahati Railway Station, on Thursday. - UB Photos

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 16: A joint awareness programme among passengers was conducted on Thursday at the Guwahati Railway Station concourse by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the SBI.

K Arul Jothi, IG of RPF (Northeast Frontier Railway), Subhakarta Kananu, General Manager of SBI Guwahati, Altah Ahmed Mallick, Additional General Manager of SBI Guwahati, Jitendra

Kumar, Additional Divisional Railway Manager Guwahati, Abhishek Kumar, Chief Manager of SBI SME Branch Guwahati, and Uday Singh Power, Senior DSC of Lumding, attended the event and spoke about the objective of the awareness programme.

The objective of the event was to educate train passengers to be cautious against miscreant activities onboard trains and the railway premises. The passengers were informed that

the 139 railway helpline is useful to inform the authorities about any kind of inconvenience faced by the passengers.

Theft of personal belongings of passengers like mobile phones, laptops, luggage, purse, and so on, is a major issue faced by the passengers.

In order to educate the passengers, leaflets printed in Assamese, Hindi, English, and Bengali were distributed to them on the occasion, stated a press release.

Message for today

Citizenship is what makes a republic – monarchies can get along without it.

– MARK TWAIN

The Assam Tribune

Opportune timing

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019, which aims to fast-track Indian citizenship for refugees of all religions from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, apart from Muslims, was enacted four years back, but the framing of the rules for its implementation was completed only in March this year. Apparently, the BJP has decided that now, the middle of the unusually lengthy Lok Sabha election, is an opportune moment to take the process to its intended conclusion by having the Union Home Secretary publicly hand over the certificates of citizenship to 14 individuals at a ceremony in Delhi, after their applications were processed online through a designated portal, in the full glare of the media. Reportedly, around 300 more applicants were sent their certificates through emails. Certain aspects of the timing are significant. It may be recalled that when the CAA was first mooted, it had been Assam in particular, and the North-East in general, which had strongly protested against the Act, and initiated an anti-CAA movement that had strengthened into a crescendo of all-India proportions. The fear here is that CAA will initiate further demographic emasculation of the indigenous Assamese people in future through enabling citizenship for illegal Hindu migrants from Bangladesh detected in the NRC, while facilitating future migration of the same. Unfortunately, the two-year long Covid-19 pandemic, when all public gatherings were banned, intruded and saw the petering away of the protests.

No doubt, the fact that the Lok Sabha election in Assam, where the distribution of certificates would have made an impact on the election, has concluded, might have had a role to play in the timing. It may also be noted that the next phase on May 20 in West Bengal will see key seats, where the Matua community that originally came from Bangladesh, holds sway. That the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will try to extract electoral mileage from the certificate distribution is testified to by the comment of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who held it up as an example of the actual realization of a 'Modi ki guarantee' and fulfilment of a campaign promise. The move has been made by the Union Home Ministry despite the fact that a clutch of petitions challenging the CAA and pleading for the North-East to be kept out of its purview are still pending before the Supreme Court of India. In fact, the Centre has asserted that CAA is not open to judicial review since matters of citizenship and foreign policy are prerogatives of the Parliament. Some observers of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections scenario have commented that the publicized distribution of certificates is aimed at firing up the BJP's base because doubts have started to crop up that the party might not win the landslide it had sought and, on the contrary, the Opposition INDIA bloc might even end up winning!

Successful raids

In a major crackdown, the Assam Police busted a big network of cyber criminals, arresting 14 persons across several locations in the State. The coordinated operation spanned the areas of Lahorighat, Bhuragaon, Moirabari and Guwahati, where 16 special police teams conducted simultaneous raids and seized a large number of incriminating documents, including 396 SIM cards, 25 ATM cards, 14 chequebooks, three laptops, 34 mobile phones, 11 fake PAN cards and two printer machines. These materials are expected to serve as critical evidence in dismantling the networks of cybercriminals operating in the areas. The arrests – over 200 since 2023 – also go to highlight the growing magnitude of cybercrimes in the State in recent times. Morigaon, in particular, has emerged as a hub of cybercrime activities and one expects that the police will follow up on the arrests with appropriate interventions for checking the menace. With cybercrime assuming serious proportions in the State as also elsewhere, the police needs to equip itself in a matching manner to take on the gangs of cyber criminals who operate with a lot of dexterity. The common people, too, need to be on the guard against such scammers and abide by some basic guidelines that can go a long way in checking such crimes. The spurt in cybercrimes, especially online frauds, has resulted in loss of hard-earned money for the gullible victims.

The gravity of the situation warrants the common man to be cyber-educated to the desired extent. This is because almost everyone today has to engage oneself in some online activity/transaction or the other. Indeed, a majority of such cases of fraud can be averted by exercising some precaution and applying common sense. In many cases, the victims act in an irresponsible manner by sharing personal details like ATM pin and OTP with the fraudsters or downloading some harmful app at their instance. This is particularly surprising given that online fraud has registered an all-time high across the country and there have also been sustained awareness campaigns by banks in recent times on the do's and don'ts concerning cyber fraud. The anonymity of the Internet user and the absence of geographical boundaries in the cyber world have made e-crimes a rather complex affair, especially in investigating cases and bringing the culprits to book. Police officials being the first respondents to crimes, it is all the more imperative that their capacity building is enhanced for handling offences having a digital perspective. There is also an urgent need to adopt a pragmatic policy that accords due thrust on the varied aspects of the crimes including prevention and follow-up. Among other things, a convergence of investigating agencies, academicians and industry is a must to devise the right kind of response mechanism. This calls for enhanced interface among these three so that preventing and probing cybercrimes becomes easier. Also imperative is to keep updating the skills of the cybercrime investigators through periodical advanced training regimes.

India's cybersecurity fears

DISHA MAHANTA

China has leveraged cyber means to shape narratives, manipulate public opinion, influence political discourse, disseminate fake news, sow discord and undermine the foundations of India's democratic institutions.

Cyberspace refers to a digitally interconnected environment that serves as a dynamic virtual realm linking diverse computer systems. There is ongoing discourse among scholars and political theorists on whether cyberspace should be classified as a global common or global public good. Given its universal accessibility, cyberspace is highly vulnerable to cyber threats, making its protection crucial for national security and integrity. Cyberattacks are particularly insidious, as they are capable of originating from anywhere in the world, targeting multiple victims simultaneously, and they are difficult to trace due to internet anonymity. Cyberattacks can severely impact critical digital infrastructure, leading to financial losses, compromised sensitive data, or disruptions in essential services. With internet governance assuming greater significance and cybersecurity becoming pivotal for national prosperity, cyber diplomacy has emerged as a focal point in foreign policy worldwide, including in India. Since the inception of the 'Digital India' programme in 2015, India has transitioned toward a digitally empowered society and economy, significantly expanding its utilization of cyberspace and the internet. Like other nations, India heavily relies on digital platforms for diplomacy, commerce and strategic communication, underscoring the imperative of safeguarding cyberspace to protect national interests.

India consistently contends with threats to its cyberspace. Cybersecurity risks in India encompass various forms such as financial fraud, identity theft, phishing, and ransomware assaults. The nation frequently finds itself targeted by state-sponsored cyber assaults, notably from neighbouring countries. These attacks are orchestrated to pilfer sensitive data, disrupt critical digital infrastruc-

ture, or engage in espionage endeavours, all in pursuit of strategic objectives. Malevolent actors, including 'hacktivists,' continue to pose threats to India's cyber landscape, often driven by political or social motives.

Tensions along the border and in strategic relations with neighbouring countries spill over into the digital arena, rendering India susceptible to cyber attacks. China, as a formidable neighbour, presents an ongoing threat to India's cyberspace. Backed by state-sponsored cyber units and a robust cyber infrastructure, China poses a considerable risk to India's cybersecurity. Numerous cyber espionage operations have been linked to China, targeting Indian government entities, critical infrastructure, and private sectors. These intrusions seek to extract sensitive information, secure strategic advantages, and compromise India's national security. Several notable cyber incidents attributed to China's activities targeting India encompass cyber espionage, critical infrastructure attacks, economic espionage, influence operations, and cyber warfare. Chinese state-sponsored hacking groups have targeted Indian government agencies, military institutions, and defence contractors to illicitly obtain sensitive information. Allegedly, China has conducted cyber assaults aimed at India's critical infrastructure, encompassing power grids, telecommunications networks, and financial systems. Such attacks pose a significant threat to India's national security and economic stability, as they can disrupt essential services and erode public confidence. In April 2022, Recorded Future disclosed that Chinese state-sponsored hackers had targeted India's power grids in Ladakh, with the possible objective of gathering information on India's critical infrastructure or preparing for future sabotage. Chinese cyber actors have directed their efforts towards Indian companies and

research institutions, aiming to pilfer intellectual property, trade secrets, and proprietary information. This form of economic espionage undermines India's competitiveness, innovation and economic growth by compromising valuable assets and undermining market integrity. A Chinese state-linked hacker group boasted of targeting key offices of the Indian government, including the PMO and businesses like Reliance Industries Limited and Air India. China has leveraged cyber means to shape narratives, manipulate public opinion, and influence political discourse within India. Through coordinated disinformation campaigns, dissemination of fake news, and manipulation of social media, Chinese actors seek to advance their strategic interests, sow discord, and undermine the foundations of India's democratic institutions.

The escalating tensions between India and China have heightened concerns over the potential for cyber warfare. While no overt instances of cyber warfare have been reported, both have demonstrated capabilities and intent to engage in offensive cyber operations, raising the spectre of cyber escalation in future conflicts. The most recent escalation between the two nations occurred following the Galwan Valley conflict. After this altercation, concerns arose regarding heightened cyber espionage efforts by both countries and potential increases in surveillance activities aimed at monitoring each other's military movements and strategic intentions.

There are several instances of China targeting India's cyberspace. In October 2020, significant parts of Mumbai experienced a widespread blackout impacting suburban railways and hospitals. Months later, Recorded Future reported that a China-affiliated hacker group known as 'RedEcho' breached the Indian power sector, potentially contributing to Mumbai's power outage. Additionally, Re-

corded Future indicated that aside from the power sector, Chinese hackers also targeted two Indian ports and various segments of the railway infrastructure. The Chinese commitment to targeting India is exemplified by the Advanced Persistent Threat 30 (APT30) vector. This espionage operation persisted for a decade before being uncovered in 2015. It systematically collected information from Indian computer networks concerning geopolitical matters pertinent to the Chinese Communist Party. These included the India-China border dispute, Indian naval activities in the South China Sea, and India's relationships with neighbouring South Asian nations. In 2020, the decision to ban Chinese-linked applications was taken after the confirmation that these applications contain material prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India. This action by the Indian government was based on several complaints of extortion and harassment of common people.

India is bolstering its cyber defences and engaging in offensive cyber actions in response to escalating Chinese cyber espionage efforts. However, more proactive measures are needed. First, India should provide technical evidence to attribute these attacks to Chinese state-sponsored hackers, a step that the national security establishment has been hesitant about despite ample evidence presented by the technical community. Additionally, New Delhi requires a dedicated mechanism to monitor these offensive operations. While intelligence and security agencies monitor foreign spying campaigns, cyber activity is often treated as isolated incidents without linking them to the broader Chinese cyber espionage campaign and state-sponsored hacking groups. India ought to prioritize the development of indigenous cybersecurity solutions, technologies and expertise to reduce dependence on Chinese imports.

Ethics in AI-based learning

DHRUBA KR BHATTACHARYYA

Policymakers must develop clear guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence in educational settings.

Today, no one can ignore the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in our daily lives. AI can bring benefits to our lives by improving human comfort, health, safety and productivity. Knowingly or unknowingly, we have been availing AI-based services almost every day in the form of searching documents using Google, using GPS to find the shortest path to a destination, reading or writing emails or messages, or fetching appropriate movies. In each of these applications, AI and machine learning have been applied to a significant extent. In addition to these numerous applications, AI has also been massively applied in education. Both AI and education are evolving rapidly, and their unification generates significant discourse about ethical considerations. With increasing applications of AI in education, the ethical implications of its usage become more prominent. Therefore, it is essential to identify the ethical challenges raised due to such growing application of AI in education, and the learners must be informed on how to address them. The academicians, administrators and policymakers need to navigate the complex application landscape to ensure that AI solutions are used in education both ethically and responsibly.

One major ethical challenge of AI-based learning is to ensure the privacy and security of student data. To implement AI-based educational technologies, the administrators collect voluminous data from each student. It is the primary ingredient for any AI model. Such data may range from personal to extracurricular to academic performances. The use of such voluminous data for training AI models raises questions

about its ownership and privacy protection. My personal experiences while addressing students inside the country as well as abroad also reveal that today's students are very much concerned about the privacy of their personal data. The repeated occurrences of incidents related to data scandals and security breaches may have compelled them to become more protective of their data. So, AI-based educational technologists must have to ensure that data are gathered and used following certain clear and transparent guidelines accepted mutually by both the parties, i.e., students or their guardians and the institution.

Another major ethical concern is raised due to biases in AI models. AI bias refers to non-conformity or anomaly in the predictions or decision-making due to some prejudiced assumption(s). The excessive dependence on biased AI-based models often leads to human biases. AI models mostly suffer from two biases. First, cognitive biases cause unconscious errors that mislead human judgements and decisions. This type of bias mostly occurs due to human attempts to simplify the information describing the real world used for analysis. Such cognitive biases are usually soaked by AI-based methods unknowingly while developing the prediction model or during training the model. Second, a lack of completeness in training data also causes AI bias. Incomplete or partial data cannot represent the student population fairly. For example, considering only UG student data cannot provide a proper representation of the whole population in an HEL. So, AI technologists must be careful to make their models free from these biases.

The influence of AI in human decision-

making is another major concern. AI methods have been used to make predictions about students' future performances or to generate recommendations about personalized learning paths. Although such predictions are helpful in the performance evaluation of the learners, they can also be self-fulfilling prophecies, attempting to shape students' opportunities based on their predicted outcomes. So, provided with predictions given by AI models, an academician or an administrator should not straightaway accept or reject them without applying their own intelligence. An appropriate reliance in decision-making occurs when the human accepts a correct AI prediction or corrects an incorrect AI prediction. An underreliance is a situation which occurs when the human fails to accept a correct AI prediction, whereas overreliance occurs when the human fails to correct an incorrect AI prediction.

Educational administrators are to be adequately trained to act with appropriate reliance on AI models. Further, there is always a risk that students could become overly reliant on AI-based systems, potentially undermining their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Inadequate or non-optimal learning of AI models is another major ethical issue that leads to inaccurate decision-making. AI models are software programmes that are written based on machine-learning algorithms. Such programmes are trained using task-specific data (or, examples or references) to generate appropriate predictions to satisfy the intended goals. For accurate decision-making, such programmes need to be trained using several sets of learning data so that they can identify the

desired patterns in them and use the learnings to generate a fair and unbiased decision for the given task at hand. When modelling students' learning performances with partial or inadequate training data, and identifying at-risk students, AI methods may provide more accurate predictions for a group of students than the others simply based on the different demographic attributes of the students (e.g., female vs male). So, learning highly influences the performances of such AI models. The use of learning data with any form of deficiencies such as incompleteness, irrelevance, non-recentcy, or a lack of reliability causes biased or inaccurate decision-making by the AI models. Further, the rate at which the AI models are trained is controlled by a set of parameters. For the best possible learning rate, these parameters are to be well-tuned by a trial-and-error method. The inappropriate setting of these parameters will lead to an inappropriate learning rate and hence will cause biased or inappropriate decision-making.

Lack of transparency and explainability is another major ethical issue. Transparency in AI refers to an adequate understanding of the actions of the AI system in real time for better awareness of the situation. On the other hand, explainability deals with providing information on the logic and reasoning used in the decision-making process, and how the system actions are decided. It refers to the ability of the human being to understand and evaluate the predictions made by the AI models based on the underlying reasoning. So, a lack of adequate transparency and explainability will lower the acceptability of AI-based systems and will lead to a state of underreliance.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opposition's biased narratives

Sir, – The Opposition parties must stop their endless biased narratives. They have been making so many unfounded allegations and insinuations, as explained in the article by Jayanta Madhav published in your esteemed daily on May 14, 2024. The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the Narendra Modi government and presents the real picture. The Opposition parties' actions are nothing more than false propaganda. The facts highlighted in the article, relating to the judiciary, the Enforcement Directorate, the Supreme Court, and the baseless complaints over electronic voting machines, provide ample evidence against the Opposition's allegations. The

writer's simple logic and straightforward views reflect the correct scenario and effectively counter the false narratives created by the Opposition. Your etc., **Manindra Borah**, Guwahati.

Rein in Rapido drivers

Sir, – Through your esteemed daily, I would like to raise my concern about the recent surge in Rapido ride fares in Guwahati city. As a regular commuter, I have noticed a significant increase in fares for some time now, making it difficult for commuters to afford their daily travels. The situation worsened when drivers began pressuring passengers to pay extra cash on top of the surge price, or cancel

the ride if the latter refused to comply with the inflated fares. What is even more concerning is the behaviour of some Rapido drivers while asking for extra payment. This situation goes against fair pricing and customer service principles. Citizens should not be subjected to such arbitrary pricing practices, especially during these challenging summer times.

I humbly urge the authorities concerned to ensure that fair pricing regulations are followed and some steps are taken immediately to rectify this issue. Yours etc., **Nandini Garodia**, RG Baruah Road, Guwahati.

Govt libraries

Sir, – As a civil services aspirant, I would like to highlight the timings of various government libraries in the city.

The Assam Administrative Staff College Library and the District Library remain open only for a fixed period. They should remain open until 9 or 10 pm. Many aspirants staying in PGs and hostels cannot afford the fees of private libraries. The only hope for them is the government libraries.

These libraries should be open even on holidays. The government should appoint shift-wise staff for these libraries. It would be helpful for the students who wish to spend more time in the libraries even on holidays. Yours etc., **A concerned student**.

Articles (within 1000-1100 words) and Letters to the Editor (within 150 words) for publication on the editorial page may be sent to the email ID: editor@assamtribune.com.

Air Quality Index (AQI)		
May 16, 2024		
(Average of past 24 hours)		
City/Town	Index Value	Air Quality
Guwahati	91	Satisfactory
Nalbari	113	Moderate
Nagaon	-	-
Sivasagar	64	Satisfactory
Silchar	58	Satisfactory

Pollution Control Board, Assam



Forecast for NE: Light to moderate rain is very likely to occur at many places over Arunachal Pradesh; at a few places over Assam and Meghalaya and light rain is very likely to occur at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Hot and humid weather conditions likely to prevail over Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura.

Warning: Thunderstorm and lightning is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh.

Dibrugarh	Max	Min	Tezpur	Max	Min
35.2	26.0	37.2	26.4		
Silchar	Max	Min	Dhubri	Max	Min
37.6	27.1	37.0	26.4		
Jorhat	Max	Min	N. Lakhimpur	Max	Min
34.6	24.2	32.8	20.8		
Shillong	Max	Min	Kohima	Max	Min
24.0	16.5	27.6	16.8		
Pasighat	Max	Min	Itanagar	Max	Min
32.8	26.4	34.0	26.3		
Imphal	Max	Min	Agartala	Max	Min
33.5	21.1	38.1	27.7		
Cherrapunjee	Max	Min			
33.5	21.1				

Duty Meteorological Officer, Regional Meteorological Centre, Guwahati

SFI protests poor CBSE exam results in Vidyajyoti schools

AGARTALA, May 16: The CPI(M)-backed SFI today gheraoed the Education Department's headquarters, Siksha Bhavan, here over the poor performance of students of State-run Vidyajyoti schools in the CBSE examinations.

A total of 110 State-run schools were rechristened as Vidyajyoti schools in 2019, and the CBSE curriculum was introduced in them. While 61 per cent of students cleared the CBSE Class X examinations, 59 per cent were successful in the Class XII examinations.

"Today, we came here to meet Director of Secondary Education NC Sharma and tell him about the anger among students and parents after the disastrous results. The BJP Government introduced the CBSE curriculum without creating proper infrastructure, mainly trained teachers. This has pushed thousands of students to a bleak future," SFI's State secretary Sandipan Deb said. - PTI

Stink bug outbreak sparks concern in Mamit town of Mizoram

ZODIN SANGA

AIZAWL, May 16: Reports coming in from Mamit town and its surrounding villages along the border with Tripura and Bangladesh, have raised alarm over the outbreak of Udonga montana, a stinky species of Pentatomid bug, locally known as *thangnang*. Swarms of these bugs have been spotted on tree branches, though no damage has been caused by them so far.

According to local sources, villagers collect these bugs and extract a pungent oil from them, which is sold at Rs 50 per cup. This has traditionally served as edible oil for the tribal population, although its

ALARM BELLS RINGING

Udonga montana, a stinky species of Pentatomid bug, is believed to be a harbinger of gregarious flowering in bamboos.

Such gregarious flowering is dreaded as it leads to a rapid growth in the rodent population.

The rodents cause widespread damage in the agricultural fields, leading to famine-like conditions.

demand has declined in contemporary times.

In local belief that runs deep in the agrarian society, the outbreak of *thangnang* is interpreted as an ominous sign, particularly forewarning of a famine. Agricultural scientists have reinforced this belief, suggesting a correlation between the stink bug infestation and 'Thing tam' - the gregarious flowering of 'Rawthing', a bamboo species

scientifically known as *Bambusa tulda*, which occurs in a 48-year cycle.

Past occurrences of gregarious flowering in *Bambusa tulda* led to surges in rodent populations which, in turn, led to widespread destruction of paddy fields and vegetables. The last major *Thing tam* triggered a famine in 1977, characterised by the withering away of 'Rawthing' bamboo and subse-

quent devastation caused by rodents in agricultural areas.

Local scientists have predicted recurrence of such famine-like conditions in 2025, coinciding with the next anticipated cycle of *Thing tam*. The looming threat underscores the importance of vigilance and proactive measures to mitigate potential agricultural losses and ensure food security in the region.

Heavy downpour submerges low-lying areas in Shillong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, May 16: A heavy downpour that lashed the Meghalaya capital for close to four hours this afternoon, caused flash floods and submerged low-lying areas in several parts of the city.

The incessant rainfall that began at about 1.30 pm and continued till 4.30 pm, flooded roads and footpaths. School-children, escorted by their parents, faced a harrowing time reaching their homes.

The Meteorology Department has not provided any rainfall data till the filing of this report. No casualty or damage to property has been reported so far.

Meanwhile, the Met Department has forecast rainfall in the State during the next couple of days.



Waterlogging woes: A flooded locality following incessant rainfall at Lower Lachumiere in Shillong on Thursday. - UB Photos

CUET examinees face inconvenience at NEHU

Two political parties and a student body have sought answers for alleged mismanagement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, May 16: Students appearing for the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) held at the NEHU on Wednesday, had to face a harrowing time due to alleged mismanagement. The examination that was scheduled at 3 pm, began at about 5.15 pm.

The examinees had to wait for several hours in torrential rain in the absence of proper signage to direct them to their respective examination halls.

According to the students, the National Testing Agency had marked the NEHU's Cluster Building as the examination hall, but the NEHU authorities assigned

two other buildings for the purpose without informing the students.

Moreover, there was a technical snag in the biometric system to facilitate entry of students, which caused further delay. The students were later allowed to enter the examination halls without the biometric identification process.

Meanwhile, political parties like the BJP and the Voice of People's Party (VPP), and the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) have condemned the mismanagement and demanded fixing of responsibility.

"It was unfortunate that the students had to face the ordeal as there was no authority looking after their welfare. The chaotic conduct of the examination subjected

the students to great stress that might have affected their performance," the VPP said.

The BJP, in a separate release, added: "The organisers must come up with a satisfactory justification for the harassment faced by the unfortunate examinees, failing which the party would take up the matter with the Government to ensure legal action against the blundering organisers."

The KSU wrote to Education Minister Rakkam Sangma to "take immediate action and ensure that such incidents do not recur". It demanded better facilities like clear signage, adequate seating arrangements, and working biometric systems to facilitate a smooth examination process.

Sikkim celebrates Statehood Day

GANGTOK, May 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, and Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang today greeted the people of Sikkim on the 49th Statehood Day.

"Greetings to the people of Sikkim on their Statehood Day," Modi wrote on X.

"This state is known for its scenic beauty and hardworking people. Over the years, Sikkim has made a mark in organic farming. Our government will keep working for the welfare of Sikkim in the times to come," the Prime Minister said, adding, "I pray that the people of this state are always healthy and prosperous."

Governor Acharya, in his message, said: "Today marks Sikkim's completion of 49 years in the democratic system. The journey from voluntary integration into the world's largest democracy on 16 May 1975 until today has been profoundly memorable and meaningful for Sikkim and its people." - PTI

Manipur Security Adviser briefs Guv on law and order



Manipur Security Adviser Kuldip Singh during a meeting with Governor Anusuya Uikhey at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal on Thursday. - Photo: Correspondent

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, May 16: Manipur Governor Anusuya Uikhey has asked the State Security Adviser Kuldip Singh to take all possible measures to check untoward incidents and ensure safety and security of the people in general, Raj Bhavan sources stated.

Singh called on the Governor at the Raj Bhavan this evening and briefed her on the prevailing security situation in the State. He gave details about deployment of Central forces along the fringe areas to prevent untoward incidents.

The Security Adviser pointed out that some forces had to be withdrawn from the ongoing Lok Sabha elections

1 held in illegal appointments case in Arunachal

CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, May 16: The Special Investigation Cell (Vigilance) of the Arunachal Pradesh Police, has arrested a person in connection with illegal appointment of primary teachers and other staff in the Education Department in Lower Siang district.

The arrested has been identified as Mikjar Ngulom alias June Lendo (32), a resident of New Bomte village under the Gensi/Likabali Police Station in Lower Siang district.

The case, registered under Sections 120(B)/420/409/468/471 of the IPC read with Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, was initiated on the basis of a report submitted by the State

Scam in appointment of primary school teachers and other staff

Director of Elementary Education regarding irregularities in appointment of primary teachers and others in various districts of the State, including Lower Siang. The case was registered at the SIC (Vigilance) Police Station on February 6, 2024.

SIC (Vigilance) SP Anant Mittal said, "The arrest was made on Wednesday after detailed analysis of the documents, interrogation of appointees, and other suspects, and technical analysis."

"Mgulom was employed privately by some of the accused to help further their cause," said the SP declining to share further details. "The SIC investigation into illegal appointments is going on and all facets of the case are being investigated," Mittal added.

Naga Plebiscite Day

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, May 16: The NSCN (I-M) today observed the Naga Plebiscite Day at its general headquarters church at Camp Hebron, around 50 km from here.

NSCN (I-M) ato kilonser (prime minister) and chief negotiator of the Naga talks with the Government of India Th Muivuh, Naga 'army personnel', leaders of civil society organisations including the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights, Naga Hoho, Naga Mothers Association, Global Naga Forum and Naga Students Federation, attended the function.

The Naga National Council had conducted the Naga Plebiscite Day on May 16, 1951, to reaffirm the declaration of "Naga independence" on August 14, 1947.

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati
Guwahati-781039, Assam
Office of Industrial Interactions and Special Initiatives

Call for various post purely on contractual basis in the Project No. SARTISPKDST00296xxSK103 in School of Agro and Rural Technology, IIT Guwahati. For detailed advertisements may please visit Project Positions in I&SI at https://www.iitg.ac.in/iitg_recruitment

Adv. No. IITG/II&SI/Project Staff Recrt/2024/29 Asstt. Registrar(I&SI)

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati
Research & Development Section
Guwahati-781039, Assam

Online interview for various positions under some sponsored projects in the Dept. of DESIGN, IIT Guwahati. For detailed advertisements may please visit https://www.iitg.ac.in/iitg_recruitment

HOS (R&D)

BANK OF INDIA, GUWAHATI ZONAL OFFICE
Sankha Commercial Complex, Sreenagar, G.S. Road, Guwahati - 781005. Tel. No.: 3361-2347938, 2347994. Fax: 0361-2347934. Email: Guwahati.zo@bankofindia.co.in

REQUIREMENT OF PREMISES ON RENT / LEASE
Bank of India, Guwahati Zonal Office requires a well-constructed commercial premises on lease basis measuring 1250 sq. ft. (approx.) preferably on ground floor with Frontage, Parking facilities and facilities for easy access to Dibranga for two proposed branches as under:

Sl. No.	Proposed Branch Name	Location	Nearest Contact Branch
1.	Dhemaj Branch	Dhemaj District H.Q.	North Lakhimpur Branch at Bharati Business Park, C.D. Road, Ward No-7, North Lakhimpur, Dist- Lakhimpur, Assam, Pin - 781061.
2.	Hojai (Sankardev Nagar) Branch	Sankardev Nagar, Hojai	Nagaon Town Branch at P.S. Road, Nagan Bazar, Dist- Nagaon, Assam, Pin - 782001

For further details, please visit Bank's website: www.bankofindia.co.in or Guwahati Zonal Office at above mentioned address.

The last date for submission of application in sealed cover in two bids is on or before 29.05.2024. The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Zonal Manager, Guwahati Zone

ICAR- NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE ON PIGBREEDING
राष्ट्रीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
RAJIL, GUWAHATI-781131. Phone No.0361 2847195

File No. NLR/ Multiserotypic Vaccine PCV/2024 Dated: 15-05-2024

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ONE NUMBER OF YOUNG PROFESSIONAL-II (YP-II)

Applications are invited for one number Young Professional-II (YP-II) under the National Livestock Mission (NLM), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying funded project: "Development of Multiserotypic Virus-like Particle Based Vaccine Candidates Against Porcine Circovirus Disease of Pig in India". Interested candidates fulfilling the qualifications as mentioned in the advertisement available in our website: <http://www.nrcp.icar.gov.in> must submit their applications in the prescribed format along with self-attested copies of all the certificates, mark sheets, Experience certificates etc. To the Principal Investigator, National Livestock Mission (NLM), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying funded project, ICAR-National Research Centre on Pig by email: nrcp2024@gmail.com. The filled in application along with the required documents should reach the institute latest by 30.05.2024. Application received after 30.05.2024 will not be considered.

Details of Selection criteria, qualifications, emoluments, application form etc is available in our website: <http://www.nrcp.icar.gov.in>

-Sd/-
Asst. Administrative Officer

ऑयल इंडिया लिमिटेड
Oil India Limited

P.O. Dulaigan - 788002, Assam, India. CIN: L11101AS1958GOI001148

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

GNM Entrance Examination (GNMEE), 2024 for admission into GNM course under Directorate of Health Services, Assam in both Govt., and Private Institutes for the session 2024-25 will be conducted by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences, (SSUHS), Guwahati-Assam.

Eligible candidates who are willing to get admission in School of Nursing, Oil India Hospital-Dulaigan, will have to apply online for GNMEE, 2024 to be conducted by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences, Guwahati.

Online application form for admission is now available at Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences website: www.ssuhs.in. The last date to submit online application form is 10-06-2024. Details of the Entrance Examination including eligibility criteria and requirements are available at the same University website.

So, those candidates who are willing to get admission in School of Nursing, Oil India Hospital-Dulaigan are advised to submit their Online Application Form available in the University website: www.ssuhs.in and be guided by Educational Notice (GNM Entrance Examination, 2024) No. SSUHS/149/2024/2234 dated 29-04-2024.

Note: No separate Entrance test will be conducted by School of Nursing, Oil India Hospital-Dulaigan from this session onwards.

The admission will be based on the marks obtained at GNM Entrance Examination (GNMEE) conducted by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences, Guwahati-Assam only.

ENPO urged to participate in Nagaland civic polls

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, May 16: The Nagaland Government on Thursday appealed to the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) and its constituent bodies to participate in the upcoming urban local body elections in the State, slated for June 26.

Addressing a press conference on the 'public emergen-

- ENPO has declared public boycott of the electoral process in Nagaland
- The umbrella organisation is seeking a Frontier Nagaland Territory

cy' declared by the ENPO in eastern Nagaland and its decision to abstain from Central and State elections at in Kohima, Nagaland Power and Parliamentary Affairs Minister KG Kenye said the State Cabinet earlier held a meeting to deliberate on the sequence of

events that took place and also the organisation's latest statement to abstain from the civic body elections.

Notably, the ENPO boycotted the April 19 Lok Sabha elections in the State.

Kenye said no quarters have any misunderstanding or mis-

conception on the issue of the ENPO's demand for a 'Frontier Nagaland Territory'. He stated that the State Government had recommended the case to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Kenye pointed out that the elections to the urban local bodies are being conducted at the direction of the Supreme Court after a prolonged legal battle involving

women's reservation in the civic bodies in the State in the larger interest of the public and their welfare.

He said that the urban local bodies are semi-autonomous bodies for local self-government to manage their own affairs at their own local levels.

Kenye said the civic body elections would facilitate grassroots-level development and uplift of citizens.

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.

Refineries Division - Bongaigaon Refinery, P.O. Dhaligaon, Dist.- Chirang, Assam - 783385

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

REQUIREMENT OF PART TIME VISITING SPECIALIST DOCTOR & TEMPORARY DOCTORS (ON CONTRACT BASIS) AT BONGAIGAON REFINERY, DHALIGAON

Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Bongaigaon Refinery invites interested candidates for engagement as Part Time Visiting Specialist Doctor and Temporary Doctors (On Contract Basis).

Discipline	Qualification	Location	Nos To be engaged	Working Hours
Specialist Doctor	MS (Ophthalmology) and registration with Medical Council of India	BGR Hospital	1	For 4 hours in a day, 3 days in a week
Temporary Doctors	Minimum MBBS with completed internship and registration with Medical Council of India	Bongaigaon Refinery First Aid Centre (FAC)	4	8 hrs in a day, 6 days in a week - (Rotational Shift Duty)

Note: All Candidates must possess a valid registration number. Candidates with additional qualification & experience may be given preference. However, discretion of the Management would be final.

Interested candidates fulfilling the above mentioned criteria may appear in the Walk-In-Interview scheduled on 24.05.2024 (Friday) from 1000 hrs to 1200 hrs with all the relevant documents (Original & one set self attested photo copy, two recent coloured passport size photographs, valid identity proof and post qualification work experience documents) at Bongaigaon Refinery Hospital, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Bongaigaon Refinery, BGR Township, P.O. Dhaligaon, Dist. Chirang, (Assam). Pin: 783385.

Teachers in Nalbari district resent snag in Shiksha Setu

CORRESPONDENT

NALBARI, May 16: Teachers in Nalbari district have claimed that malfunctioning of Shiksha Setu app has affected the academic environment in the district.

Shiksha Setu is a mobile application which was launched by the State Education department to digitally record the attendance of students and teachers in government educational in-

stitutions.

According to the teachers, the app is not working for the past three days in Nalbari district as a result of which they have not been able to mark their attendance as well as that of their students.

Owing to the problem, they have also not been able to upload the data related to mid-day meal.

Various associations of teachers in the district have expressed strong resent-

ment over the situation, which has adversely affected the academic activities.

The teachers said that they had to spend a considerable amount of time recording their daily attendance in the app, which subsequently affects their teaching.

In the last three days the authorities concerned have not informed the teachers about the snag in the app due to which they wasted their time trying to capture their

attendance online. They called upon the authorities to inform the schools immediately if any such situation arises in the future.

It may be mentioned that the online attendance in Shiksha Setu app will be linked to payment of monthly salaries to teachers soon. If the Shiksha Setu app continues to malfunction, the teachers may have to face unnecessary harassment in the future.



Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal during his visit to Krishnaguru Sewashram, Nasatra in Barpeta district on Wednesday. — UB Photos

Train services restored in Dima Hasao

HAFLONG, May 16: All passenger and freight train services in the Lumding-Badarpur hill section have been restored on Wednesday.

It may be mentioned that following the derailment of a goods train between Jatinga-Lumpur and New Harangajao, the train communication between Lumding and Badarpur had been disrupted since April 26.

Following the disruption of rail traffic in Lumding-Badarpur hill section of NF Railway, the people of Dima Hasao, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, and the Barak Valley had to suffer a lot due to shortage of fuel and other essential items.

Ramesh Kumar Mahato, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Lumding, informed that considering the people's plight, the railway authorities acted promptly to restore the train communication on a war footing and as a result of that all passenger and goods train services were restored on Wednesday. — Correspondent

CRPF jawan found hanging

SILCHAR, May 16: A CRPF jawan was found hanging in a storeroom of a CRPF camp at Doyapore area in Udabond on Tuesday.

After being informed about the incident, a police team from Udabond police station recovered the body and sent it to the Silchar Medical College and Hospital for post-mortem. The deceased jawan, aged around 38 years, hailed from Rajasthan. — Staff Correspondent

Morigaon DC unearths irregularities by SSA staff

CORRESPONDENT

MORIGAON, May 16: Morigaon District Commissioner Devashish Sarma today made a sudden visit to several lower primary and upper primary schools in the district and unearthed financial irregularities committed by the technical staff of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Mission of the district.

Sarma said that Rs 5 lakh was sanctioned by the government for installation of television sets in 90 lower primary schools of the district.

Even after District Project Engineer, SSA, Morigaon, Abinash Das and Junior Engineer Dhanti Boruah, sub-



Morigaon DC Devashish Sarma visiting a school on Thursday. — Photo: Correspondent

mitted a completion report for the work, no TV set was installed till date, the DC said.

He said that some unscrupulous employees tried to siphon off government money with ulterior motive.

The DC further said that the Education department had sanctioned several lakhs of rupees to construct libraries in 90 schools in Morigaon district, but no work was done by the technical staff, the DC added.

Karbi Anglong SP allays fears of Christian forum

CORRESPONDENT

DIPHU, May 16: Karbi Anglong Superintendent of Police Sanjib Kumar Saikia has clarified that the district police had compiled a list of all Christian institutions in areas within its jurisdiction as per a directive issued by the Assam Police Headquarters to all SPs.

He said the directive was issued after the Assam Catholic Educational Trust submitted a memorandum to the Director General of Police, Assam on May 12 regarding the safety of Christian institutions in the State.

Accordingly, Karbi Anglong

Collection of information by police about Christian institutions in the district

Police compiled a list of all such institutions in the district. However, the United Christian Forum of Diphu submitted a memorandum to the Karbi Anglong District Commissioner, stating that police personnel are collecting information of all Christian institutions in the district without any official mandate, causing fear among the public.

This exercise is a follow-up action of the directions issued by the Government of Assam based on a complaint petition submitted by United Christian Forum, Golaghat, to the Chief Minister of Assam on February 19, regarding grievances of the Christian community against the recent threats and attacks on Christian schools.

Karbi Anglong DC Madhumita Bhagabati held a meeting with the Karbi Anglong SP and other senior officers of the district administration on this issue. She allayed all doubts and misgivings in the meeting and mentioned that the exercise was carried out in compliance with government orders.

Lecture series on IPR organised at Goalpara College

CORRESPONDENT

GOALPARA, May 16: The Institutions Innovation Council organised Impact Lecture Series at the conference hall of Goalpara College on Tuesday.

The event proved to be an enlightening and inspiring event for the students.

The series, divided into two sessions, aimed to foster innovation, creativity, and awareness regarding intellectual property rights among the participants. It also served as a platform to ignite the spirit of innovation, entrepreneurship, and intellectual property rights awareness among students through engaging sessions and insightful discussions. It underscored the transformative power of innovation in shaping a brighter future for the participants.

Inaugurating the programme, Dr Subash Barman, Principal of Goalpara College, said that innovation and skill development for social change involves utilizing new ideas, technologies, and techniques to address social issues and create positive change among communities. This can include developing new skills, tools, and ap-

proaches to effectively tackle complex social problems and improve the well-being of individuals and communities, he said, adding that this means that students will gain understanding and develop the abilities needed to take on leadership roles and carry out actions that promote long-lasting positive changes in society.

The initial session of the event featured Padma Shri awardee Dr Uddhab Kumar Bharali, also known as the 'Machine Man', who shared insights into his remarkable journey. He highlighted his groundbreaking invention, the pomegranate de-seeder, which garnered international acclaim.

Dr Bharali also discussed his various inventions tailored for the benefit of differently-abled individuals, showcasing the power of innovation to transform lives.

Furthermore, Dr Bharali stressed the significance of innovation which entails generating fresh ideas or approaches. When utilised to tackle social and environmental issues, innovation can result in finding solutions that enhance the well-being of communities, he said.

Wage earner found dead

SIVASAGAR, May 16: A daily wage earner, identified as Pulin Kalita, was found dead under mysterious circumstances in his house at Pabhajan near Gaurisagar here on Wednesday night.

The incident triggered sensation in the area. Kalita was found lying dead on the floor this morning. Kalita's family members have demanded a probe into his death. Jaysagar police recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem examination.

One dies in a road accident: One Tulshi Kumar Das, a social worker and a resident of Mathadung GGS Chariali, died after his scooter was hit by a speeding vehicle on NH37 near Hazarika Petrol Station on Wednesday night. Das leaves behind his wife and a son. — Correspondent

Book released

GUWAHATI, May 16: Green Oscar award winner Purnima Devi Barman recently unveiled a commemorative book on prominent social worker and educationist of Dadara area, Ganeshwar Medhi, at the Dadara Emerging Central Rongali Bihu function.

The book titled *Gajanan* was edited by Anjan Sharma, eminent journalist and vice president of Asom Bartajeivi Sangha, stated a press release.

Home guard faces action for unprofessional conduct

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, May 16: Disciplinary action has been taken against a woman home guard posted at Chabua Police Station for her alleged unprofessional and inappropriate conduct while on duty.

Action was taken against her after a video of the on-duty home guard indulging in unprofessional conduct dur-

ing a musical event of Zubeen Garg on the last day of a community Bihu celebration in Chabua recently was telecast on news channels.

Superintendent of Police VV Rakesh Reddy told *The Assam Tribune* that the home guard has been removed from the police station and sent back to reserve following the incident. "The matter has been

referred to the Home Guard Commandant. Her final removal will depend on the Home Guard Commandant as he allocates home guards to the SP office, and accordingly they are placed in police stations as per requirement. She has been removed from Chabua Police Station and we have also delisted her from the district," SP Reddy informed.

Rangia College conducts educational progs for locals

GUWAHATI, May 16: The Extension Education Cell of Rangia College in collaboration with LASA S&C, a Guwahati-based NGO, recently organised two educational programmes involving the local community.

Under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan of the Central government and the ongoing college internship programme 'Learning with Laughter', an exposure visit to Rangia College was organised for students and teachers of five nearby LP schools, stated a press release.

The students were invited to the college in a bid to inspire them at an early age to aspire for higher education.



School students during the exposure trip to Rangia College.

The students were given a tour of the college library and science laboratories. A science exhibition with practical fun experiments was also organised for them by the Science stream of the college. Principal Dr Brajendra Saikia inaugurated the programme.

As part of another programme, a review meeting

was conducted for the students of Rangia College, who enrolled themselves as volunteer teachers for the ongoing New India Literacy Program. The students, mostly from remote areas, identified non-literates at their homes and neighbourhood and taught them foundational literacy.

NFR surpasses annual target for track renewal works



PRANJAL BHUYAN

GUWAHATI, May 16: The Maligaon-headquartered Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has surpassed its annual target for track renewal works in the 2023-24 financial year.

The track renewal works were undertaken as part of the Indian Railways' safety action plan.

"Several track renewal works were undertaken by the NFR zone during the 2023-24 fiscal. The main aim of the works was to maintain the railway tracks in proper condi-

tion and to provide safe transportation and comfortable journey to the commuters. These track renewal works surpassed the annual targets set by the zone during the last fiscal year," an official said.

As a part of the safety action plan, nearly 258 track kilometres (TKM) of 'Through Rail Renewal', over 210 TKM of 'Through Sleeper Renewal', and more than 264 units of Complete Track Renewal works were completed in 2023-24.

In addition, NFR also achieved 7.27 lakh cubic metre of progress in ballasting works as against a target of 5 lakh cubic metre.

"This is the highest ever progress in the zone surpassing the previous year's headway of 6.34 lakh cubic metre. In addition, 134 Thick Web Switches were installed last fiscal, up from 35 during 2022-23. As a part of the road safety works and for ease of movement of

both the road and rail users, 19 manned level crossings were eliminated. Besides, 20 road over bridges (ROBs) and 48 road under bridges (RUBs) were commissioned across the zone during 2023-24," the official said.

The maximum speed limit on 118.20 km length of loop lines was raised to 30 km per hour, and the sectional speed on 803.5 km of stretch was raised to 110 km per hour, marking a progress of 42 per cent.

"Latest surveillance techniques like structural health monitoring, 3D scanning of river beds, underwater inspection by Remote Operated Robotic Vehicle (RORV), scour monitoring, and water level monitoring were also undertaken for keeping a watch on railway bridges. Besides, nine additional waterways were constructed to mitigate the problem of flooding during the monsoon season," the official said.

He said that the maintenance of tracks at regular intervals resulted in smooth operations of trains and also provided a better riding experience for passengers.

"The increased emphasis given by the Engineering Department of NFR on safety measures for railway tracks has resulted in safer running of trains with increased speed and also provided better travel experience to the commuters," the official said.

NFR also added more than 10,800 additional berths in 25 Mail and Express trains in 2023-24 as part of the effort to reduce the waiting list and clear extra rush of passengers.

"A total of 151 additional coaches were added in the period from April 2023 to March 2024 to provide more berths for the passengers travelling in various Mail and Express trains on a permanent basis," the official added.

OBITUARY

Prabhat Chandra Bora

CORRESPONDENT

JAGIROAD, May 16: Noted social worker and president of Jagiroad Sakha Sahitya Sabha, Prabhat Chandra Bora, passed away at his Natun Gaon residence here on Wednesday. He was 74.

Bora had been suffering from liver disease.

Bora, who retired as the headmaster of Nellie-Borpayak High School, was actively associated with various socio-cultural, educational and religious organisations of Morigaon district.

He leaves behind two daughters and a host of relatives.

Jagiroad Sakha Sahitya Sabha, Jagiroad Anchalik AASU, District Unnati Sab-



ha, Kavi Sanmilan, Jagiroad Senior Citizens Samiti, Sri Sri Sankardev Naamghar, Sankardev Vidya Niketan, Morigaon District Retired Teachers' Association, Jagiroad Sattriya Sangeet Vidyalay, and Jagiroad Journalists' Association have condoled his demise.

TRIBUTE

Mohan Ch Sharma

Mohan Chandra Sharma, who was my father-in-law, passed away on May 8 at the age of 85 in Guwahati.

Deuta retired as a senior official of LIC, leaving a legacy of integrity and service.

Born in Majuli in 1940, he had embarked on a journey that touched countless lives with his kindness and positivity.

After completing his pre-university education from Cotton College, he did his graduation with distinction from Dibrugarh University. At the same time he also shouldered the responsibility of providing for his large family by working tirelessly.

Throughout his professional life, he traversed the length and breadth of Assam. His eloquent drafting skills were matched only by his culinary prowess. His friends and family will always remember him for his sound advice and ready-to-help attitude. He was also a great fan of cricket and other sports, and during his service tenure, he participated in LIC carrom and badminton tournaments, winning accolades. His innate positivity infused every aspect of his life, uplifting those around him despite adversity.

Even when he was battling



heath issues, he remained a beacon of hope and optimism. His positive outlook was not just a personal trait, but a force that inspired all who knew him. His influence left an indelible mark on his family, friends, and community. He lived each day to the fullest, cherishing every moment and spreading joy wherever he went, truly embodying the spirit of positivity.

He is survived by his wife, a son, three daughters and a host of relatives.

Though he may no longer be with us in person, his spirit will continue to live on, in the hearts of all who are fortunate to know and love him.

Today on the occasion his *adyashradha*, we fondly remember him and pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to his departed soul.

— Dr Bhaskar Thakuria

Tributes should not exceed 300 words

Teachers' residence burgled

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, May 16: The incidents of theft are on the rise in the Phillabari area of Tinsukia district in the last few weeks. In such an incident that took place on Thursday, thieves broke into the residence of a teacher couple Phuleswar Saikia and Tarulata Borah Saikia situated near the Tuesday Weekly Market of Phillabari under Phillabari Police Station and looted cash Rs 30,000 in broad daylight.

The teacher couple had gone for their normal school duty when the theft took place. The thieves entered the house by breaking the backdoor of the house. The couple filed an FIR at the Phillabari Police Station in this connection and police have started investigation.

Drought-like situation in West Karbi Anglong

CORRESPONDENT

DIPHU, May 16: The West Karbi Anglong district is currently experiencing a severe drought-like situation, particularly in the agricultural lands within the Hapwair and West Rongkhong revenue areas.

This situation poses a significant threat to the livelihoods of approximately 90% of the population who rely heavily on agricultural activities such as sugarcane, vegetables, paddy, wheat, and several horticultural items. The lack of adequate water for the crops to mature and thrive is a major concern, as the fields typically require water for at least 40 days to two months after cultivation. Furthermore, the absence of functional irrigation schemes in the area has exacerbated the issue, leaving the farmers without crucial crop support.



Artistes performing a bhaona at Balijan, Gohpur on Wednesday night. - UB Photos

Meet discusses steps to check rhino poaching



CORRESPONDENT

KAZIRANGA, May 16: The second meeting of the Anti-Rhino Poaching Task Force was held at Kaziranga on Thursday with an objective to strengthen the strategies and adopt measures to check poaching activities at all rhino-bearing protected forests in the State.

The meeting was chaired by Special Director General of Police Harmeet Singh and attended by senior police officials, including IGP of STF and CR, and superintendents of police of Golaghat, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Darrang, Biswanath and Karbi Anglong districts. Senior forest officials, including Director of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve Dr Sonali Ghosh and DFOs, attended

the review meeting. The meeting's agenda included adoption of rhino protection measures, forest-police coordination, deployment of existing forest protection force, measures to strengthen intelligence network and providing accurate information to government agencies.

While presentation was made by the forest and police officials from four rhino-bearing protected areas, a few recommendations had been made by the committee. It is worth mentioning that due to concerted efforts of the State government, the population of rhino has increased, indicating a positive sign. However, with the increase in the population, some rhinos have even ventured into newer areas such as Majuli and Bura Chapori in the last two years.

This was a matter of concern for which the review meeting recommended that these new areas would be mapped and measures identified, including setting up of new forest camps and regular patrolling routes. The meeting also recommended addition of new members in the committee, including IGPs of NR and ER and DFOs of Nagaon, Golaghat and Jorhat territorial divisions and commandants of the Assam Forest Protection Force for greater coordination and surveillance. A regular coordination meeting in all rhino-bearing areas at district level has also been recommended to increase operational capabilities.

Miscreants pelt stones at cops in Raha

ANN SERVICE

RAHA, May 16: A mob pelted stones at the police on duty on Wednesday night at a location between Khatguri and Kohiguri village under the Raha police station which led to the damage to the Bolero vehicle of Raha police force.

As per information, a man identified as Bidyut

Das of West Pasalabari village was severely beaten by a group of people suspecting him as a cattle thief. On receiving the information, a team from Raha police station led by the officer in-charge Maniram Kalita reached the spot and rescued the victim from the irate mob.

As tension prevailed in the area following frequent

incidents of cattle thefts, the mob soon reportedly turned violent attacking the policemen on duty and pelted stones at the police vehicle bearing registration No. AS-30-9252.

Police sources said that no police personnel were hurt in the incident. Till the filing of this report, no one was arrested and investigation is under way.

Noted physician passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, May 16: Dr Shankar Jyoti Parashar, a former assistant professor of Jorhat Medical College Hospital (JMCH) and a renowned physician here, breathed his last at a private hospital in Guwahati on Thursday due to a sudden illness. He was 52.

He leaves behind his wife, a daughter, mother, two sisters and a large number of relatives.



Dr Parashar, a resident of Darangichuk area here, on Tuesday evening while attending patients at a private hospital in Jorhat suddenly fell ill and was hospitalized in a serious condition. On Wednesday he was shifted to a hospital in Guwahati for advanced medical care.

He was involved in socio-cultural activities and was popular amongst people for his amiable nature and was always ready to help people in the time of need. His demise has been widely mourned by several organizations and individuals.

Class 10 student goes missing in Brahmaputra

CORRESPONDENT

DHUBRI, May 16: The community of Dhubri is in a state of shock after a Class 10 student, Arindam Saha, also known as Deep, went missing in the Brahmaputra river on Thursday afternoon. The young man was last seen bathing in the river after playing a football match.

Deep, a student of Dhubri Shishu Pathshala Higher Secondary School, and his four friends went to the river for a bath following their game at the Raja Prabhat

Chandra Baruah playground. Deep was a resident of Shanti Nagar in Ward No. 13. They enjoyed a brief swim before realizing that Deep had disappeared.

Efforts to locate the missing teenager began immediately. Teams from the Border Security Force (BSF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been tirelessly searching the river to find any trace of Deep. Despite their best efforts, the young student remains untraceable till the filing of this report.

BTC to celebrate Bodo Bijwng San on May 18

CORRESPONDENT

KOKRAJHAR, May 16: In a move to commemorate the historic introduction of the Bodo language as a medium of instruction in schools across Assam, the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has announced the observance of 'Bodo Bijwng San, 2024' on May 18 next.

This decision, aimed at celebrating the cultural significance and linguistic diversity of the Bodo community, marks a pivotal moment in

the educational landscape of Assam. Despite this significant transition, the normal functioning of all educational institutions and government offices under the entrusted departments to BTC will remain unaffected.

A notification issued by the BTC government today has directed all educational institutions, government, and semi-government offices under the entrusted departments of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) to observe the day in a befitting manner.

Wanted cow-lifter arrested in Tamarhat

ANN SERVICE

GOSSAIGAON, May 16: A wanted accused in illegal cow-lifting trade on the Assam-Bengal border under Tamarhat Police Station in Dhubri district, Ashraf Mandal, a resident of Kamandanga, was arrested by Grahampur outpost police yesterday night during a sudden raid.

Eighteen high-breed cows loaded on a truck was seized by the Grahampur police at Kathalguri near here, and the driver and the handyman were arrested. The seized cows were to be deported to the Dhubri transit point for sending them to Bangladesh by crossing the rivers Sonkosh and Gangadhar. The arrested truck driver, Abdul Samad Sheikh and the handyman, Saifuel Islam, in their confessional statements before the in-charge of the Grahampur police outpost, Roshmita Saikia said that Ashraf Mandal was the main player of the ongoing illegal cow trade in the border areas.

Based on this information, police arrested Ashraf Mandal yesterday night from his house. Further investigation is on.

School foundation day celebration gets under way

CORRESPONDENT

DERGAON, May 16: The 47th foundation day of Shishu Bharati Higher Secondary School (SBHSS), a noted English-medium educational institution at Dergaon, commenced with a two-day programme today.

The colourful programme was ceremonially started with the school flag hoisting by the secretary of the School Managing Committee (SMC), Ranjit Kr Baruah. This was followed by the illumination of ceremonial lamps by the SMC president, Nila Padma Phukan, who has had a pivotal role in the school's journey. After the welcome song by the stu-

dents, the school principal Dr Pranjal Sarmah delivered the welcome speech.

In his speech, the SMC president and the school's founder, Nila Padma Phukan, recalled his memories in the school's foundation and acknowledged the contribution of noted businessman Shival Bayenwalla.

After the inaugural session, a fashion show by the school students was presented, followed by an art competition in which many students took part.

Dr Sanjoy Kr Hazarika conducted the inter-school quiz competition, in which several teams from the schools of the greater Dergaon area participated. The

team of Dergaon Jatiya Vidyalaya comprising Swarnabh Srijan Barthakur, Riddhipran Bora and Pritipahi Parashar clinched the best team prize, the team of Dergaon Girls' HS School comprising Sristinista Borah, Mahasweta Devi and Tobosum secured the second position and Dergaon Sankardev Shishu Niketan team comprising Snigdha Priyam Borah, Anubhab Sharma Pandit and Prithiraj Sharma bagged the third spot.

A debate competition and an extempore speech competition will be held tomorrow. The prize distribution ceremony will be held in the afternoon, and the SMC president and secretary will be the distinguished guests.

One killed

CORRESPONDENT

GAURIPUR, May 16: A woman died and four others seriously injured when the auto-rickshaw they were travelling in was knocked down by a speedy Bolero van near the Targhat bridge here on the night of May 15. Four persons were coming from Alomganj in an auto-rickshaw towards Gauripur on the NH 17 when they were hit by the van. The passengers of the auto-rickshaw were seriously injured and among them one aged woman succumbed to her injuries. Police arrived at the spot and sent the three injured persons to Dhubri Medical College Hospital for treatment and the body of the woman was sent for post mortem.

Road safety awareness prog

CORRESPONDENT

BISWANATH CHARIALI, May 16: Chaidur College, in collaboration with Bhuyan Driving School, Gohpur and supported by the Biswanath district police and Transport Office, organized an engaging road safety awareness programme on Tuesday. The programme saw the participation of over 200 attendees, including distinguished guests, resource persons, students, faculty members, college employees, and media representatives. Dr Kishore Singh Rajput, principal of Chaidur College, delivered the welcome address, emphasizing the critical need for social awareness to ensure the success of the

workshop on road safety.

Navajit Bagchi, Deputy Superintendent of Police, underlined the necessity of adhering to road rules and implementing safety measures to achieve accident-free national highways. He commended the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders involved.

Sailen Das, District Transport Officer, spoke on the importance of citizen awareness for road safety, stressing the collective responsibility of the public, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the media. Enforcement Officer Rajiv Das echoed these sentiments, advocating for active participation from everyone to prevent accidents and enhance road safety.

CINEMA PROGRAMME

GALLERIA CINEMA HUB, G.S. Road, Guwahati is showing From 17th May onwards following timings:

THE GARFIELD MOVIE 3D (E) At 1.30 pm & 9.00 pm

KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES 2D (H) At 4.15 pm

JIYA (ASSI) At 6.30 pm

THE GARFIELD MOVIE 3D (H) Regular price: Silver- Rs. 130/-, Gold- Rs. 170/-, Platinum- Rs. 200/- & Business- Rs. 220/-

Moring price: Silver- Rs. 100/-, Gold- Rs. 150/-, Platinum- Rs. 180/- & Business- Rs. 200/-

Tele Booking No. 887656001/887656002 (Terms & conditions apply)

Ticket Rates: Regular Show: Rs. 150/-, Rs. 200/-, Rs. 350/-, Rs. 500/-, 1000/-

New Movie Rates Rs. 180/-, Rs. 240/-, Rs. 350/-, Rs. 500/-, Rs. 1000/-

Ticket Rates 3D Movies: Rs. 200/-, Rs. 260/-, Rs. 380/-, Rs. 520/-, Rs. 1040/-

Website: www.bookmyshow.com

GALLERIA CINEMA Dibrugarh, Junction Mall From 17th May 2024 to 23rd May 2024

Screen-1 At 12.30 pm & 8.35 pm

THE GARFIELD MOVIE 3D (H) At 1.55 PM

THE GARFIELD MOVIE 3D (E) At 3.50 pm

KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (E) At 8.30 pm

KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (H) Screen-2 At 12.30 pm, 5.25 pm & 8.00 pm

SRIKANTH At 3.05

JIYA (ASS) Tele Booking Timings 9.00 am to 8.00 pm.

GALLERIA CINEMA Tinsukia, ATC Mall, GNB Road From 17th May to 23rd May 2024

Screen-2 At 12.30 pm, 5.15 pm & 8.00 pm

SRIKANTH (HINDI) At 3.00 pm

JIYA (ASSAMESE) Tele Booking timings: 9 am to 8.30 pm.

Tele Booking No. 887656005/887656006 (Terms & conditions apply)

Regular Tickets price Rs. 170/-, Rs. 240/-, Rs. 300/-, Rs. 500/-

3D Tickets Price : Rs. 200/-, Rs. 280/-, Rs. 320/-, Rs. 520/-

GALLERIA CINEMA Dibrugarh, Junction Mall From 17th May 2024 to 23rd May 2024

Screen-1 At 12.30 pm, 5.15 pm & 8.00 pm

THE GARFIELD MOVIE 3D (H) At 1.55 PM

THE GARFIELD MOVIE 3D (E) At 3.50 pm

KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (E) At 8.30 pm

KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (H) Screen-2 At 12.30 pm, 5.25 pm & 8.00 pm

SRIKANTH At 3.05

JIYA (ASS) Tele Booking Timings 9.00 am to 8.00 pm.

ANURADHA CINEPLEX Multiplex Ambience From 17.05.24 to 23.05.24

At 2.00 pm, 5.00 pm & 8.00 pm

JIYA (ASSAMESE) 2D Cast - Samistha Chakravorty, Eepsita Hazarika, Aradhya Mahanta, etc.

Booking Nos. 882777555 (995454738, 7086525826)

Online Booking: www.anuradhacineplex.in, www.bookmyshow.com

Model United Nations organized at Dibrugarh University

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, May 16: Dibrugarh University organized a Model United Nations (MUN) in collaboration with Yuvamanthan and the United Nations Development Programme on the theme 'Lifestyle for Environment' at the Indira Miri Conference Hall of the University here recently.

The inaugural ceremony began with a felicitation ceremony, followed by speeches from the Vice Chancellor, Professor Jiten Hazarika, Dean of Student Affairs, Professor Surajit Borkotoky, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Dev Kumar Chakraborty and the Faculty Coordinator of the event professor

Kaustabh Kumar Deka. The audience comprised the executive board, the organizing committee, the photographers, caricaturists, and the delegates.

The Secretary General then explained the technicalities regarding the commencing MUN and introduced the executive board. The event was divided into three sessions.

The first session began at 11am and lasted for an hour. The delegate from the USA proposed the sub-agenda 'Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for ambitious climate targets', which was passed by a simple majority. The delegates representing their respective nations presented their

contributions and commitments regarding the agenda.

The second session began at around 12:15pm, and the delegate from Russia proposed the sub-agenda 'Scaling up climate finance for better resilience and adaptation in vulnerable regions', which was again passed by a simple majority. The second session proceeded like the previous session. Thereafter, everybody dispersed for an hour-long lunch break at 1:15pm.

The last session began at around 2:30pm, and the delegate from Egypt proposed the sub-agenda 'Innovative approaches to climate education and public awareness', which was not passed due to a lack of majority. The delegates from Japan then proposed another sub-agenda,

'Importance of transitioning to renewable energy sources', which was passed by a simple majority.

The session ended on a similar note. The delegates then drafted a resolution entitled 'Comprehensive Action for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation', which was passed by a simple majority.

The Secretary-General then announced a wrapping up of the MUN simulation with a valedictory session. The valedictory speech was delivered by the Dean of Student Affairs. A prize distribution ceremony was conducted with Russia bagging the best delegate award, followed by the USA and France. Moreover, certificates were provided to all, the release added.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, UDALGURI DISTRICT, UDALGURI ASSAM

The above is photograph of Musst. Ruksana Begum (21 Yrs.), W/o- Md. Saiful Ali along with her son namely Md. Ariyan Ali (8 month), Vill: Uttar Kalikhal, PS: Panery, Dist: Udalguri who has been missing 22.04.2024 from complainant house.

This refers to Panery PS GDE No-15, Dtd. 23.04.2024 and this office Man Missing Register Entry No. 61, Dtd. 07.05.2024.

Descriptive Roll of the Missing Person:

- Complexion : Fair
- Age : 21 Yrs.
- Height : 5 1/2 Feet
- L/known : Assamese, Bengali
- Wearing : Frock

All efforts may be made to trace out/recover the above noted missing person at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to this office at the following helpline numbers for further necessary action: 6026901138 (Cell Phone).

Sd/- Superintendent of Police Udalguri, Assam

Janasanyog/D/781/24/17-May-24

Gave my statement to Delhi Police, says Maliwal over 'assault' on her

NEW DELHI, May 16: AAP Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal today broke her silence over the alleged assault on her, saying she has recorded her statement with the Delhi Police and the BJP should not indulge in politics over the incident.

Three days after the alleged incident at Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence, where his close aide Bibhav Kumar allegedly "assaulted" Maliwal, she said the past few days have been very difficult for her.

"What happened to me was very bad. I have given my statement to the police on the incident that happened to me. I hope appropriate action will be taken. The past days have been very difficult for me. I thank those who prayed. Those who tried to indulge in character assassination, said that I was doing it at the behest of the other party, God bless them too," she said in a post on X in Hindi.

She said crucial elections are going on now, and stressed that she is not important but the issues of the country are. "There is a special request to the BJP people not to do politics on this incident," she said in the same post.

Earlier, the Delhi Police today recorded the statement of AAP Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal in connection

- BJP people should not do politics: RS MP
- NCW summons Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar
- Strict action should be taken against person involved in incident: Cong's Ragini Nayak



ACP PS Kushwaha leaves AAP MP Swati Maliwal's residence, in New Delhi on Thursday. A police team visited Maliwal's residence to record her statement. — PTI

with the alleged assault on her by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar, officials said. Her statement was recorded by a two-member team of the Delhi Police at her residence in Central Delhi.

According to a police officer, Maliwal told police about the incident that happened at

the Chief Minister's residence on Monday.

The officer said with Maliwal's statement recorded, police might register an FIR in connection with the matter.

The police team, led by Additional Commissioner of Police PS Kushwaha, was at Maliwal's residence for more than four hours.

On Monday morning, Maliwal went to the Civil Lines police station here and alleged that a member of Kejriwal's personal staff "assaulted" her at the Chief Minister's official residence, police officials said.

Earlier today, the National Commission for Women (NCW) summoned Kejri-

al's aide Bibhav Kumar over Maliwal's allegations. His hearing is scheduled for Friday at 11 am.

On Tuesday, senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh had said that the incident with Maliwal was "highly condemnable".

Cong's Ragini Nayak on Maliwal incident: Congress spokesperson Ragini Nayak today said strict action should be taken against the person who was involved in the alleged assault on AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal.

The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party are fighting elections under the banner of INDIA bloc in the national capital.

Nayak said the Congress party's stand in the matter has been absolutely clear.

"If any crime takes place against a woman, whoever is involved in the crime, whether he belongs to any political party or not, strictest action should be taken against him. (AAP MP) Sanjay Singh also said the same thing and the Congress party also said the same," Nayak said.

She further stated that Maliwal herself understands her legal rights since she was the Chairperson of DCW. It was probably she who called the police and informed them about the incident, she said. "The legal process will take its own course," she added. — PTI

Modi says CAA is here to stay

AZAMGARH/BHADOHI (UP), May 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today accused the Opposition of spreading lies and inciting violence over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and said that the law is here to stay.

Addressing an election rally in Azamgarh a day after the first set of citizenship certificates under the new law were issued, he dared the Opposition parties to muster whatever forces they could against the CAA.

They will never be able to scrap the law, he asserted, saying in Hindi, "Kya iss desh me ab tak koi mai ka la pa-ida hua hai jo CAA ko khatam kar sake?"

"These people are Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. They have been living in the country for a long time as refugees and were victims of the partition of the country done on the basis of religion," he said.

Modi addressed three more back-to-back election rallies in quick succession in Bhadohi, Jaunpur and Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, targeting the Congress and the Samajwadi Party.

In Bhadohi, where the two parties are backing a Trinamool Congress candidate as INDIA bloc partners, the Prime Minister accused them to trying out West Ben-

gal's "TMC politics" in Uttar Pradesh. The brand, he claimed, represented politics of appeasement and harassment of Dalits and women.

In Pratapgarh, he said the Opposition INDIA bloc wants to appoint five Prime Ministers in five years and predicted that the alliance will disintegrate after June 4, when the Lok Sabha election results are out.

"Khata khat, khata khat,"

PM predicts 'khata khat' disintegration of INDIA bloc after election results

he said in Hindi, suggesting that it will happen rapidly — and also mocking Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for using the phrase to claim that a fixed stipend would flow into the accounts of poor women if his party comes to power.

Modi accused the Congress and its allies of neglecting the refugees over the years because they were not part of their own "vote bank".

"The Congress and the SP tried to spread lies in the name of CAA. They tried to push Uttar Pradesh and the entire country towards riots," he claimed.

"You are frauds... You forced the country to burn in the fire of communalism," he said, claiming he had "exposed" the Opposition.

He said voters in Kashmir felt proud to participate in the festival of democracy. "The excitement shown by people of Srinagar in polls is proof that no one can bring back Article 370 and do vote-bank politics."

"Earlier during polls in Kashmir, there used to be protests, people used to fear for their lives and get threats from terrorists. But this time previous polling records were broken in Srinagar," the PM said.

At the rallies, he listed development projects undertaken in the State and praised Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's handling of law and order.

"Terrorists accused of explosions were pardoned. Sleeper cells were given the cover of politics. Due to this attitude, terrorism rose across the country," Modi said, attacking former CM Akhilesh Yadav whom he called SP's "shehzade", or prince.

The SP and Congress are two parties but have one "shop" where they sell appeasement, lies, dynastic politics and corruption, he charged. — PTI

Z-plus security for former NIA

DG Dinkar Gupta

NEW DELHI, May 16: Former NIA Director General Dinkar Gupta was recently provided the top Z-plus category VIP security cover by the Union government in view of potential threats to him from pro-Khalistan elements, officials sources said today.

Gupta, a former Punjab Police DGP, retired from service in April.

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) VIP security wing has been entrusted with the task to secure the 1987-batch Indian Police Service officer, the sources said.

A contingent of about 40 CRPF personnel will now be deployed in shifts to secure Gupta during his presence in Punjab and Delhi, the sources said.

A threat perception report prepared by the Central intelligence and security agencies necessitated the top category cover for Gupta due to his work in the NIA and in the Punjab Police against pro-Khalistan elements, they said. — PTI

Will soon file prosecution complaint against Kejriwal, AAP: ED to SC

NEW DELHI, May 16: In potential trouble for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Enforcement Directorate today told the Supreme Court it will soon file a prosecution complaint against him and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the ED, told a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta that the agency proposed to file a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) against Kejriwal and the AAP. "We will do it shortly. It is in the pipeline," he told the court.

The ED made the statement when the court was hearing Kejriwal's challenge to his arrest in the money laundering case arising from the alleged Delhi excise scam.

Raju claimed the probe agency has enough evidence to show that Kejriwal de-

manded Rs 100-crore bribe which was used by AAP in the Goa Assembly poll campaign.

"We have direct evidence that Kejriwal stayed in a seven-star hotel, whose bills were partly paid by an accused in the case," Raju submitted, adding Kejriwal played a key role in the for-

Excise policy case

mulation of the now scrapped Delhi excise policy. He alleged that Kejriwal, as the National Convener of the AAP, was vicariously responsible for the alleged scam. Kejriwal, despite being the Chief Minister, does not hold any departmental portfolio.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who also appeared for the ED, questioned the maintainability of the petition, saying that barring the first two

occasions when Kejriwal opposed the remand orders, he virtually "consented" to judicial custody.

He submitted the court cannot hold a mini-trial at the remand stage and examine material and other evidence available with the investigating officer.

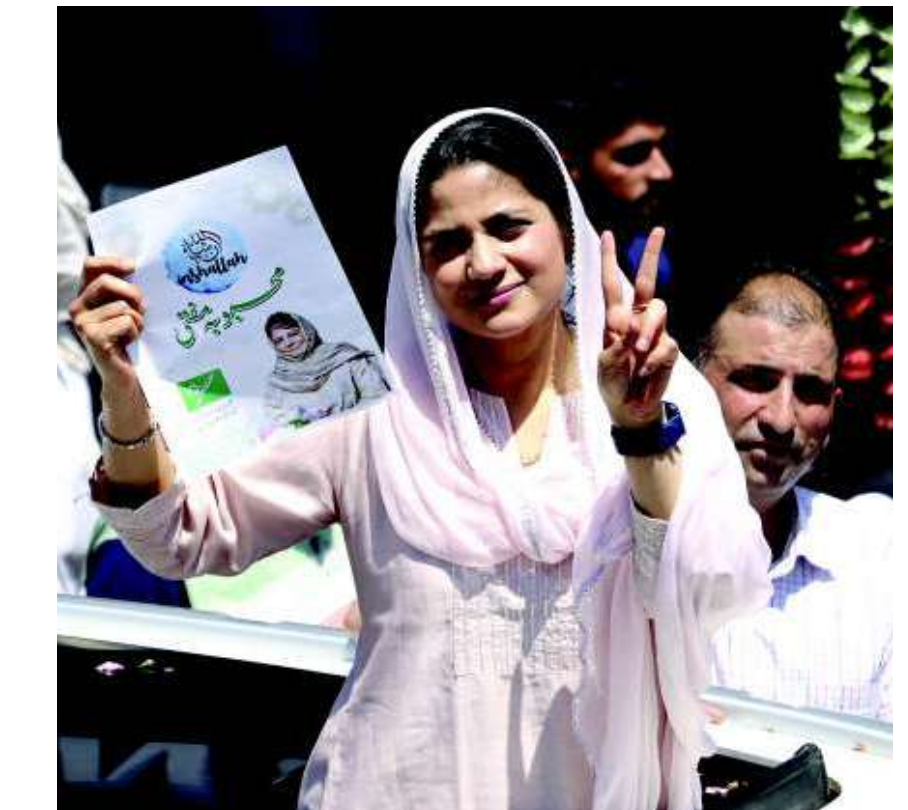
"The court can only see whether there is any material for arrest and not what material is there. In this case, the materials were seen by the trial court and the High Court. The High Court had summoned the case files and perused the material. Ministerial, which this court is called upon to do, is what we are opposing," he submitted.

Mehta said that if this court starts interfering at the remand stage, it will open the doors for powerful people to approach the apex court directly, without following the procedure prescribed under the Code of Criminal Proce-

dure (CrPC). "There are certain in-built safeguards provided under Section 19 of PMLA, which deals with powers of arrest of ED officer. More rigorous the provision of arrest, the less scrutiny by courts," he said.

The bench, however, did not agree with the submission of Mehta and said that if there is a violation of Section 19 conditions, the courts can interfere.

"There are several petitions filed directly in the Supreme Court under Article 32 and this court has nullified arrests or granted bail. Yes, the remedy cannot be excluded and remand court or the High Court usually look into these aspects. It is not that we don't have jurisdiction but normally we observe judicial restraint, because there are alternate remedies available. However, we cannot overlook when there is a grave case," the bench told Mehta. — PTI



PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti during a rally in support of her mother and party candidate from Anantnag-Rajouri constituency for Lok Sabha elections, in Poonch district on Thursday. — PTI

HD Revanna gets interim bail in sexual harassment case

BENGALURU, May 16: A court here today granted interim bail to JD(S) MLA and former Karnataka minister HD Revanna in a sexual harassment case.

The case of sexual harassment of a 47-year-old house help was registered against Revanna and his son and MP Prajwal Revanna at the Holarisipur town police station in Hassan district on April 28.

Prajwal reportedly left for Germany on April 27 and is still at large. The complainant had claimed that the father-son duo had sexually abused her at the 66-year-old MLA's house. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) which is probing the alleged sexual abuse charges against Prajwal and related cases, had sought custody of the former minister.

Revanna's advocates sought anticipatory bail in the case. However, the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court (ACMM) heard the matter and gave interim relief to Revanna till Friday.

The SIT had sent two notices to Revanna, son of JD(S) patriarch and former PM HD Deve Gowda, and Prajwal to join the investigation, but both of them skipped it.

Today Revanna applied for anticipatory bail and the SIT objected to this and sought his custody or that he be remanded in judicial custody. The court however decided to hear the matter again on Friday. — PTI

Nearly 67% voter turnout in first 4 phases of LS polls: EC

NEW DELHI, May 16: The cumulative turnout in the first four phases of the Lok Sabha elections has been recorded at 66.95 per cent, the Election Commission said today, adding, 45.10 crore of the nearly 97 crore electors have voted so far in the ongoing electoral exercise.

In a statement, the poll panel urged electorate to come out and vote in large numbers in the coming phases.

According to the poll authority, the updated voter turnout in the fourth phase of polling held on May 13 was 69.16 per cent, 3.65 percentage points higher than the corresponding phase in the 2019 parliamentary polls.

The updated voter turnout figures for the third phase of polling in the Lok Sabha election stood at 65.68 per cent. In the third phase of the 2019 general election, the turnout was 68.4 per cent.

In the second phase of the election held on April 26, the turnout was recorded at 66.71 per cent as against the 69.64 per cent in the second phase of the 2019 polls.

In the first phase of the ongoing general elections, a 66.14 per cent turnout was recorded. In the 2019 polls, the turnout in the first phase was 69.43 per cent.

The EC said there is enhanced focus on to inform, motivate and facilitate voters

in the remaining three phases of the parliamentary polls and State Chief Electoral Officers have been asked to step up measures.

"The commission strongly believes that partnership and collaboration are essential pillars of voter awareness programme. It's really heartening to see that on commission's request, different institutions, influencers and celebrities having significant reach are working enthusiastically on pro bono basis," Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said.

A total of 379 seats across 23 States and Union Territories have voted in the first four phases of elections.

A high voter turnout, Kumar felt, would be a message from Indian voters to the world about the strength of Indian democracy. He urged voters to cast their ballot in huge numbers, as voting day is not a holiday but a day of pride to participate in the festival of democracy.

The poll panel also listed out outreach efforts undertaken by various private and public bodies to enhance voter participation in the elections. Banks, post offices, private entities and telecom platforms are using their public interface to encourage registered voters to turn up at the polling stations on various voting days. — PTI



Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia performs rituals during the last rites of his mother Madhavi Rajee Scindia, at the Jai Vilas Palace, in Gwalior on Thursday. — PTI

39% candidates in 6th phase of LS polls are crorepatis: ADR

NEW DELHI, May 16: About 39 per cent of candidates contesting in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha polls are crorepatis with average assets of Rs 6.21 crore, according to poll rights body ADR.

Among the candidates contesting in the sixth phase on May 25, the highest assets have been declared by BJP candidates from Kurukshetra Naveen Jindal at Rs 1,241 crore followed by Santrupt Misra at Rs 482 crore and Sushil Gupta at Rs 169 crore, the analysis by Association of Democratic Reforms said.

Out of the 866 candidates contesting the Lok Sabha polls, 338 (39 per cent) are crorepatis and the average assets per candidate contesting in the Lok Sabha phase VI election is Rs 6.21 crore.

Among the major parties, all six candidates from BJD, four out of four candidates each from RJD and JD(U),

48 (94 per cent) out of 51 candidates from BJP, 11 (92 per cent) out of 12 candidates from SP, 20 (80 per cent) out of 25 candidates from Congress, 4 (80 per cent) out of 5 candidates from AAP and 7 (78 per cent) candidates out of 9 candidates from AITC have declared assets worth more than Rs 1 crore.

Among the lowest asset declaration is Master Randhir Singh, an Independent candidate from Rohtak, who declared Rs 2 worth of assets followed by Ram Kumar Yadav, a candidate from SUCI(C) in Pratapgarh, who declared assets worth Rs 1,686.

About 411 (47 per cent) candidates have declared liabilities in their affidavits.

About 180 (21 per cent) out of 866 candidates have declared criminal cases against them and 141 (16 per cent) out of 866 have declared serious criminal cases against themselves.

Bought leaf tea factories to shut operations from June 1

Decision adopted collectively to uphold reputation of Assam tea

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, May 16: Following non-redressal of grievances by the State government, Tea Board and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the Assam Bought Leaf Tea Manufacturers' Association (ABLMTA) has yet again announced its decision to shut down its factories from June 1, 2024.

ABLMTA president Chand Kumar Gohain has said that FSSAI-compliant tea cannot

be manufactured from non-compliant green tea leaves. According to the tea manufacturers, the small tea growers must supply FSSAI-compliant green tea leaves to the factories, a step which is nearly impossible for the small scale farmers as there are no laboratories in the State to test green tea leaves.

Addressing newsmen here on Wednesday evening, Gohain said that ABLMTA member factories will not operate until and unless compliant green tea leaves are

supplied to them.

The association urged the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to withdraw the notification through which it mandated 100% of dust grades tea to be sold through public tea auctions, asserting that 56% of dust tea of the bought leaf tea factories have remained unsold in the auctions. The association also demanded that until an adequate number of laboratories are established in the State for testing green tea leaves, the regulatory sample collections must be stopped.

Deven Singh, advisor to ABLMTA, who also addressed newsmen, said that a major chunk of the green tea

leaves are non-compliant. "However, major tea companies are making orthodox tea out of these non-compliant green tea leaves to bring bad name to Assam tea as no step has been taken to test these orthodox grades. Over and above, the orthodox grade of tea is largely exported. If it fails the test in the international market, it will unquestionably bring bad name to Assam tea. Therefore, strict measures must be introduced to ensure that non-compliant green tea leaves from Assam are not used to make orthodox tea so as to protect the reputation of Assam tea," Singh said.

However, the new President said they are concerned as labour-intensive sectors like knitted and woven garments, footwear, gem and jewellery are doing good.

In the footwear sector, while global imports grew at a CAGR of 5 per cent, India's exports contracted.

"The focus on skilling is still lacking as per piece production in many segments is much less as compared to Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Cambodia," he said.

He suggested that the government address certain issues such as credit flow, interest subsidy and set up e-commerce hubs in the country to provide a cushion to the exporting community.

The share of export credit in the net bank credit is extremely low and not commensurate with the share of India's exports in the GDP, which is over 20 per cent, he said. "The demand for the credit has gone up with rising inflation, high commodity prices and abnormal increase in sea as well as air freight," he added.

For this, a budgetary support equivalent to 1 per cent of preceding year's export in Indian rupee can be made available every year through the budget grant to the department of commerce.

He also said that huge potential is there to boost exports by about USD 250-300 billion by 2030 through e-commerce medium.

"Let us explore the potential of social media like Facebook, Instagram, etc., for promoting e-commerce exports," Kumar said. - PTI

India PC market up 2.6 pc in Jan-Mar to 3.07 mn units

HP tops chart; Dell, Acer follow

NEW DELHI, May 16: The traditional PC market in India, comprising desktops, notebooks, and workstations, grew 2.6 per cent to 30.7 lakh units in the March quarter, market research firm International Data Corporation said on Thursday.

HP led the personal computer (PC) market with a 30.1 per cent share despite an 8.8 per cent decline in shipments. The company's PC shipment dropped to 9.23 lakh units during the quarter from 10.12 lakh a year ago.

Dell Technologies and Acer Group's PC volume shipments market share grew 28.8 per cent each to 17.5 and 15.4 per cent, respectively.

The market shares of Lenovo and Asus declined to 15.1 and 5.9 per cent, respectively, during the reported quarter. The share of Lenovo declined 1.3 per cent to 4.64 lakh units from 4.7 lakh while

that of Asus declined 8.3 per cent to 1.82 lakh from 1.98 lakh on a year-on-year basis.

"The PC market in India is facing challenges in the commercial segment due to reduced PC procurement from the IT and ITES sector and global accounts which traditionally drive significant volumes," IDC India Associate Vice President, Client Devices and IPDS, Navkendar Singh, said.

The market is expected to start recovering by the end of 2024 with refresh buying from the enterprise segment, Singh said.

According to the International Data Corporation (IDC) Worldwide Quarterly Personal Computing Device Tracker report, the desktop and workstation categories grew 10.1 per cent and 2.7 per cent year-on-year, respectively, and notebooks declined 1.7 per cent. - PTI



With the mercury rising, a worker prepares to sell air-coolers at a market in Gurugram on Thursday. - PTI

Telcos adopting green networks for sustainability goals: Industry

NEW DELHI, May 16: The Indian telecom operators are increasingly adopting green telecom networks, which focus on energy-efficient operations, carbon emission reductions and the use of renewable energy sources, industry experts said on Thursday, ahead of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day that falls on May 17.

Innovative 5G applications like Internet of Things (IoT), smart grids, precision agriculture, among others, will further contribute to the nation's sustainability goals.

"This is in addition to the efficiencies to be driven via use of 5G across diverse sectors like healthcare, education, transport, manufac-

turing, logistics, mining, etc., which will take us closer to achieving the country's sustainability goals," said Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).

"India has embarked on diverse projects with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as the foundation, offering the potential to build a sustainable economy. A key enabler in this journey is the rapid adoption of mobile Internet, which the United Nations deems essential for achieving its 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," Kochhar elaborated.

According to latest Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data, the

number of Internet subscribers reached 936.16 million at the end of December 2023, registering a quarterly rate of growth of 1.96 per cent.

Tarun Chhabra, Country Manager, Nokia India, said that as the digital landscape is becoming all-pervasive, the telecom industry needs to validate its sustainability efforts. "It's estimated that digital technologies can help achieve 70 per cent of targets under the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030," he noted.

With the fastest rollout of 5G, India is on the cusp of a digital revolution with its pioneering initiatives in the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and also taking the right steps in establishing its 6G leadership. - IANS

Exports may rise 12-15 pc to cross \$500 bn this fiscal: FIEO

Govt should address issues like credit flow, interest subsidy and set up e-commerce hubs

NEW DELHI, May 16: The country's merchandise exports are expected to increase about USD 60-70 billion to USD 500 billion by the end of FY25 on account of gradual improvement in global demand, apex exporters' body FIEO said on Thursday.

In 2023-24, exports dipped over 3 per cent to USD 437.1 billion.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Ashwini Kumar also said the country's services exports are also likely to reach USD 390-400 billion this fiscal.

"We are looking for merchandise exports between USD 500-510 billion in 2024-25. In the services, we expect exports to be around USD 390-400 billion for the current fiscal," Kumar told reporters here.

He said traditional markets like the US and Europe will help boost India's exports.

Sectors such as electronics, electricals, engineering, and pharma will play a key role in boosting shipments.

However, the new Presi-

dent said they are concerned as labour-intensive sectors like knitted and woven garments, footwear, gem and jewellery are doing good.

In the footwear sector, while global imports grew at a CAGR of 5 per cent, India's exports contracted.

"The focus on skilling is still lacking as per piece production in many segments is much less as compared to Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Cambodia," he said.

He suggested that the government address certain issues such as credit flow, interest subsidy and set up e-commerce hubs in the country to provide a cushion to the exporting community.

The share of export credit in the net bank credit is extremely low and not commensurate with the share of India's exports in the GDP, which is over 20 per cent, he said. "The demand for the credit has gone up with rising inflation, high commodity prices and abnormal increase in sea as well as air freight," he added.

For this, a budgetary support equivalent to 1 per cent of preceding year's export in Indian rupee can be made available every year through the budget grant to the department of commerce.

He also said that huge potential is there to boost exports by about USD 250-300 billion by 2030 through e-commerce medium.

"Let us explore the potential of social media like Facebook, Instagram, etc., for promoting e-commerce exports," Kumar said. - PTI

FIEO warns of dumping in India due to US-China trade war

China sitting on overcapacity in many sectors and thus threat of dumping cannot be ruled out



NEW DELHI, May 16: China has overcapacity in many sectors such as electric vehicles and hence threat of dumping of goods cannot be ruled out in the domestic market due to the escalating trade war between Beijing and Washington, exporters' body FIEO said on Thursday.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Ashwini Kumar said industry and the government should keep a close watch on the imports from China and if surge or dumping happens, the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) should take appropriate action to safeguard businesses.

"China is sitting on overcapacity in many sectors and thus the threat of dumping cannot be ruled out and more so when an important market is closed for their exports," Kumar told reporters here.

The US on Tuesday announced plans to slap new tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, advanced batteries, solar cells, steel, aluminium

and medical equipment.

According to a report by think tank GTRI, the escalation of the trade war between the US and China may push Beijing to dump goods in the Indian markets.

However, Kumar added that this also provides opportunity to India and other competitors to chip in at the supply gap.

Of the products affected by additional duties on China, India has opportunities in face-masks, PPE, syringes, needles, medical gloves, aluminium and iron and steel. "Opportunity may come in China also with retaliation on US exports, provided we have market access in products targeted by China," he said.

Further, he said that the Red Sea crisis is having a significant negative impact on both sea freight and air freight, which is in turn affecting Indian exports.

As some goods traditionally shipped by sea are being diverted to air due to the crisis, there is a rise in air freight demand. This has pushed air cargo costs upwards, with

some reports suggesting a jump of over 300 per cent for routes like India to Europe, Kumar said.

"The rise in both sea and air freight costs makes Indian exports more expensive for foreign buyers. This can hurt India's competitiveness in the global market. We have lost a few orders due to high freight rates, particularly in metal and commodities," he added.

He also said that delays and higher costs can disrupt the smooth flow of Indian exports, leading to potential order cancellations and reputational damage. "Overall, the Red Sea crisis is creating a challenging situation for Indian exporters. The Indian government and businesses are looking for strategies to mitigate these impacts, such as exploring alternative shipping routes and negotiating with shipping lines," he said.

The DGTR (Directorate General of Trade Remedies) is an investigation arm of the commerce ministry that deals with anti-dumping duty, safeguard duty, and countervailing duty. - PTI

Harsh Baweja takes charge as REC Director (Finance)

GUWAHATI, May 16: Harsh Baweja has taken charge as Director (Finance) at REC after the recent approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, stated a press release.

Baweja brings with him an extensive experience of over 33 years in managing financial and business operations across multiple institutions. His tenure as Executive Director of Finance at REC saw him steer the organization through diverse financial challenges, demonstrating a keen understanding of both state and private sector financing. His career also includes overseeing REC's key business offices in strategic locations across India.

SBI raises FD rate on select short-term maturity

NEW DELHI, May 16: The country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has hiked fixed deposit rate on select short-term maturity up to 75 basis points.

For term deposits of 46-179 days, the rate has been increased by 75 basis points to 5.50 per cent, as against the earlier 4.75 per cent, as per the revised figure posted on SBI website. There has been a 25 basis point increase in the other two maturity buckets - 180-210 days and 211 days to less than 1 year, to 6 per cent and 6.25 per cent respectively. The new rates on deposit less than Rs 2 crore are effective from May 15, 2024. Senior citizens would be eligible for additional 50 basis points on the revised rates as per the norms, it said.

SBI has left interest rates unchanged on other maturity buckets beyond one year. - PTI

Govt slashes windfall tax on domestic crude

NEW DELHI, May 16: The government has slashed windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil to Rs 5,700 per tonne, from Rs 8,400 per tonne, with effect from Thursday. The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED). The SAED on the export of diesel, petrol and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at 'nil'. The new rates are effective from May 16, an official notification said.

India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies. The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks. - PTI

Share of non-fossil fuel energy to be up 50 pc

NEW DELHI, May 16: The government aims to increase the share of non-fossil fuel to 50 per cent in the country's total installed electricity generation capacity by 2030, MNRE Secretary Bhupinder Singh Bhalla said.

The share of non-fossil fuel-based capacity in India's installed energy generation capacity is around 42 per cent at present, the official said in a address at the World Hydrogen Summit 2024 in Rotterdam, Netherlands, on May 15, 2024. "Approximately 43 per cent of India's current installed electricity capacity is from non-fossil-fuel sources, with projections indicating a rise to 50 per cent by 2030," he said. - PTI



India to become \$4 tn economy in FY25: Sanyal

Do not get emotional about trying to hit a very high growth rate in any particular year



NEW DELHI, May 16: India will be a USD 4 trillion economy in 2024-25 and surpass Japan by early next fiscal to become the world's fourth largest economy, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) Member Sanjeev Sanyal said on Thursday.

Sanyal further said that a 7 per cent economic growth rate will be a 'very good' growth rate for India, given various constraints, including the country's weak exports.

"So, this financial year, we will become a USD 4 trillion economy," he said at an event here.

Recently, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that India is expected to overtake Japan and Germany to emerge as the world's third-largest economy by 2027.

Currently, in US dollar terms, India is the fifth largest economy with a size of about USD 3.7 trillion in nominal terms.

Sanyal said Japan is now just a little ahead of us at USD 4.1 trillion. "So, either very early next year or even you know this year, we will cross Japan to become the world's fourth largest economy," Sanyal added.

According to him, Germany is a USD 4.6 trillion economy and it is not growing, so makes it a static target. "Maybe in two years, we will go past Germany. So, I think in terms of becoming the world's third largest economy, we are reasonably now close to the target," he said.

Sanyal argued that the government should not push any fiscal move to accelerate economic growth to 8-9 per cent. "If you get it, great, but anything around 7 per cent compounded over time is a very good growth rate. We shouldn't get too excited about 9 per cent," he said.

Sanyal said compounding of growth is the single most important thing as this will generate jobs and taxes.

While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Fitch Ratings have estimated India's growth at 7 per cent, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), S&P Global Ratings and Morgan Stanley projected a 6.8 per cent growth rate for FY25.

"Do not get emotional about trying to hit a very high growth rate in any particular year," he emphasised. Sanyal emphasised that there is no need to mess around with the financial system trying to support growth. "Do not mess around with your fiscal system, your monetary system, your current account and so on," he said.

Responding to a question on the internationalisation of the rupee, Sanyal said it is about converting the rupee into a hard currency. "We

only aspire over the next decade or so to become a hard currency like many of the others, we are not attempting to become the world's anchor currency," he added.

Sanyal said India's limited purpose is to convert the rupee into a hard currency over the next decade in terms of its wider usage as the currency in which people trade, in particular, the country's own trade.

"It is a currency in which other governments in the world hold their reserves in terms of being a part of the IMF SDR basket. So, that is a limited objective," he said.

In that context, Sanyal said, the government has done a few things, including an inflation rate targeting mechanism. "...So that the rupee essentially becomes a commonly used hard currency, at least commonly used for things relating to India," he said. - PTI

EC directs MHA to retain 25 coys of CAPF even after counting

NEW DELHI, May 16: The Election Commission today directed the Union Home Ministry to retain 25 companies of Central forces in Andhra Pradesh even after counting of votes on June 4 following post-poll violence in the State as it conveyed its displeasure to the State Chief Secretary and the police chief over the incidents.

Andhra post-poll violence

In a statement, the EC said "without mincing any words", it directs the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police to ensure that such violence is not repeated and all SPs are tasked with taking pre-emptive measures to avoid such a situation in future.

The poll authority had summoned Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy and DGP Harish Gupta to Nirvachan Sadan here to seek "person-

al explanation" over the incidents of violence reported on Monday and Tuesday.

"The commission decided to direct the Ministry of Home Affairs to retain the 25 CAPF (Central Armed Police Force) companies in Andhra Pradesh for 15 days after counting, to control any violence after declaration of results," the poll panel said.

It said the State government had requested that Central forces be retained for 15 days post counting.

Post-poll violence was reported in parts of Andhra Pradesh on Monday and Tuesday where Lok Sabha and Assembly polls were held simultaneously on Monday.

The leaders of the ruling YSRCP and Opposition TDP have levelled allegations against each other for the incidents. - PTI

Amit Shah interacts with J&K BJP leaders during Srinagar visit

SRINAGAR, May 16: Union Home Minister Amit Shah today interacted with several delegations, including BJP leaders of Jammu & Kashmir, on the first day of his two-day visit here.

Shah, who arrived this evening, is also likely to hold a security review meeting on Friday morning.

A Pahari delegation led by Mohammad Younis Khan met the minister and thanked him for granting Scheduled Tribe status to the community.

"We have come to meet the Home Minister to express our gratitude because after 50 years of struggle, we have finally obtained Scheduled Tribe status. They have fulfilled our demand, unlike other parties who only seek votes but never fulfil their promises. We will remain faithful to them as they fulfilled our demand," Khan told reporters before the delegation's meeting with Shah.

A delegation of local Sikhs also met Shah and it said it raised the demand of inclusion of the Punjabi language in syllabus of universities and reservation of seats in the Assembly for the community as granted to Kashmiri Pandits. Among the BJP leaders who met Shah were Darakhshan Andrabi, Sunil Sharma, Tarun Chugh and RS Pathania.

Though the schedule finalised for Shah's visit is limited to meeting only BJP leaders, sources said leaders of "local allies" of the party may also meet him.

Earlier in the day, Sharma,

the general secretary of the BJP's Jammu & Kashmir unit, said the Home Minister's visit to Kashmir is not political.

"The Union minister is coming to Kashmir today, but the visit is not political. The (general) elections are under way. The voter turnout (for the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat) on May 13 is a huge success of the policies of the Central government including the abrogation of Article 370.

"I think the Home Minister is coming here to review the measures from the security point of view to increase the turnout and create an atmosphere of peace. There is no political activity, but the BJP workers will meet him and discuss the party's organisational matters," Sharma said. Asked whether a Jamaat-e-Islami delegation will meet Shah, he said no such delegation is scheduled to meet the Home Minister.

Any non-political or senior people can meet Shah but no political delegation is meeting him, Sharma said.

Shah is likely to be briefed about the security situation in Jammu & Kashmir by the top security brass as the Lok Sabha elections will be followed by the annual Amarnath Yatra, which is scheduled to start on June 29 and conclude on August 19.

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir might witness Assembly elections after the yatra as the Supreme Court has given a deadline of September 30 to the Centre for holding these polls. - PTI

Poll officials check CM Shinde's luggage in Nashik

NASHIK, May 16: Poll officials today checked the luggage of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on his arrival at a helipad in Nashik, days after Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut alleged that the CM carried bags stashed with cash in a helicopter.

The officials did not find anything objectionable in Shinde's bags. "I carry this much luggage. It contains my clothes. I have brought bags even today," Shinde told reporters when asked about his bags being checked.

Shinde was in Nashik to

seek support for incumbent MP Hemant Godse who has been renominated by Shiv Sena. He also took part in a motorcycle rally in the city.

Raut on Monday had alleged that Shinde carried bags stuffed with cash in a helicopter to Nashik. He had posted a video on X, showing Shinde alighting from a helicopter and some persons around him carrying large bags.

"If they claim to have the support of the people, then why do they need money to entice voters," Raut had asked during a media interaction.

"The authorities have time

to probe our helicopters, but no action is taken against these people," he had added.

After nothing suspicious was found in his bags today, Shinde also said, "Some people work secretly. Eknath Shinde works openly. Now, what went outside from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation standing committee will also come to the fore (referring to alleged corruption in BMC)," he added.

Meanwhile, members of Sena (UBT) shouted slogans and showed their party symbol 'flaming torch' at Marathon Chowk on Gangapur

Road when Shinde's rally was passing through the area. Shinde responded by making a gesture of 'bow and arrow', the Shiv Sena's symbol.

This prompted the authorities to step up security at the Sena (UBT) office in the Shalimar Chowk area to avoid a confrontation between the rival Senas when the rally passed from there.

Nashik is among the 13 Lok Sabha seats that will go to polls in the fifth phase on May 20, marking the conclusion of general elections in Maharashtra. Votes will be counted on June 4. - PTI



Devotees gather at the Kedarnath temple during the 'Char Dham Yatra', in Rudrapur district on Thursday. - PTI

Alamgir Alam remanded to 6-day ED custody

RANCHI, May 16: Jharkhand minister Alamgir Alam, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with its probe into a money laundering case, was today remanded to the custody of the Central agency for six days by a special PMLA court here, lawyers said. The ED sought a 10-day remand for Alam.

Alam's lawyer Kishlay Prasad said that his six-day remand will start on Friday.

"Today, he is in judicial custody. There is no specific allegation against Alam. Everything is vague. Neither they are disclosing the name of the

person who has taken money or who has taken proceeds of crime. There is no direct involvement of the minister. Cash was recovered from one Jahangir who has no link with Alamgir Alam," Prasad said.

Earlier in the day, the minister was produced before the PMLA court in Ranchi amid tight security arrangements, an ED official said.

The money laundering investigation pertains to alleged irregularities and bribery in the State Rural Development department.

Alam was arrested after a six-hour grilling by the ED on Wednesday at the agen-

cy's office here. He was also questioned by the federal agency on Tuesday for over nine hours and his statement was recorded.

The State Parliamentary Affairs Minister represents the Pakur seat in the Jharkhand Assembly.

He came under the ED radar following the recent arrest of his personal secretary and State Administrative Service officer Sanjeev Kumar Lal (52) and the latter's domestic help Jahangir Alam (42). The Central agency recovered more than Rs 32 crore in cash from a flat linked to them during a raid on May 6. - PTI



BJP National President JP Nadda and party candidate and MP Aparajita Sarangi during a roadshow for Lok Sabha elections, in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. - PTI

Lightning strikes kill 11 in Bengal's Malda

MALDA (WB), May 16: At least 11 people were killed this afternoon after being struck by lightning in different places across Malda district of West Bengal, a government official said.

The district administration has announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of the deceased, he said.

"So far, 11 people have been killed due to lightning strikes. A number of injured

people are being treated at various hospitals. Some of the injured are in critical condition," the official told PTI.

Three persons - Chandan Sahani (40), Raj Mriddha (16) and Manoj Mandal (21) - were killed in Malda's Sahapur area, while another person identified as Asit Saha (19) died in Gajol after he was struck by lightning while working in a mango orchard, he said.

Eight-year-old Rana

Sheikh in Manickchak's Mohammed Tola and a couple, Nayan Roy (23) and Priyanka Singha (20) of Harishchandrapur, also lost their lives due to lightning, the official added.

In Haddatola, lightning killed Atul Mandal (65) and Sheikh Sabrul (11) while Sumitra Mandal (45) lost her life in Mirdadpur, he said.

In Englishbazar's Milki, a man identified as Pankaj Mandal (23) was killed. - PTI

Kapil Sibal elected as SCBA President

NEW DELHI, May 16: Senior advocate Kapil Sibal was today elected as the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

The SCBA elections were held today.

A Harvard Law School graduate, Sibal was the Additional Solicitor General of India during 1989-90. He was designated as senior advocate in 1983. Between 1995 and 2002, the former minister in the Congress-led UPA government served three terms as SCBA President. - PTI

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, UDALGURI DISTRICT, UDALGURI ASSAM



The above is photograph of Md. Ahmad Hussain (28 Yrs.), S/o- Suraj Ali, Vill: Sidhakhua, PS: Rowta, Dist: Udalguri who has been missing 27.04.2024 from her house.

This refers to Rowta PS GDE No-10, Dtd. 29.04.2024 and this office Man Missing Register Entry No. 57, Dtd. 07.05.2024.

Descriptive Roll of the Missing Person:

1. Complexion : Swarthy
2. Age : 28 Yrs.
3. Height : 5 Feet
4. L/known : Assamese
5. Wearing : Not Noted

All efforts may be made to trace out/recover the above noted missing person at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to this office at the following helpline numbers for further necessary action: 6026901138 (Cell Phone).

Sd/- Superintendent of Police Udalguri, Assam

Janasanyog/D/775/24/17-May-24

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE :: UDALGURI :: DISTRICT :: UDALGURI ASSAM::



The above is photograph of Sapna Barla (23 Yrs.) D/o Buti Barla, Vill- Majuli T.E., PS- Harisinga, Dist- Udalguri who has been missing 25.04.2024 from Majuli T.E.

This refers to Harisinga PS GDE No. 587, Dtd. 27.04.2024 and this office Man Missing Register Entry No. 59, Dtd. 07.05.2024.

Descriptive Roll of the Missing Person :

1. Complexion : Swarthy
2. Age : 23 Yrs
3. Height : 5,4 feet
4. L/ Known : Assamese, Adivasi
5. Wearing : Suridar

All efforts may be made to trace out/ recover the above noted missing person at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to this office at the following helpline numbers for further necessary action : 6026901138 (Cell phone).

Sd/- Superintendent of Police Udalguri, Assam

Janasanyog/D/785/24/17-May-24

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, UDALGURI DISTRICT, UDALGURI ASSAM



The above is photograph of Rousni Boro (32 Yrs.), W/o- Rajesh Boro, Vill: Adhakhupara, PS: Panery, Dist: Udalguri who has been missing 19.04.2024 from informer house.

This refers to Panery PS GDE No-18, Dtd. 23.04.2024 and this office Man Missing Register Entry No. 60, Dtd. 07.05.2024.

Descriptive Roll of the Missing Person:

1. Complexion : Fair
2. Age : 23 Yrs.
3. Height : 5 Feet
4. L/known : Assamese, Bodo
5. Wearing : Suridar

All efforts may be made to trace out/recover the above noted missing person at the earliest and result thereof may be intimated to this office at the following helpline numbers for further necessary action: 6026901138 (Cell Phone).

Sd/- Superintendent of Police Udalguri, Assam

Janasanyog/D/783/24/17-May-24

**DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF EMPLOYMENT
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, SHARAM SHAKTI BHAWAN
RAFI MARG, NEW DELHI- 110001
Central Employment Exchanges
Advt. No. 05/2024**

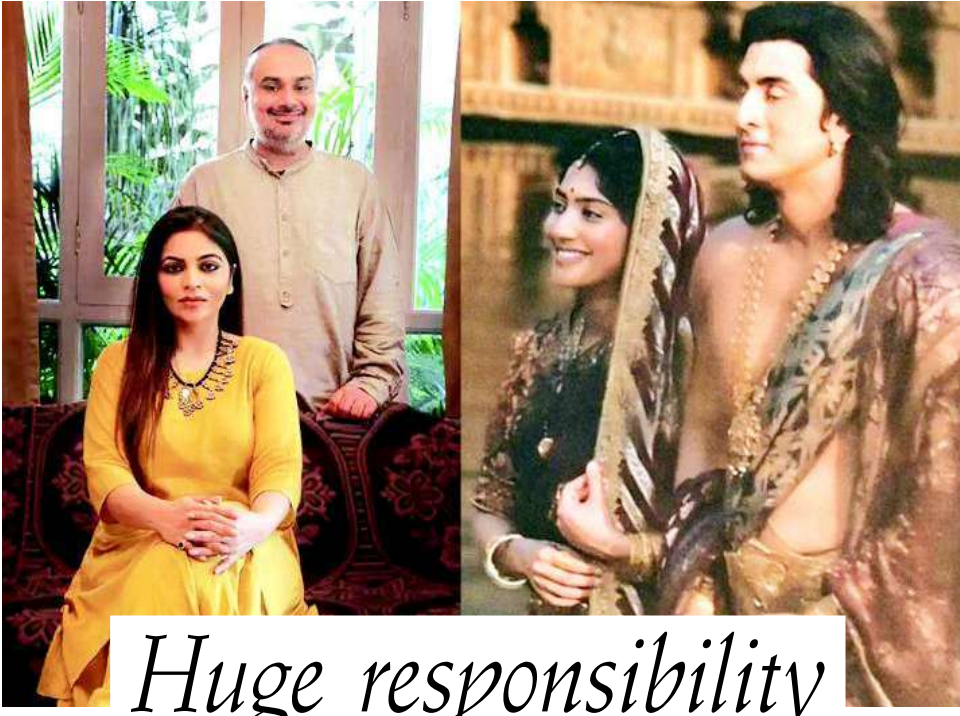
Applications are invited from eligible SC/ST jobseekers for (1) Special Coaching (2) 'O' level One Year Software training (3) 'O' Level Computer hardware maintenance training (CHM) (4) Office Automation, Accounting and Publishing Assistant (5) Computer Application and Business Accounting Associate (6) Cyber Secured Web Development Associate programme which is likely to commence from 01.07.2024.

National Career Service Centres for SC/ST offer the following courses free of cost for SC/ST jobseekers at various locations. During the course period, the candidate is entitled for the stipend @ Rs. 1000 per month. The details of eligibility criteria for training programmes are given as under :

Sl. No.	Name of the course	Duration of the course	Age limit	Minimum Qualification	Family Income	Books & Stationery	Likely to be commenced
1	Special Coaching Scheme	One Year	18-27 Years (as on 01.07.2024)	10+2	Upto Rs. 3.00 Lakh per annum	Free	01.07.2024
2	'O' Level one Year Computer training through NIELIT	One Year	18-30 Years (as on 01.07.2024)	10+2	Upto Rs. 3.00 Lakh per annum	Free	01.07.2024
3	'O' Level Computer Hardware maintenance training through NIELIT	One Year	18-30 Years (as on 01.07.2024)	10+2	Upto Rs. 3.00 Lakh per annum	Free	01.07.2024
4	Office Automation, Accounting and Publishing Assistant through NIELIT	One Year	18-30 Years (as on 01.07.2024)	10+2	Upto Rs. 3.00 Lakh per annum	Free	01.07.2024
5	Computer Application and Business Accounting Associate through NIELIT	One Year	18-30 Years (as on 01.07.2024)	10+2	Upto Rs. 3.00 Lakh per annum	Free	01.07.2024
6	Cyber Secured Web Development Associate through NIELIT	One Year	18-30 Years (as on 01.07.2024)	10+2	Upto Rs. 3.00 Lakh per annum	Free	01.07.2024

Desirous SC/ST jobseekers may visit www.ncs.gov.in or www.dge.gov.in and submit their application (in enclosed format) to the National Career Service Centre for SC/STs (list may be seen on DGE website or NCS portal) where the candidate is interested for participating in the above said program. Last date for submission of application to NCS for SC/ST is 15.06.2024. Candidates would be considered for only one course. The candidates may indicate their choice of courses in order of their preferences.

CBC 23105/11/0003/2425



Huge responsibility

Fashion label Rimple & Harpreet trying to create 'authentic' costumes for the new Ramayana movie

All eyes will be on Nitesh Tiwari's upcoming film Ramayana when it's up for release, and designer Rimple Narula of the fashion label Rimple & Harpreet says they are working round the clock to create "authentic" costumes for the forthcoming period drama.

seen Lord Ram or Goddess Sita, so we sat down and thought what we would like to see and present to the world. We made a full look book and took it to director Nitesh Tiwari. We decided collectively," she added.

Works of 19th century's iconic Indian artist Raja Ravi Varma, best known for his portraits and paintings of Hindu deities, also served as a source of inspiration for the attire in Ramayana.

"There are a lot of Raja Ravi Varma paintings, which we were looking at in terms of colours and silhouettes. We have created a beautiful form with the help of very old weavers in Banaras. We have developed some authentic fabrics, which are absolutely Indian, made in India and revived some very old techniques, which really took us a lot of time to do.

Asked about the reaction of Kapoor and Pallavi to their looks in the film, the designer said that the actors were happy with the costumes. "They were happy and felt in character. Ranbir was a little more expressive," she added.

Rimple & Harpreet's latest project is Sanjay Leela Bhansali's debut web series Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar.

(Source: PTI)

TV Channel schedule for CN, Nick, Disney, and Rishtey.

TV Channel schedule for Zee, Colors, and Rishtey.

TV Channel schedule for Zcafe and StarPlus.

TV Channel schedule for StarPlus and Zcafe.

TV Channel schedule for Regional channels.

TV Channel schedule for Regional channels.

TV Channel schedule for Discovery, History, and National Geographic.

TV Channel schedule for National Geographic and Discovery.

TV Channel schedule for Sony Max 2 and MX.

TV Channel schedule for MX and Sony Max 2.

TV Channel schedule for Sony Max 2 and MX.

TV Channel schedule for Sony Max 2 and MX.

Know your DAY section with horoscope advice for Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, and Aquarius.

Lockhorns cartoon strip featuring a character in a suit and a woman.

Cartoon strip titled 'THE PHANTOM' by Lee Falk, showing a character in a dark suit.

Cartoon strip titled 'BLONDIE' by Dick Tracy, featuring a blonde woman and a man.

Cartoon strip titled 'HAGAR THE HORRIBLE' by David Levine, featuring a cavewoman and her family.

Tribune CROSSWORD - 7985 grid with numbers 1-33.

Across and Down clues for the crossword puzzle.

SOLUTION TO TRIBUNE CROSSWORD - 7985 with answers for across and down.

JUMBLED WORDS section with a word search and a list of words to find.

Slovakian PM Fico remains in 'serious' condition

BRATISLAVA, May 16: The condition of Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico is "still serious" following the assassination attempt a day ago, Defence Minister Robert Kalinak said on Thursday after a special meeting of the Security Council in Bratislava.

Kalinak, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister, said that Fico had been hit by four bullets and they had caused serious injuries. "The doctors have managed to stabilize his condition," he said, but stressed Fico is not yet out of danger. "We have had a difficult night," Kalinak said.

Miriam Lapunikova, director of the FD Roosevelt Hospital in Banská Bystrica, said Fico underwent a five-hour emergency operation on Wednesday evening.

Two teams of doctors were involved in the operation, and Fico continues to be under the constant care of a team of doctors, she said.

Fico, 59, was flown to hospital by hel-

icopter after the shooting attack that followed a government meeting in the central town of Handlova.

The suspected shooter, who was arrested at the scene, is a 71-year-old man



from the town of Levice, according to Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok. Initial questioning had revealed a "clear political motive," according to the minister.

According to media reports, the man had worked for a private security serv-

ice in the past and therefore had a fire-arms licence.

The attack occurred as Fico, a left-wing nationalist, went outside to shake hands after a Cabinet meeting held at the House of Culture in Handlova. One of the shots hit him in the abdomen.

The local television station RTV Prievidza published a video of the incident showing a man pushing against the fence and shooting at the prime minister from close range.

Experts in Slovakia criticized the security precautions surrounding Fico's outing. "Fico himself spoke a few weeks ago about the danger of someone shooting at politicians," former Slovakian police chief Stefan Hamran told the *Dennik N* newspaper on Thursday.

He also criticised the reaction of security staff after the shots were fired. "There was chaos there, that is obvious and that is a failure." — IANS

5 Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza

JERUSALEM, May 16: Five Israeli soldiers were killed and seven others injured, three of them seriously, by errant Israeli tank fire in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement on Thursday.

The casualties were with a force that entered Gaza City and seized buildings as part of a resumed attack on the refugee camp, Xinhua news agency reported.

Two IDF tanks, positioned several dozen meters away, apparently spotted a gun in a window of one of the buildings and fired two shells towards the target. The army said it was investigating why the soldiers were misidentified as Palestinian militants.

A total of 626 soldiers have been killed in Hamas' Oct. 7 attack and Israel's ensuing attacks on Gaza, according to the IDF tally. — IANS

3 dead after small plane crashes

FRANKLIN (US), May 16: Three people are dead after a small plane crashed on Wednesday in Williamson County, local officials confirmed.

Williamson County Chief Deputy Mark Elrod told reporters that the plane had left Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and was headed to Louisville, Kentucky, but crashed in Tennessee near Leiper's Fork, about 30 miles (48.28 kilometers) south of Nashville, around noon local time. "It does appear that the plane did break up in the air," Elrod said.

Elrod added that the debris field is more than a mile long, but no structures have been reported damaged.

The names of the victims have not been released.

Jill Burgin, spokesperson for the Williamson County Emergency Management Agency, said they received a 911 call at about 12:05 pm.

"He just said a possible plane crash, but he didn't have a lot of details," Burgin told reporters. — AP

Sri Lanka to send high-level team to Moscow

COLOMBO, May 16: Sri Lanka on Thursday said it will send a high-level delegation to Russia to look into the issue of its retired soldiers joining the Russian military at the Ukrainian war front. The development comes a day after the Sri Lankan Defence Ministry admitted at least 16 retired military personnel have been killed in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

"President Ranil Wickremesinghe has instructed to send a team comprising the Defence Secretary, a Foreign Ministry official and a former Sri Lankan diplomat to Russia to look into the Sri Lankans who have joined the Russian military in the Ukrainian war front," State Minister of Foreign Affairs Tharaka Balasuriya was quoted as saying by news portal Adaderana.Lk.

An emergency hotline number of the Ministry of Defence is currently in operation to collect the information of Sri Lankan nationals, who have travelled to Russia to join the war, Balasuriya told a press briefing.

On Wednesday, State Minister for Defence Premitha Bandara Tennakoon said that 16 Sri Lankan retired military personnel have been killed in the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Sri Lankan mercenaries had joined the Russian and Ukrainian forces after unscrupulous foreign employment agencies misled them in the name of foreign employment, according to police. Tennakoon had said that plans are being made to bring back Sri Lankans who are currently in Russia and Ukraine.

"The figure according to the information received so far is 288," Tennakoon said, adding, "The government would take action to bring them back as complaints have been received from their relatives."

Tennakoon also hinted that it was a human trafficking operation where former servicemen go through a third country to reach the war front and said, last week, Sri Lanka had opened an inquiry into the recruitment of its citizens for the conflict. — PTI

8 killed, 16 hurt in Nigeria

ABUJA, May 16: At least eight worshippers were killed and 16 others injured early Wednesday morning after a man attacked a mosque with a locally made explosive in northern Nigeria's Kano state, resulting in a fire outbreak, the police said.

The suspect, a 38-year-old local resident, confessed that he attacked the mosque in Kano's remote Gadan village "purely in hostility following (a) prolonged family disagreement," police spokesman Abdullahi Haruna said in a statement on Wednesday.

Eight of those injured died

later in a hospital, Haruna later told local Channels Television on Thursday. Four children were among the injured worshippers, although it was not clear if any of the children died.

The incident caused panic in Kano, northern Nigeria's largest state, where periodic religion-related unrest has occurred over the years, sometimes resulting in violence.

The suspect invaded the mosque with "a locally prepared bomb and exploded it," local police chief Umar Sanda told reporters. "It has nothing to do with terrorism". Footage broadcast by the

local TV station showed charred walls and burned furniture in the mosque, the main place of worship for Gadan village in Muslim-dominated Kano state.

Local media also reported the worshippers were locked inside the mosque, making it difficult for them to escape.

"Some children ran for their lives with fire all over them. We had to put water to quench it," Hussaini Adamu, a resident, told TVC.

The police cordoned off the scene while the injured were rushed to a hospital in the state capital. — PTI

Sudan denies reports of visa denial to US envoy

KHARTOUM, May 16: Sudan's Foreign Ministry on Thursday issued a statement refuting claims that the Sudanese government had declined to grant an entry visa to U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan, Tom Perriello.

The ministry clarified, "The Sudanese Embassy in Washington or any other capital did not receive a request from Perriello for an entry visa," Xinhua News Agency reported.

Earlier reports from Sudanese local media suggested that Perriello had stated during a meeting with a Sudanese civil group in Kampala, Uganda, that the Sudanese government had denied

him a visa. Responding to these reports, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry confirmed that the Sudanese embassy in Washington contacted the U.S. State Department, which affirmed that Perriello had not made such statements.

Perriello was appointed as the US special envoy for Sudan on Feb. 26, 2024, with a mandate to lead US efforts to resolve the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan. Sudan has been witnessing deadly clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since April 15, 2023. — IANS

Violence rages in New Caledonia

PARIS, May 16: Violence raged across New Caledonia for the third consecutive day on Thursday, hours after France imposed a state of emergency in the French Pacific territory, boosting security forces' powers to quell deadly unrest in the archipelago that has long sought independence.

French authorities in New Caledonia and the interior ministry in Paris reported that five people, including two police officers, have been killed in the violence after protests earlier this week over voting reforms pushed by President Emmanuel Macron's government turned deadly.

At least 60 members of the security forces were injured and 214 people were arrested in the Thursday's clashes with police, arson and looting, according to the territory's top French official, High Commissioner Louis Le Franc.

"Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said after Thursday's security meeting at the Elysee presidential palace in Paris.

Attal said France will provide the island with essential goods after three days of unrest. In addition to the 1,700 security forces troops that have already been deployed to help police curb the violence, 1,000 more are on the way, he added.

The situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks which are unbearable and unspeakable," Attal said. Two members of the island's Indigenous Kanak community were among the five dead, French Interior and

Overseas Territories Minister Gerald Darmanin said on Thursday.

"The (French) state will regain total control," Darmanin declared in a series of interviews with French media.

Darmanin said 10 people, all alleged members of the pro-independence movement known as The Field Action Coordination Unit, have been placed under house arrest. In April, the group had backed several protests against French authorities on the island.

However, Darmanin, the interior minister, alleged on Thursday that the movement is a "small group which calls itself pro-independence, but instead commits looting, murder and violence." "We will not back down," Darmanin said.

The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak people condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence" as "unjustifiable", but rejected the allegations that members of The Field Action Coordination Unit have been involved in the deadly violence.

Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island.

"This is not a terrorist group" or mafia group, as certain political leaders want us to believe," he said in a statement on Thursday.

The state of emergency will be in place for at least 12 days, French Prime Min-

ister Gabriel Attal said Wednesday.

French military forces were being deployed to protect ports and airports and to beef up security forces' efforts to curb violence. The curfew has been extended until Friday morning, Le Franc said. The territory's political parties appealed for calm and reason with people who support independence and those who want the island to remain part of France in a joint statement.

The last time France imposed such measures on one of its overseas territories was in 1985, also in New Caledonia.

The emergency powers enable French and local authorities on the archipelago to tackle unrest, namely by authorising the house detention for people deemed a threat to public order and expanding powers to conduct searches, seize weapons and restrict movements, with possible jail time for violators.

The Pacific island east of Australia, home to about 270,000 people and 10 time zones ahead of Paris, is known to tourists for its UNESCO World Heritage age atolls and reefs. Tensions have simmered for decades between the Indigenous Kanaks seeking independence and colonisers' descendants who want it to remain part of France.

People of European descent in New Caledonia, which has long served as France's prison colony and now has a French military base, distinguish between descendants of colonizers and descendants of the many prisoners sent to the territory by force. — AP

Bangladesh okays annual development programme

DHAKA, May 16: The highest economic policy-making body of the Bangladeshi government on Thursday approved a 2.65 trillion taka (\$23 billion) Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the next fiscal year 2024-25.

The amount is over 8 per cent higher than that of the revised ADP of the current fiscal year 2023-24 (June 2023-July 2024).

After the meeting, Bangladeshi Planning Minister Abdus Salam told journalists that out of the ADP outlay of 2.65 trillion taka for the next fiscal year, 1.65 trillion taka will come from local sources while the rest of 1 trillion taka as foreign project assistance.

The ADP for the next fiscal year attaches the highest importance to the transport, communication and education sectors alongside putting priority on ensuring optimum utilization of public funds through checking misuse. — IANS

4 migrants die in Croatia

ZAGREB (Croatia), May 16: A car carrying migrants on Thursday skidded off road and hit a wall in southern Croatia, killing four people and injuring several others, police said. Croatian media reported that the driver was trying to escape police to avoid being caught for people smuggling. The five other passengers, including a child, were injured and taken to the hospital.

Croatia is a European Union (EU) member state. Migrants trying to reach Western Europe come to Croatia through Bosnia before moving on towards Slovenia or Italy. — AP



US Vice President Kamala Harris speaking at an event in Washington on Thursday. — PTI

Australian unemployment rate rises to 4.1 per cent

CANBERRA, May 16: Australia's unemployment rate rose for a second straight month to 4.1 per cent in April.

According to official figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on Thursday, the unemployment rate rose from 3.9 per cent in March to 4.1 per cent in April — the equal-highest rate since January 2022, Xinhua news agency reported.

The rise in the unemployment rate came despite the number of employed Australians increasing by 38,500 people between March and April, with a 44,600 rise in part-time positions partially offset by a 6,100 fall in full-time roles.

In the same period, the

number of unemployed people — meaning those who are not employed but are actively looking for work — rose by 30,300 to 604,200.

at 64.0 per cent in April, indicating that recent employment growth is broadly keeping pace with population growth," Bjorn Jarvis, head of labor statistics at the ABS, said in a media release.

"This suggests that the labour market remains tight, though less tight than late 2022 and early 2023." The total number of hours worked by Australians was 1.96 billion in April — 15 million fewer than in April 2023.

The federal budget handed down by Treasurer Jim Chalmers on Tuesday projected that unemployment would rise to 4.25 per cent by June 2024 and to 4.5 per cent by June 2025. — IANS



Slovakia's incumbent President Zuzana Caputova during a press conference in Bratislava, Slovakia, on Thursday. — PTI

Facebook, Instagram face fresh scrutiny under EU's digital regulations

LONDON, May 16: The European Union opened fresh investigations on Thursday into Facebook and Instagram over suspicions that they're failing to protect children online, in violation of the bloc's strict digital regulations for social media platforms.

It's the latest round of scrutiny for parent company Meta Platforms under the 27-nation EU's Digital Services Act, a sweeping set of regulations that took effect last year with the goal of cleaning up online platforms and protecting internet users.

The European Commission, the bloc's executive

arm, said it's concerned that the algorithmic systems used by Facebook and Instagram to recommend content like videos and posts could "exploit the weaknesses and inexperience" of children and stimulate "addictive behaviour".

It's worried that these systems could reinforce the so-called "rabbit hole" effect that leads users to increasingly disturbing content.

The commission is also looking into Meta's use of age verification tools to prevent children from accessing Facebook or Instagram, or be shown inappropriate content. Only children aged 13 and

older are allowed to use the platforms. It's also looking into whether the company is complying with DSA rules requiring a high level of privacy, safety and security for minors.

"We want young people to have safe, age-appropriate experiences online and have spent a decade developing more than 50 tools and policies designed to protect them," Meta said in a prepared statement. "This is a challenge the whole industry is facing, and we look forward to sharing details of our work with the European Commission."

They're the latest DSA

cases to focus on child protection under the DSA, which requires platforms to put in place stringent measures to protect minors. The commission opened two separate investigations earlier this year into TikTok over concerns about risks to kids.

"We are not convinced that Meta has done enough to comply with the DSA obligations — to mitigate the risks of negative effects to the physical and mental health of young Europeans on its platforms Facebook and Instagram," European Commissioner Thierry Breton said in a social media post.

The cases announced Thursday aren't the first for Facebook and Instagram. They're already being investigated under the DSA over concerns they're not doing enough to stop foreign disinformation ahead of EU elections next month.

Social media platform X and e-commerce site AliExpress are also being investigated over their compliance with the EU rules.

There's no deadline for the investigations to wrap up. Violations could result in fines of up to 6% of a company's annual worldwide revenue. — AP



Born
August 3, 1984
Debut
June 12, 2005: vs Pakistan (Quetta)
Matches played
150 (captain in 87 matches)
Goals scored
94 (Top goalscorer for India)
Trophies Won
Jawahar Lal Nehru Cup in 2007, 2009 and 2012
AFC Challenge Cup in 2008
Hero Intercontinental Cup in 2018 and 2023
Hero Tri-Nation Cup in 2017 and 2023
SAFF Cup in 2011, 2015, 2021 and 2023



“He (Sunil) knows best how he feels and when it's the appropriate time to do things. I just wish we all do everything to make June 6 very memorable for him and all Indian football fans. He became a legend while still playing and that's something only a few can do.”

Team India head coach
Igor Stimac

“Big brother, wonderful human being, the GOAT”

SPORTS REPORTER

GUWAHATI, May 16: As the Indian senior men's team gathered in the Kalinga Stadium gym in Bhubaneswar for their session on Thursday morning, there was a hush in the room. Less than an hour ago, Sunil Chhetri posted a heart-touching 10-minute video announcing his retirement from national colours. Head coach Igor Stimac stood beside him, gathered everyone in a semi-circle, and gave a brief speech for the captain and the boys. This was the start of Sunil Chhetri's last-ever national team camp – 19 years after his first.

“He knows best how he feels and when it's the appropriate time to do things. I just wish we all do everything to make 6th June very memorable for him and all Indian football fans,” Stimac was quoted as saying by the-aiff.com. “He became a legend while still playing and that's something only a few can do. He's an inspiration to everyone, absolutely committed to the Indian jersey which is something these youngsters need to follow. Playing for the country with passion and love, and as he said with ‘intense joy’,” Stimac added. Having taken over the Indian national team in May 2019, the Croatian has completed five years together with Chhetri.

“I had the pleasure of coaching such a wonderful human being and getting to know his beautiful family,” he said. “We were more than simply a coach and a player and I am very proud of the relationship we have amongst us and the group. I am very confident that whatever he decides to do after football will have an immense impact on society in a very positive way. He was born to become a GOAT (Greatest Of All Time).”

‘Intense joy’ to come to an end

Stalwart Chhetri announces retirement, WC qualifier on June 6 to be his last game

NEW DELHI, May 16: The iconic Sunil Chhetri on Thursday announced his decision to retire from international football after the FIFA World Cup qualifying match against Kuwait on June 6, bringing the curtains down on a career that is unparalleled in Indian football for its longevity and consistency.

The long-serving national team captain who always mentioned playing for India has been ‘intense joy’, announced his decision via a video he posted on his social media accounts.

Chhetri, who made his debut in 2005, has scored 94 goals for the country. He will leave the scene as India's all-time top scorer and most-capped player.

He is also third in the list of goal scorers among active players behind Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi and currently sits as the fourth in the all-time list of international goal-scorers as well.

Chhetri, 39, will walk into international sunset after rendering yeoman service for nearly two decades, 19 years to be precise, to a team that was heavily reliant on the 5'7" forward to deliver the goals every time he wore the blue jersey.

“The match Against Kuwait is the last,” Chhetri said while announcing his decision.

Chhetri's final match will be played at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata, and it is appropriate that he will end his journey in a city, where he has played a lot of his football while evolving into a potent striker.

India are currently second in Group A with four points, behind leaders Qatar.

Chhetri had made his 150th national appearance in March and scored on the occasion against Afghanistan in Guwahati. India, though, stunningly lost that game 1-2.

On his international debut against Pa-

kistan way back in 2005, Chhetri, who would go on to become one of the game's most lethal strikers, scored, and he rated it as his best moment.

“There is one day that I never forget and remember it quite often is the first time I played for my country man, it was unbelievable.”

“But the day before, morning of the day, Sukhi sir (Sukhwinder Singh), my first national team coach, in the morning he came to me and he's like, you're going to start? I can't tell you how I was feeling man,” Chhetri recalled.

He added, “I took my jersey, I sprayed some perfume on it, I have no idea why. So that day, everything that happened, once he told me, from breakfast to lunch and to the game and to my first goal in my debut, to conceding late in the 80th minute, that day is probably that I will never forget and is one of the best days of my national team journey.”

Speaking on the future of Indian football, Chhetri said that it was time for the country to find the next 9. He felt the team is currently handicapped as none of the current lot of players play as the main striker for their respective clubs and sees the massive hole in the current national team.

In recent times, Chhetri said he could sense that he was heading towards the end of his glorious journey.

“You know the feeling that I recollect in the last 19 years is a very nice combination between duty, pressure and immense joy. I never thought individually, these are the many games that I've played for the country, this is what I've done, good or bad, but now I did it.”

“This last one and a half, two months, I did it and it was very strange. I did it because probably I was going towards the decision that this game, this next game is going to be my last.”

The moment he had arrived at the decision, memories came flooding back to his mind. – PTI



Sunil Chhetri is seen just before his debut match against Pakistan in 2005.

Chhetri, who made his debut in 2005, has scored 94 goals for the country. He will leave the scene as India's all-time top scorer and most-capped player. He is also third in the list of goal scorers among active players behind Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi and currently sits as the fourth in the all-time list of international goal-scorers as well

Who can replace Sunil Chhetri?

NEW DELHI, May 16: The striker position in the Indian football team is one that has remain untouched ever since 2005 when a 20-year-old Sunil Chhetri made his way into the team which is why the all-important question arises, who will take up the mantle after Chhetri's final game?

The Indian footballing scene has grown so accustomed to having the country's leading top scorer up front that there are no out and out strikers left. A majority of the teams in the ISL have foreign center forwards to make up for the lack of goal scorers in the country.

The first two names that come to mind when thinking about India's hunt for the next number nine are the Mumbai City FC duo, Lallianzuala Chhangte and young breakout star Vikram Partap Singh. The two combined for three goals in stoppage time in the first leg of the semifinals of the Indian Super League to come back from 2-0 down to win 3-2 against FC Goa.

Following Chhetri's departure, Indian football urgently needs to figure out where the goals will come from and 26-year-old Chhangte might be the short-term answer. He has been lighting up the wing with his pace, skills and technical ability. He scored 10 goals and provided six assists in this edition of the Indian Super League. A false nine situation may be better suited to his abilities.

What made Mumbai City champions this season was their lethal attack from both wings as Vikram Partap Singh scored 8 goals and provided 4 assists in the title winning season.

What is the most appealing about the Chandigarh born forward is his work ethic. At just 22 years, he has shown relentless pressing which is one of the factors that separated the Indian captain from those around him. Singh has surely shown potential that he can be nurtured into the centre forward role in the future.



Lallianzuala Chhangte

The first two names that come to mind when thinking about India's hunt for the next number nine are the Mumbai City FC duo, Lallianzuala Chhangte and young breakout star Vikram Partap Singh. The two combined for three goals in stoppage time in the first leg of the semifinals of the Indian Super League to come back from 2-0 down to win 3-2 against FC Goa

Another name that comes to mind is that of Chennaiyin FC player, Rahim Ali who has on occasion been the man to replace Chhetri on the pitch as a substitute. He is also the only Indian player who has on occasions played as a centre forward for his club. – IANS

The Secunderabad-born footballer, who made his club debut for Mohun Bagan in 2002, went on to play for USA's Major League Soccer team Kansas City Wizards in 2010 as well as for the reserve team of the Sporting CP in the Portuguese football league back in 2012



Achievements

- First Indian to score 50 international goals
- Scored four hat-tricks for India Vs Tajikistan in the 2008 AFC Challenge Cup Final at New Delhi; Vs Vietnam in 2010 Friendly at Pune; Vs Chinese Taipei in 2018 Intercontinental Cup at Mumbai; Vs Pakistan in 2023 SAFF Cup
- Only Indian to score a hat-trick in the final of an International Tournament – AFC Challenge Cup in New Delhi – 2008
- Scored in three finals of the SAFF Cup 2011, 2015-16 and 2021
- Scored at least one goal in his first, 25th, 50th, 75th, 100th, 125th and 150th matches

Awards

- Arjuna in 2011
- Padma Shri in 2019
- Khel Ratna in 2021
- Asian Icon by the AFC in 2018
- AIFF Player of the Year in 2007, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2019
- FPAL Player of the Year in 2009 and 2018
- AFC Challenge Cup Most Valuable Player in 2008
- SAFF Player of the Tournament in 2011
- Hero of the Intercontinental Cup in 2018

(AIFF)



Sunil Chhetri in Kansas City Wizards jersey in USA's Major League.

‘Real legend of the game’

Sports world come together to pay tribute to Chhetri

NEW DELHI, May 16: Batting maestro Virat Kohli, 2011 World Cup hero Yuvraj Singh and former star footballer Bhattacharya were among the leading sports personalities who lauded Sunil Chhetri's achievements after the iconic India striker on Thursday announced his decision to retire from international football.

Chhetri, the long-serving national team captain announced his decision to call it a day after the FIFA World Cup qualifying match against Kuwait in Kolkata on June 6.

Commenting on Chhetri's video post on Instagram, Kohli wrote for his good friend: “My brother: Proud.”

Yuvraj called him a legend, saying the legacy of the 39-year-old veteran of 150 national appearances will remain for a very long time.

“A real legend of the game who took Indian football onto the global stage. Your passion has inspired a generation to

When I came in (IM) Vijayan was senior to me, after that Sunil (Chhetri) came. I am fortunate to have served Indian football in between two stalwarts of Indian football,” added Bhutia.

Cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal, member of the India squad for the T20 World Cup, wished Chhetri a “happy retirement”.

“What a run you have had! Congratulations on an amazing career,” wrote Chahal on ‘X’, while Chhetri's Bengaluru FC and India team-mate, goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, wished he could change his compatriot's mind.

“Never wanted to see this happen, I wish I could do something to change your mind but I also understand why it is happening bhai. The whole country needs to celebrate your international career on the 6th of June the way you deserve. My Captain,” Sandhu wrote on ‘X’.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) said Chhetri will continue to motivate the coming generations.



Yuvraj Singh

“A real legend of the game who took Indian football onto the global stage. Your passion has inspired a generation to take up the game... Your legacy in Indian sports will be remembered forever... You can look back with pride as you get set for your final game, thank you legend.”

take up the game... Your legacy in Indian sports will be remembered forever... You can look back with pride as you get set for your final game, thank you legend,” wrote Yuvraj in an Instagram story.

Chhetri, who made his international debut in 2005, has scored 94 goals for the country. He will leave the scene as India's all-time top scorer and most-capped player.

Legendary India forward Bhutia, who Chhetri succeeded as captain, told PTI that it was a great loss for Indian football.

“Sunil, no doubt, will go down as one of the greatest players India had ever produced. His contribution to Indian football is immense. It's a great loss for Indian football,” said Bhutia, the former India captain.

“I am fortunate to have played with him as senior player.

“Your legacy on and off-the-field will always be remembered! You have always been and will continue to inspire us. Thank you.”

BCCI termed Chhetri a “phenomenal icon”, saying his “career has been nothing short of extraordinary and you have been a phenomenal icon for Indian football and Indian sports,” while India spinner Kuldeep Yadav congratulated the legend on a “fantastic career”.

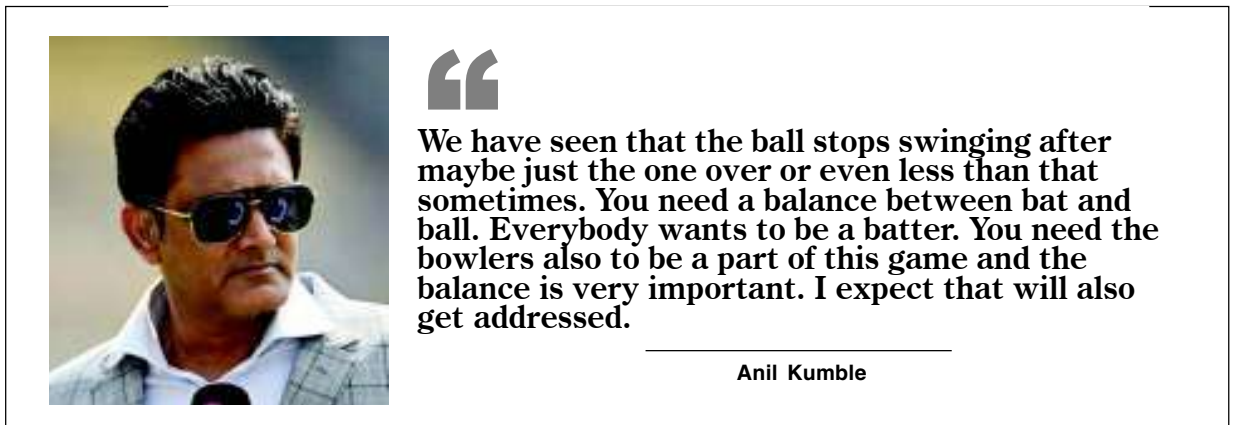
IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru saluted the No. 11 jersey, saying, “What a ride this has been, skipper! 94 international goals, so many laurels, an unbroken conviction and you've inspired so many young Indians to dream big. Happy farewell to the No.11 (No.9) but India's 1,” wrote RCB on ‘X’. – PTI

MI, LSG look to end dismal IPL campaigns with win

Maximize boundary size: Kumble

Former Indian great recommends for more pronounced seam to save bowlers' future

Weather		Venue		Recent Form		Head to Head	
Temp.	29°C	Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai		Matches played recently		Since 2008	
Humidity	85%	Match starts 7.30 pm		MI	L W L L L	MI	Won - 01
Wind Gusts	4 Km/h			LSG	L L L W L	LSG	Won - 03
						No Result	0



“We have seen that the ball stops swinging after maybe just the one over or even less than that sometimes. You need a balance between bat and ball. Everybody wants to be a batter. You need the bowlers also to be a part of this game and the balance is very important. I expect that will also get addressed.”

Anil Kumble

NEW DELHI, May 16: If the game of cricket remains tilted heavily in the favour of batters, not many youngsters would be lining up to start bowling in a couple of years, fears spin great Anil Kumble, who advocated the need to keep biggest possible boundaries at IPL venues and use of more pronounced seam to restore the balance between bat and ball.

The score of 250 has been breached as many as eight times this season with shorter boundaries, flat pitches and impact player rule aiding the batting side.

Like the great Sunil Gavaskar, Kumble also feels that keeping the maximum possible boundaries length is need of the hour.

“It’s been really hard on the bowlers, especially the first half of the tournament. I certainly believe that you need to maximize the boundaries at every venue. Try and keep the biggest boundary possible in that venue,” India’s leading wicket taker across formats told select media in an interaction arranged by JioCinema.

“For a start, you could move the dugout into the stands. I know you’ll lose a few seats but so be it. Then the other aspect is to perhaps look at white ball to have slightly more pronounced seam so that there’s a bit more movement.”

“We have seen that the ball stops swinging after maybe just the one over or even less than that sometimes. You need a balance between bat and ball. You can’t be running in and just going through the motions where in a couple of years you won’t have too many youngsters lining up to start bowling.”

“Everybody wants to be a batter. You need the bowlers also to be a part of this game and the balance is very important. I expect that will also get addressed,” he said.

As per the playing conditions of the IPL, “The playing area shall be a minimum of 150 yards (137.16 metres) from boundary to boundary square of the pitch, with the shorter of the two square boundaries being a minimum 65 yards (59.43 metres).”

“The straight boundary at both ends of the pitch shall be a minimum of 70 yards (64.00 metres). Distances shall be measured from the centre of the pitch to be used. In all cases the aim shall be to provide the largest playing area, subject to no boundary exceeding 85 yards (77.71 metres) from the centre of the pitch to be used.”

Decision to replace Rohit as MI captain was sudden

The call to replace Rohit Sharma with Hardik Pandya has not worked for Mumbai Indians. Kumble feels that transition could have been completed next season when the mega auctions are due. — PTI

MUMBAI, May 16: Out of reckoning from the IPL playoffs, Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants will look to end their campaign on a winning note when they clash at the Wankhede Stadium here on Friday.

While Mumbai Indians were knocked out of the playoffs race long ago, Lucknow Super Giant’s chances of making the last-four are extremely bleak even if they win their last IPL game here by a huge margin.

Three consecutive defeats have not only denied LSG crucial points, they have also battered their net run rate.

A 98-run loss to KKR was followed by a 10-wicket hammering by Sunrisers Hyderabad with a 19-run defeat to Delhi Capitals all but ending their chances of getting into the playoffs after making the final-four in the previous edition.

The seventh-placed LSG’s NRR of -0.787 will not improve significantly for them to get back into contention, as Royal Challengers Bengaluru, at No. 6, are much better placed with a NRR of 0.387.

Five-time IPL champions Mumbai Indians were the first team to be knocked out of the race for the playoffs

IPL POINTS TABLE			
P	TEAM	NRR	Pts
1	KKR (Q)	1.428	19
2	RR (Q)	0.273	16
3	CSK	0.528	14
4	SRH	0.406	14
5	DC	-0.377	14
6	RCB	0.387	12
7	LSG	-0.787	12
8	GT	-1.063	11
9	PBKS	-0.347	10
10	MI	-0.271	8

*Updated till 9 PM of May 16

SRH qualify	
HYDERABAD, May 16: Sunrisers Hyderabad on Thursday qualified for the Indian Premier League playoffs after rain washed out their IPL match against Gujarat Titans here without a ball being bowled.	
SRH thus became the third team to make the cut after following Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals, who are currently occupying the top two places in the standings.	
The Sunrisers received one point to take their tally to 15 points with one match to go. They will face Punjab Kings, who have already been eliminated, on May 19 in their last league assignment. — PTI	

Player	Matches	Runs
T Varma	13	416
R Sharma	13	349
J Bumrah	13	20 wkts
G Coetzee	10	13 wkts
KL Rahul	13	465
N Pooran	13	424
N-Ul-Haq	9	12 wkts
Y Thakur	10	11 wkts

Data source: www.iplt20.com

Danielle Collins in Italian Open semis

Once I’m done, I’ll be gone: Kohli

ROME, May 16: Danielle Collins has been nearly unbeatable lately. Even with her announced retirement looming.

The 15th-ranked American beat former No. 1 Victoria Azarenka 6-4, 6-3 on Wednesday to reach the Italian Open semifinals and extend her record to 19-1 since early March.

Having won back-to-back titles in Miami and Charleston, South Carolina, recently, she hasn’t dropped a set on Rome’s red clay.

Collins underwent surgery in 2021 to treat endometriosis and has said she wants to have a child – which is why she plans to retire at the end of the year.

“A lot of it has to do with my health,” Collins said. “Everybody has different ways of ending their professional journey. I want to go

clutch serving to finish Azarenka off – finishing with six aces to Azarenka’s none.

“I feel dialed in with my shots and I’ve gotten better at hitting those small parts of the court,” Collins said.

Collins’ semifinal opponent will be Aryna Sabalenka, who showed no ill-effects from her previous marathon match as she eased past Jelena Ostapenko, the 2017 French Open champion, 6-2, 6-4.

Sabalenka’s win over Collins in the fourth round of the the Madrid Open marked the American’s only loss since a defeat to top-ranked Iga Swiatek at Indian Wells on March 8.

All three top-ranked women have reached the final four in Rome as the other semifinal pits Swiatek against No. 3 Coco Gauff. — AP



BENGALURU, May 16: Well aware that he “can’t keep going forever”, Indian batting superstar Virat Kohli wants to give everything he has to his cricket career because he once he is done, he says he would be “gone” and won’t be seen “for a while”.

Kohli’s appetite for runs and centuries has already got him a record eighth ton in the IPL this season and he continues to lead the scoring charts with a mind-boggling 661 runs from 13 games for Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

In a video posted by RCB on social media, the 35-year-old said the desire to live a regret-free life keeps him going.

“So, it’s just about not leaving any undone business behind and not having any regrets later, which I’m very sure of I won’t. Once I’m done, I’ll be gone; you won’t see me for a while.”

“So, I want to give it everything I have till the time I play and that’s the only thing that keeps me going”

Virat Kohli

only thing that keeps me going,” said Kohli when asked what keeps him hungry.

Kohli was picked by RCB soon after he led India to title triumph in the 2008 Under-19 World Cup and he has continued to be with the franchise ever since.

“I think, as sportsmen, we do have an end date to our careers, so I’m just working backwards, I don’t want to finish my career thinking what if I had done this on that particular day because I can’t keep going on and on forever,” he added.

The former India captain is part of the Indian squad for the T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies beginning next month.

Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh had recently opined that RCB should think about giving back the

SU DO KU

		7	4	5	3		
5	3			1	6		
6	2		9	8			
	5		2	4			
8	4	3				5	7
			7	3		6	
		8	3	9	7		
			6	4		1	5
2		1	9	3			

Solution of last problem

9	1	5	2	8	3	4	7	6
8	3	6	4	9	7	1	2	5
7	2	4	1	5	8	3	9	6
3	8	1	5	7	2	9	6	4
4	7	2	9	6	1	5	3	8
5	6	9	8	3	4	7	1	2
8	4	3	7	2	9	8	5	1
1	5	7	6	4	8	2	9	3
2	9	8	3	1	5	6	4	7

Originating from Japan, 'su do ku' is a mind game and a puzzle that can be solved with proper reasoning and logic. Fill the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9 without repeating any.

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