



Brief Post

1 arrested
City Correspondent, Guwahati, May 31: An East Guwahati Police District team from Basistha Police Station apprehended Rajib Nath (19) of Nalbari and recovered 2 hydraulic clutch boosters and 2 bundle electric wires on 31st of May. Legal action initiated, informed by Police Commissionerate Guwahati.

Committee formed
City Correspondent, Guwahati, May 31: The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Krishnanagar Community Naamghar Committee was held on 31st of May at Naamghar which was presided over by the adviser of the Committee Pramod Ch. Kakoti. The new committee for 2026 - 27 was formed selecting Dharani Dhar Kalita as president, Upendra Talukdar and Prafulla Kalita, as VPs, Karuna Kanta Haloi as GS, Khargeswar Deka and Guneswar Das as AGSs, and Phatik Ch. Sil, Satya Rajbongshi, Basanta Talukdar, Prafulla Bezbaruah and Kalpa Hira and ex-Officio members Rama Medhi and Padma Kalita, The House selected Loknath Talukdar and Kushal Hazarika as Auditors.

Govt strengthens Fuel Security amid continuing West Asia conflict

New Delhi, May 31: The government has directed public sector oil marketing companies to create Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) reserves sufficient for at least 30 days as the ongoing conflict in West Asia continues to disrupt global energy supplies, underscoring India's efforts to safeguard fuel availability and strengthen energy security amid evolving geopolitical uncertainties. The announcement was made during an inter-ministerial press briefing on the West Asia conflict, where Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Sujata Sharma, outlined a series of precautionary measures being implemented to protect the country against potential supply shocks and maintain uninterrupted access to essential petroleum products. Speaking to reporters, Ms Sharma said that, in addition to building LPG reserves, India is actively working

to enhance its crude oil storage capacity in order to improve resilience against external disruptions



and ensure that domestic energy requirements continue to be met effectively. She emphasized that the government is strengthening fuel security through strategic reserves while simultaneously ensuring uninterrupted supplies across the country and continuing efforts to curb hoarding and prevent any artificial shortages in the

market. As part of this broader strategy, state-run oil marketing companies, including Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), have been asked to prepare plans for creating additional storage capacity over and above their regular commercial inventories, thereby providing an extra layer of protection against unforeseen disruptions in global supply chains. The move reflects the government's proactive approach to energy management at a time when developments in West Asia remain under close observation due to their potential implications for international oil and gas markets. Reassuring consumers and industry stakeholders, Ms Sharma stated that the country currently has adequate stocks of petrol, diesel, LPG, crude oil and natural gas, and that there is no immediate cause for concern regarding fuel availability. She noted that refineries across the country are operating at optimum levels, helping maintain stable production and supply chains. Highlighting recent achievements in domestic energy production, she said that LPG production has reached an all-time high of around 92,000 metric tonnes per day, a milestone that reflects the capacity and efficiency of the country's refining and distribution network. She further informed that no dry-out has been reported at any LPG distributorship, indicating that supplies remain stable and accessible across regions. The government also shared

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A tragic road accident at Fakidiya in the Ikrabari

Tapan Sen Gupta, Correspondent, Orang, May 31: A tragic road accident at Fakidiya in the Ikrabari area under Rowta Police Station of Udalguri district left around eleven teenagers and youths injured on Sunday afternoon, creating panic and concern among local residents.

According to sources, the incident occurred at approximately 1:00 PM when a light commercial vehicle carrying a group of young boys was travelling from Chidakhowa towards Ikrabari. Eyewitnesses stated that the youths were reportedly enjoying the

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World No Tobacco Day Observed in Nagaon; Awareness Rally Led by District Commissioner

Staff Reporter, Nagaon, May 31: World No Tobacco Day was observed in Nagaon on Sunday with a series of awareness programmes organized by the Nagaon District Administration and the District Tobacco Control Cell in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority.



31: World No Tobacco Day was observed in Nagaon on Sunday with a series of awareness programmes organized by the Nagaon District Administration and the District Tobacco Control Cell in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority.

The observance began with an awareness rally from the premises of Nagaon University, which was flagged off

He stated that tobacco consumption has caused significant damage to society and emphasized that preventing its use is a collective responsibility. Contd to PG 11.

India Korea talks

New Delhi: India and the Republic of Korea have intensified efforts to strengthen their economic partnership as the 12th round of negotiations for the upgrade of the India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IK CEPA) concluded in New Delhi, reflecting the commitment of both countries to modernise the existing trade pact and create a more balanced and mutually beneficial framework for future cooperation. The negotiations were held pursuant to the Joint Declaration signed on 20 April 2026 by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Korean Trade Minister, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources, Mr. Yeo Han-koo during the State Visit of the President of the Republic of Korea to India, where both

sides had committed themselves to accelerating the IK CEPA upgrade negotiations in view of the rapidly evolving global economic environment and the growing importance of deeper bilateral engagement between the two nations. The latest round of talks was co-chaired by Ms. Kapil Chaudhary, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, and Mr. Park Geun-oh, Director General for Trade Agreement Policy, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE), Republic of Korea, with officials from both countries participating in detailed discussions covering a broad range of trade and investment issues aimed at strengthening the economic architecture

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Tense Situation in Rangia Over Hoisting of Islamic Flag

Rangia, May 31: A tense atmosphere prevails in Rangia following the hoisting of an Islamic flag at a



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RPF of NFR Intensifies Safety and Anti-Crime Operations


Maligaon, May 31: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway continued its sustained efforts




towards ensuring passenger safety, preventing unlawful activities and safeguarding railway premises through a series of successful operations conducted across the zone on 25th and 26th May, 2026.

During anti-crime drives and surveillance operations conducted on 25th May, 2026, RPF personnel achieved significant success in detecting unlawful transportation of liquor

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অসম চৰকাৰ



শ্ৰীশ্ৰীমাধৱদেৱৰ জন্মোৎসৱ



মহাপুৰুষ শ্ৰীশ্ৰীমাধৱদেৱৰ পৱিত্ৰ আৰিভাৰ তিথিত
তেৰাৰ শ্ৰীচৰণত অসমবাসীৰ হৈ একান্ত মনে সেৱা জনাইছোঁ।

জ্ঞান, ভক্তি আৰু মানৱতাৰ অমৃত-বাণীৰে যুগে যুগে পথ
প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰি থকা মহাপুৰুষজনা আমাৰ জাতীয় জীৱনৰ প্ৰেৰণাৰ
অমল উৎস হৈ থাকক।

১ জুন ২০২৬

ড° হিমন্ত বিশ্ব শৰ্মা
মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী, অসম

তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত

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APART Project Transforms Rural Landscape, Boosts Agricultural Productivity

Guwahati: The Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART), supported by the World Bank, has significantly reshaped the agricultural landscape of Assam since its inception in October 2017, creating a momentum for agri-growth and achieving its original objectives, with its operational term extended until September 2024, allowing for the completion of ongoing initiatives. Executed by the Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services (ARIAS) Society, the project has garnered praise for its innovative approach in addressing the unique challenges faced by the state's agricultural sector, particularly by focusing on smallholder farmers and agri-entrepreneurs. Virendra Mittal, the State Project Director of ARIAS Society, remarked that APART has successfully directed Assam's agricultural sector through the implementation of value-added and climate-resilient practices, effectively increasing farm incomes and market access. The project operates in collaboration with eight line departments of the Assam Government, with the Agriculture Department playing a pivotal role. Over its seven years, APART has made remarkable strides in enhancing agricultural productivity, with an emphasis on rural development, thereby reshaping the socio-economic landscape of Assam. By promoting sustainable farming practices and integrating market access initiatives, the project has significantly impacted the livelihoods of rural communities. It adopts a cluster and value chain approach, facilitating the integrated development of climate-resilient production clusters within designated project districts. These clusters are identified based on specific criteria, including acreage for crops, animal numbers for livestock value chains, and water areas for fisheries. In partnership with esteemed organizations such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Assam Agricultural University, as well as international entities like the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), APART has leveraged global expertise to enhance agricultural productivity in the state. Notably, the IRRI introduced a stress-tolerant rice variety in flood-prone areas, successfully covering nearly 500,000 hectares, while conducting demonstrations to familiarize local farmers with new rice varieties. Furthermore, APART has initiated a potato seed village program aimed at boosting production in the potato chips industry, marking a departure from traditional potato varieties cultivated in Assam. The project has seen an investment exceeding ₹3,000 crores to support agri-enterprise clusters, fostering geographic concentration of agricultural enterprises to spur competitiveness and employment growth. The initiative has supported 2,336 entrepreneurs, including 952 women, promoting gender inclusivity in entrepreneurship development. Infrastructure development is another key achievement of APART, which has enhanced rural agricultural markets, upgraded warehouse facilities, and rehabilitated last-mile rural roads. The establishment of modern markets and innovative farming methods has unlocked agricultural value chains, allowing farmers to increase their incomes while enabling Assam's agricultural produce to reach broader markets, both domestically and internationally. Mittal noted that the impact of APART extends beyond mere economic gains, as it has also bolstered the social and environmental well-being of rural communities, laying a sustainable foundation for development in Assam. The project has emerged as a transformative force in rural Assam, directly benefiting over 200,000 farming households, with women farmers representing nearly 50% of beneficiaries. APART's interventions include the strengthening of farmer producer organizations (FPOs), promoting climate-resilient agriculture, and establishing efficient market linkages. By facilitating the formation of over 5,000 FPOs, smallholder farmers can access improved inputs, technology, and favorable market prices. Sustainable practices introduced by the project, such as drip irrigation and organic farming, have led to increased crop yields and improved soil health. To further enhance market access, APART has established 50 rural haats and linked farmers to online platforms, ensuring fair pricing for their produce. Additionally, the project has supported the establishment of 1,500 agri-entrepreneurship units, generating employment opportunities for rural youth, thereby addressing the issue of rural unemployment. Official data indicates that APART has led to a significant increase in farm incomes, with average annual earnings rising by 30-40%. The economic empowerment of women farmers is particularly noteworthy, as many have reported enhanced social status and financial independence due to their involvement in the project. Given its success, the Assam government plans to scale up APART, aiming to extend its benefits to all 33 districts by 2025, thereby solidifying its commitment to rural transformation. With its holistic approach and focus on sustainability, APART has emerged as a model for agribusiness-led growth, demonstrating the potential to uplift rural communities and drive inclusive development across India. As Assam continues to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by its agricultural sector, APART stands as a testament to the power of strategic investments and innovative practices in fostering economic resilience and

enhancing the quality of life for millions of rural residents. The project's legacy is poised to influence not only Assam's agricultural policies but also serve as a blueprint for similar initiatives in other Indian states, emphasizing the critical role of agribusiness in achieving sustainable rural development and addressing the broader socio-economic challenges faced by the country. Through a concerted effort to enhance agricultural productivity, market access, and rural entrepreneurship, APART is contributing to the realization of a more prosperous and equitable future for Assam's rural populace, thereby reinforcing the notion that targeted interventions in agriculture can yield substantial dividends in terms of economic growth, social upliftment, and environmental sustainability. As the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART) progresses, it continues to face and adapt to the multifaceted challenges inherent in the agricultural sector. The project's emphasis on climate-resilient practices is particularly significant, given the increasing threat of climate change, which poses risks to food security and rural livelihoods. By promoting adaptive strategies and innovations, APART not only ensures the sustainability of agricultural practices but also empowers farmers to better withstand the impacts of erratic weather patterns and environmental changes. This approach is crucial in a state like Assam, where agriculture remains the backbone of the economy and the primary source of income for a vast majority of the population. The collaboration with international research organizations, such as IRRI and ILRI, has facilitated the introduction of cutting-edge agricultural technologies and practices tailored to local conditions. This collaboration has fostered knowledge exchange and capacity building among farmers, enabling them to leverage scientific advancements for improved productivity. For instance, the introduction of stress-tolerant rice varieties has not only increased yield but has also instilled confidence among farmers in adopting new agricultural practices. These advancements signify a paradigm shift in how agriculture is perceived and practiced in the region, moving towards a more scientific and research-based approach that benefits smallholder farmers. Moreover, the establishment of farmer producer organizations (FPOs) has played a pivotal role in enhancing the bargaining power of smallholder farmers. By coming together, these farmers can access better resources, share knowledge, and collectively market their produce, thereby increasing their incomes. The success of over 5,000 FPOs across Assam demonstrates the effectiveness of collective action in addressing the challenges faced by individual farmers. This not only fosters economic resilience but also enhances social cohesion among farming communities, empowering them to tackle common challenges collaboratively. The project's focus on women's empowerment through targeted interventions is another remarkable aspect of APART. By actively involving women in agricultural entrepreneurship, the project has not only elevated their economic status but has also contributed to changing societal perceptions regarding women's roles in agriculture. With nearly 40% of the supported entrepreneurs being women, APART is setting a precedent for gender-inclusive development in the agricultural sector. This empowerment has significant ripple effects, as economically independent women often reinvest in their families and communities, thereby contributing to broader socio-economic development. As APART nears its full rollout across all 33 districts, the Assam government's commitment to scaling up the project underscores its importance as a cornerstone of the state's development strategy. The positive outcomes observed thus far serve as a compelling argument for increased investment in agriculture, particularly in rural areas. The project exemplifies how targeted funding, innovative practices, and collaborative efforts can yield substantial benefits, transforming not just the agricultural landscape but also the socio-economic fabric of rural communities. Looking forward, it will be vital for the Assam government and its partners to continue monitoring and evaluating the impacts of APART, ensuring that the lessons learned are integrated into future agricultural policies and programs. The focus on sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity should remain central to these efforts, particularly in light of the ongoing challenges posed by climate change, economic fluctuations, and shifting market dynamics. The legacy of APART is likely to extend beyond its immediate impacts on agricultural productivity and rural development. By fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability among farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs, the project is paving the way for a more resilient agricultural sector in Assam. The integration of modern technologies, sustainable practices, and community-driven initiatives serves as a model for other states grappling with similar challenges, illustrating the potential of agribusiness-led growth to catalyze rural transformation. Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project stands as a beacon of hope for rural development, demonstrating the power of strategic investment and innovative practices in fostering economic resilience and enhancing the quality of life for millions. Its holistic approach not only addresses

immediate agricultural challenges but also lays a sustainable foundation for long-term growth and development. As Assam continues to embrace this transformative journey, the lessons learned from APART will undoubtedly resonate far beyond its borders, inspiring similar initiatives across India and beyond. The commitment to nurturing a vibrant agricultural sector that prioritizes sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation is paramount for realizing the vision of a prosperous and equitable future for all rural communities in Assam. As the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART) enters its extended phase, the initiatives undertaken so far highlight the crucial intersections between agriculture, technology, and community empowerment. The project's multifaceted approach not only aims at boosting agricultural productivity but also focuses on enhancing the overall well-being of rural communities. This holistic perspective is vital, particularly as global agricultural landscapes face unprecedented challenges, from climate change and population growth to shifting market demands. The investment of over ₹3,000 crore into agricultural enterprise clusters reflects a significant commitment to transforming the state's economic landscape. These clusters serve as catalysts for economic activity, generating employment opportunities and encouraging entrepreneurship. The presence of 2,336 supported entrepreneurs, including 952 women, illustrates a shift towards a more inclusive agricultural economy where diverse stakeholders can thrive. This focus on entrepreneurship is particularly critical in rural Assam, where traditional agricultural practices have often limited economic growth potential. By equipping individuals with the necessary resources and skills to start their ventures, APART fosters a culture of self-reliance and innovation. Furthermore, the establishment of rural haats (markets) plays a pivotal role in improving market access for farmers. With 50 rural haats set up under the project, farmers can directly connect with consumers, reducing their reliance on middlemen and ensuring fairer prices for their produce. This direct market linkage is essential for enhancing the income levels of smallholder farmers, who often struggle to navigate complex supply chains. By streamlining these processes, APART is not only improving farmers' profitability but also promoting transparency within the agricultural market system. APART's emphasis on climate-resilient practices is particularly commendable, as it acknowledges the pressing need to adapt to changing environmental conditions. The introduction of stress-tolerant rice varieties by IRRI, for instance, showcases the potential for agricultural innovation to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Such initiatives are crucial in a region like Assam, where flooding and other climate-related challenges can severely disrupt agricultural productivity. By prioritizing sustainability, the project is not only addressing immediate agricultural needs but also safeguarding the future of farming in Assam. The partnerships formed with various research institutions further enhance the project's effectiveness. Collaborations with ICAR, Assam Agricultural University, IRRI, and ILRI facilitate knowledge transfer and innovation, ensuring that local farmers benefit from the latest advancements in agricultural science. These partnerships also underscore the importance of integrating research and development into practical applications, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Such collaborations enable farmers to adopt modern practices that are both environmentally sustainable and economically viable, ultimately contributing to enhanced productivity. As APART progresses towards covering all 33 districts by 2025, the emphasis on continuous learning and adaptation remains vital. The project's success depends on its ability to remain responsive to the evolving needs of farmers and the agricultural landscape. This requires ongoing engagement with local communities, stakeholders, and experts to ensure that the interventions remain relevant and effective. By fostering a culture of feedback and adaptation, APART can continue to refine its strategies and maximize its impact. Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project represents a transformative initiative that not only addresses the immediate challenges faced by the agricultural sector but also lays the groundwork for long-term sustainable development. By enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting entrepreneurship, and fostering resilience among rural communities,

Memorial meeting of nap

Guwahati: - A "Shradhanjali" programme has been organised on 4th June 4, 2026 at 5:00 PM in memory of those members of New Art Players, Guwahati, one of the leading socio-cultural organisations in the state with a legacy spanning seven

decades, who have already passed away.

The programme will be held at its own auditorium, and the family members of the departed members are especially requested to be present on the occasion.

Assam CM Urges Increased Fund Devolution to Support Development

Guwahati: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized the myriad challenges faced by Assam during a meeting with a team from the 16th Finance Commission on September 26, which was attended by his Cabinet ministers and State Government officials at the Lok Sewa Bhawan; he articulated the need for increased fund devolution, highlighting Assam's growth trajectory in spite of these challenges. The Commission's four-day visit to Assam commenced on September 25, culminating in discussions with Dr. Sarma regarding a range of financial matters critical to the future of the state. During this significant meeting, the seven-member Finance Commission team, led by Chairman Arvind Panagariya, engaged with Assam's Cabinet Ministers, Chief Secretary Dr. Ravi Kota, and senior officials from various departments, focusing on the state's financial roadmap. Dr. Sarma expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Finance Commission for their dedicated visit, underscoring the unique challenges faced by Assam, including its diverse geography, the impacts of climate change, proximity to multiple international borders, and demographic shifts; he pointed out that, despite these hurdles, Assam has achieved higher capital expenditure and demonstrated robust performance across critical sectors such as health, education, drinking water, infrastructure, local governance, disaster mitigation, and power. Highlighting the significant rise in Assam's GDP and per capita income, Dr. Sarma stated that the state is poised to shift from being dependent to becoming a vital contributor in India's quest to become the third-largest economy; he made insightful submissions aimed at strengthening Cooperative Federalism, addressing both vertical and horizontal challenges, and striking a balance between equity and efficiency. "To realize Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making the North East a growth engine, greater fund devolution is critical," Dr. Sarma stressed during the discussions, urging the Commission to increase Assam's share within the framework of horizontal devolution and to consider treating the North East as a collective block by allocating 10% of Central funds to the eight North Eastern States. Emphasizing that Assam's unique challenges require tailored solutions, he asserted that bridging regional disparities is the only path forward for Bharat, expressing confidence that the 16th Finance Commission would take Assam's circumstances into favorable consideration. Present during the meeting were Secretary of the Commission Ritvik Pandey, along with members Ajay Narayan Jha, Ms. Annie George Mathew, Manoj Panda, Soumya Kanti Ghosh, and Joint Secretary Rahul Jain. The 16th Finance Commission recently concluded its visit to Assam, marking a significant milestone in its efforts to promote fiscal federalism and sustainable development across India; during its visit, the Commission held productive discussions with state government officials, local stakeholders, and experts to gain insights into Assam's unique fiscal challenges and opportunities. This visit is part of the Commission's broader mandate to review the country's fiscal framework and make recommendations to the President on the distribution of tax revenues between the Union and states, as well as among the states themselves. In Assam, the Commission focused on

key areas such as cesses and surcharges, horizontal distribution, per capita income criteria, restraining freebies, equalization provisions, and the debt burden of both the center and states. Key takeaways from the visit included the Commission's emphasis on fiscal sustainability, urging Assam to prioritize diversifying its revenue streams and optimizing public expenditure; it recognized the state's infrastructure requirements, particularly in transportation, energy, and urban development, and underscored the importance of investing in education, health, and skill development to harness Assam's demographic dividend. The 16th Finance Commission's visit to Assam demonstrates its commitment to engaging with states and promoting cooperative federalism; as the Commission continues its work, its recommendations are eagerly awaited and are expected to shape India's fiscal landscape and drive sustainable development across the country. The Commission, constituted on December 31, 2023, under the chairmanship of Dr. Arvind Panagariya, is poised to reshape the fiscal landscape of India. Its mandate includes determining the sharing of tax revenues between the Central Government and states for the five-year period commencing April 1, 2026, and its recommendations will have far-reaching implications for India's federal structure and economic development. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Commission focus on core issues of revenue sharing and grants-in-aid, aligning with the constitutional mandate under Article 280, which allows the Commission to delve deeper into the complexities of fiscal federalism and propose innovative solutions to address the evolving needs of states. Key issues before the 16th Finance Commission include the declining share of states in Central tax revenues, the need for fiscal consolidation at both the Central and state levels, and the increasing demand for funds to meet the aspirations of a growing population. The Commission is expected to consider these challenges and recommend measures to ensure equitable distribution of resources, promote fiscal discipline, and foster economic growth. The 16th Finance Commission has a unique opportunity to strengthen India's fiscal federalism by promoting cooperative federalism, aligning fiscal incentives with national priorities, and empowering states to undertake development initiatives. By adopting a forward-looking approach and considering the long-term implications of its recommendations, the Commission can contribute to building a more prosperous and equitable India. The Commission's primary agenda includes addressing the North-South debate over inequity in allocating Central funds to the states, evaluating the impact of global economic uncertainties, and ensuring balanced development across all states. Furthermore, it will make recommendations on grants-in-aid to states, sectoral and state-level grants, urban and rural body

grants, and disaster relief. The Gujarat government has proposed that urbanization and a state's contribution to the nation's GDP should be factored into resource allocation, also suggesting sector-specific grants for renewable energy, tourism, and disaster relief. The Commission is expected to finalize its report by October 2025, with the aim of fostering equitable regional development and addressing fiscal imbalances. The recommendations from the 16th Finance Commission are anticipated to significantly impact the financial health and development trajectory of the states, ensuring resources are allocated efficiently and fairly to meet the diverse needs of the country, while also promoting sustainable growth and development in a manner that is responsive to the unique challenges faced by each state, especially those in the North East, which have historically received less attention in terms of financial support. As the 16th Finance Commission prepares to navigate these complexities, its outcomes could lead to a reconfiguration of fiscal relationships between the Centre and states, ultimately aiming to enhance the overall economic land-

scape of India and ensure that growth is inclusive and equitable for all regions, thereby fostering a stronger, more resilient nation that is equipped to meet future challenges and seize new opportunities for progress and development in a rapidly changing world. The ongoing discussions

and initiatives surrounding the 16th Finance Commission highlight the critical importance of fiscal federalism and the need for a more equitable distribution of financial resources among India's states.

TITLE CHANGE

I Bakul Sarma W/O - Lt. Subal Sarma R/O ward No- 2 Gauripur Town Dist- Dhubri (Assam) I declared by an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate Golakganj on 30 .05 . 2026 I along with my all family members change our title seal and adopt our title sarma Now I used my name as Bakul Sarma in place of Bakul seal. My son used his name as Raju sarma in place of Raju seal and my son used his name as Sankar sarma in place of Sankar seal and my another son used his name as Biju sarma in place of Biju seal My daughter Nilima sarma and Maya Sarma again adopted their husband title ie Paul and Karmakar and thereafter Nilima sarma used her name as Nilima Paul in place of Nilima sarma and Maya Sarma used her name as Maya Karmakar in place of Maya Sarma.

AFFIDAVIT

Me and my father's actual/correct name is/ are SHAKENDRA MUSHAHARY, S/O- Santiram Mushahary which has/ have been recorded on my Elector Photo Identity Card vide ID NO- FSC0007407 including all my relevant documents. By mistake my name have been wrongly recorded on my Aadhaar Card vide- 8773 0724 6050 as S H U K U R A M MUSHSHSRY S/O- Santiram Mushahary instead of the correct. Shakendra Mushahary, S/O- Santiram Mushahary and Shukuram Mushshsry, S/O- Santiram Mushahary is/ are the single and one identical person, represents me and my father.

Shakendra Mushahary
S/O- Santiram
Mushahary
VIII- Changbandha
Part 1
P.O- Tiptkai
P.S- Bagribari
Dist- Kokrajhar, BTC
(Assam)
PIN - 783337

Godrej introduces Multi-Ion battery technology for forklifts, advancing clean and efficient supply chains

Guwahati: Godrej Enterprises Group (GEG) has introduced India's first Multi-Ion battery technology for electric forklifts through its Mate-

India's industrial and warehousing market continues to demonstrate strong momentum, with over 11 million sq. ft. of leasing across the top



rial Handling Equipment (MHE) business, one of the market leaders in India's material handling segment. The launch addresses the growing need for efficient, reliable, and sustainable energy solutions as India's manufacturing, logistics, and warehousing sectors scale rapidly, to enable 25% lower total cost of ownership, higher equipment uptime, and cleaner industrial operations, with a battery designed to last through the full operational life of the forklift.

eight cities in Q1 2026, registering a double digit year-on-year growth, driven by demand from 3PLs, e-commerce, and manufacturing-led supply chain modernisation. As warehouses grow denser and throughput intensifies, the need for energy-efficient, safe, and future-ready material handling solutions has become central to productivity and performance. Multi-Ion battery combines fast and opportunity charging, zero maintenance, and

high energy efficiency, while eliminating rare-earth dependency and reducing disposal challenges. Developed in collaboration with, one of India's leading deep-tech battery innovators, the technology delivers up to 5,000 life cycles—nearly 60% higher than standard lithium-ion, making it battery for life of equipment, lowering Designed to operate reliably in ambient temperatures above 45°C, the Multi-Ion battery is ideally suited for India's tropical climatic conditions. Mr. Anil Lingayat, Business Head, Material Handling Equipment, Godrej Enterprises Group, said, "As India's supply chains scale in complexity and intensity, material handling requires energy solutions that deliver reliability, long-term value, and sustainability. With Multi-Ion battery technology, we are rethinking how industrial equipment is powered, applying advanced engineering to enable higher uptime, lower ownership costs, and cleaner operations across the value chain, including MSMEs. This reflects our focus on design-led innovation, R&D, and technology-driven product focus that delivers real, scalable impact across the logistics ecosystem." As a leading player in the material handling space, Godrej Enterprises Group views such innovations as critical to strengthening supply-chain efficiency, warehouse productivity, and operational resilience at scale. The launch reflects Godrej Enterprises Group's advanced engineering focus and digital integration within its material handling portfolio. Backed by over 5,000 hours of real-world validation and a 7-year warranty, the Multi-Ion battery technology reinforces the long-term trust customers place in Godrej's industrial solutions.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds enters Assam with their first flagship store in Guwahati

Guwahati: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, a leading pan-India jewellery brand, today, announced its foray into Assam with the launch of its first showroom in Guwahati. Spread across 8000 sq ft, the new store, set to be inaugurated on Saturday, 16th May, 2026 at GS Road, Ganesh Gouri by Bollywood superstar, Sonu Sood, is designed to deliver a world-class jewellery shopping experience to customers combining scale, design excellence, and trusted service under one roof. The showroom will offer a wide assortment of gold, diamond, platinum and silver jewellery and gemstones, catering to diverse tastes - ranging from traditional designs rooted in India's heritage to contemporary styles for modern sensibilities. Exclusive collections in Gold, Diamond, Bridal and Daily Wear Jewellery,

curated to reflect both timeless tradition and contemporary tastes will be showcased. Upholding the brand's core promises, the store will offer assured purity, 100% transparent pricing and a customer-first service philosophy, that has earned Malabar Gold & Diamonds the trust of millions globally. To mark the launch, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is introducing special inaugural benefits for customers. These include instant cash back on Old Gold exchange and making charges starting from just 4.9%, making premium jewellery more accessible for families preparing for weddings, festivals, and everyday milestones. "Assam has a rich cultural relationship with gold, and Guwahati is the gateway to the entire North East. Our first store here is a commitment to bring world-class designs, un-

matched transparency and Malabar Gold & Diamonds' legendary customer trust to the people of Assam. With exclusive bridal lines, daily wear collections and old gold exchange offers we want every family in Guwahati to experience jewellery shopping the Malabar way," said Mr Amir Routh, Business Head, East Region, Malabar Gold & Diamonds. Designed with elegant interiors and supported by a highly trained team of jewellery experts, the showroom will offer customers a seamless and comfortable shopping experience with spacious, thoughtfully planned layouts. The brand extends a warm invitation to families of Guwahati and across Assam to visit the new showroom and experience the Malabar promise of purity, craftsmanship, and value.

Petrol and diesel prices up by Rs 3 per litre, CNG gets costlier by Rs 2

New Delhi: As oil marketing companies (OMCs) face mounting losses amid the ongoing West Asia crisis, they raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre each. The revised rates came into effect immediately across the country. In Delhi, petrol prices rose by Rs 3.14 per litre to Rs 97.77, while diesel became costlier by Rs 3.11 per litre.

Meanwhile, amid the Middle East crisis, oil companies have also raised CNG prices. Effective Friday, the price of CNG has increased by Rs 2 per kilogram. The new CNG rate in Delhi is Rs 79.09 per kilogram.

The OMCs continue to face mounting financial losses from keeping retail fuel prices unchanged despite surge in crude oil prices.

The combined under-recovery on petrol, diesel and LPG has reached nearly Rs 30,000 crore every month, according to Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Union Petroleum Ministry.

"Our OMCs are buying crude oil at higher rates but are not selling at corresponding rates to protect our consumers. This impacts their finances," said Sharma.

She further said the Centre had already cut excise duties on petrol and diesel, sacrificing nearly Rs 14,000 crore in monthly revenue, but under-recoveries continue to widen," she informed.

India's state-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) are staring at the possibility of their entire FY26 profits being wiped out if crude oil prices remain elevated, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri warned amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Speaking at the CII Annual Business Summit 2026 this week, Puri said the ongoing energy crisis triggered by the conflict in the Middle East has sharply increased pressure on Indian fuel retailers, with oil marketing companies cur-

rently losing nearly Rs 1,000 crore every day. He estimated that their combined quarterly losses could touch around Rs 1 lakh crore if current trends continue.

The warning comes at a time when global crude oil prices have surged past the psychologically important \$100 per barrel mark due to fears of prolonged supply disruptions linked to the US-Iran conflict.

"The financial stress on state-run fuel retailers has become so severe that a single quarter of losses at prevailing crude price levels could potentially erase their entire profit after tax for FY26," the minister stated.

The three major public sector oil retailers -- Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum -- are projected to report combined losses of nearly Rs 1.2 lakh crore in the first quarter of FY27 alone, according to industry estimates cited during the discussion.

ITR filing process for AY 2026-27 officially begins

New Delhi: The Income Tax Department on Friday said that it enabled the filing of Income Tax Returns (ITRs) for the financial year 2025-26 (assessment year 2026-27) with the release of Excel utilities for ITR-1 and ITR-4 forms on e-filing portal. Announcing the update on social media platform X, the department said taxpayers can now access both the Excel utility and online filing options for the two forms. With the announcement of the offline utilities, the ITR filing process for AY 2026-27 has officially commenced. Now, taxpayers can fill out the forms offline and generate a JSON file and upload it to the Income Tax Department's e-filing website after completing verification. However, non-audit taxpayers are generally required to file their returns by July 31. At present, seven different ITR forms are available, depending on the nature of income and taxpayer category.

ITR-1 -- known as Sahaj -- is meant for resident individuals, excluding not ordinarily resident taxpayers, having an annual income of up to Rs 50 lakh.

ITR-4 -- known as Sugam -- applicable to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) and firms other than LLPs with annual income up to Rs 50 lakh. Earlier, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had notified the ITR forms for AY 2026-27 with revised disclosure norms. The changes include additional reporting requirements related to long-term capital gains, losses from share buybacks and certain trading transactions.

Notably, India's net direct tax collections

recorded steady growth in the financial year 2025-26, rising 5.12 per cent year-on-year to Rs 23,40,406 crore, according to data released by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). Singapore Airlines (SIA) Group had clocked a net profit of SGD 2.778 billion in 2024-25.

SIA Group said it was committed to its 25.1 per cent investment in Air India, which is a core component of its long-term multi-hub strategy.

"This strategic investment provides the Group with a direct stake in one of the world's largest and fastest-growing aviation markets, complementing its Singapore hub and strengthening its long-term growth," the airline said in a press statement.

SIA Group's net profit declined by SGD 1.594 billion or 57.4 per cent to SGD 1.184 billion, primarily due to the absence of the SGD 1.098 billion non-cash accounting gain recognised in November 2024 upon the completion of the Air India-Vistara merger.

"The swing from a share of profits of associated companies last year to a loss this year (SGD 846 million) was due to the Group accounting for its share of Air India's full year losses, versus only four months the previous year," the statement said.

Loss-making Air India has been forced to cancel several international flights in recent months due to the closure of Pakistan's airspace and the Middle East conflict, which has adversely impacted its revival plans.

India's air traffic registered a sequential slow-

down in April compared to March for both domestic and international passengers, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The downturn comes in the backdrop of the Middle East conflict, which led to a sharp decline in international flights.

The increase in jet fuel prices has also led to an increase in operating costs, which has come as a further dampener in the airline's turnaround plans.

India's domestic air traffic stood at 140.8 lakh passengers, which represents a 4 per cent drop year-on-year as well as month-on-month. International traffic saw a sharper decline of 20 per cent in April compared to March as the number of air passengers fell to 28.3 lakh passengers.

Canara Bank posts 12.69% rise in net profit, global business crosses Rs 28 lakh crore

Guwahati: Canara Bank has reported a 12.69 per cent year-on-year rise in net profit for the financial year ended March 31, 2026, supported by strong growth in advances, retail lending and improved asset quality. The bank said its net profit for FY26 stood at Rs. 19,187 crore, while operating profit rose 5.19 per cent to Rs. 33,019 crore. The board also recommended a dividend of 210 per cent of paid-up capital for FY26, higher than 200 per cent declared in FY25. According to the bank's financial results released on May 11, global business increased 12.11 per cent year-on-year to Rs. 28,06,226 crore. Global deposits rose 9.71 per cent to Rs. 15,68,678 crore, while global advances grew 15.30 per cent to Rs. 12,37,548 crore. Retail and agriculture-led growth remained strong during the year. RAM credit expanded 19.73 per cent, while retail lending surged 32.93 per cent to Rs. 2,96,912 crore.

Honda NX500 gets E-clutch technology for smarter adventure touring

Gurugram: Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) today announced the addition of Honda E Clutch technology to the NX500, its mid-size adventure touring motorcycle. The E Clutch system uses precise electronic control to manage clutch engagement during starting, gear shifting, and stopping, reducing the need for manual clutch operation, while allowing riders to override the system at any time. For riders navigating India's busy city roads as well as long highway stretches, the addition helps reduce fatigue caused by regular clutch operation. Honda E-Clutch manages this automatically, allowing riders stay focused on the road without compromising on the hands-on riding experience, the NX500 is known for. On the announcement, Mr. Tsutsumu Otani, President & CEO, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, said: "The Honda NX500 equipped with E Clutch technology enhances comfort and control across both urban and touring environments in India, by reducing rider fatigue, while retaining the engaging, hands-on riding experience that defines Honda motorcycles." The NX500 is powered by a 471cc liquid-cooled, parallel-twin engine paired with a 6-speed transmission, tuned to deliver strong low and mid-range torque along with linear power delivery at higher RPMs - supporting both city riding and highway touring. The motorcycle features a steel diamond frame, Showa SFF-BP USD front suspension, and a preload-adjustable rear monoshock, along with dual front disc brakes and a rear disc with dual-channel ABS. It rides on a 19-inch front and 17-

inch rear wheel combination. A 5.0-inch full-colour TFT display with Honda RoadSync connectivity enables navigation, call and music functions. Honda Selectable Torque Control (HSTC) and LED lighting are standard. The NX500 is avail-



able in two colour options: Mat Gunpowder Black Metallic and Pearl Horizon White. Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. (HMSI) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Honda Motor Co., Ltd., Japan. Founded in 1948, Honda Motor is a global leader in two-wheelers with a diverse portfolio spanning automobiles, motorcycles, power products, marine, and aviation, with a strong presence across continents. Rooted in Honda's philosophy of delivering the joy of mobility, HMSI brings world-class engineering and innovation to India. The company manufactures motorcycles and scooters for domestic and export markets. It operates four plants in Manesar, Tapukara, Narsapura, and Vithalapur, and serves more than 70 million customers through a network of over 7,000 touchpoints. Aligned with Honda's global targets, HMSI is working towards carbon neutrality across products and operations by 2050, alongside the goal of zero traffic collision fatalities.

Rupee trades lower amid elevated crude prices

New Delhi: The Indian rupee breached the 96-mark against the US dollar on Friday amid persistent global pressures, rising crude oil prices, and continued geopolitical tensions linked to the Iran conflict. Earlier in the day, the domestic currency opened at 95.86 in the interbank foreign exchange market and slipped to 95.94 during early trade, after touching an all-time low of 95.96 in the previous session. Pressure on the rupee also intensified after oil marketing companies (OMCs) increased petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre with immediate effect. According to experts, the rupee has remained under pressure in recent weeks and emerged as one of the worst-performing currencies in Asia as India's import bill comes under strain from surging energy costs.

In addition, market sentiment remained fragile after talks between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi

Jinping failed to deliver significant progress on key geopolitical flashpoints, particularly on the US-Iran front. Despite pressure on the rupee, domestic equity markets showed resilience. BSE Sensex rose 0.62 per cent or 471.64 points during intraday trade, while the Nifty 50 gained 0.63 per cent or 150 points to touch 23,839.30. On the commodities front, international benchmark Brent crude surged 3.46 per cent to \$109.38 per barrel. Similarly, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude advanced 4 per cent to \$105.24 per barrel. Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) have raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre. According to a senior official, the marginal increase in fuel prices is significantly lower than the losses being absorbed by public sector oil companies due to soaring global crude oil prices, which have crossed the \$100-per-barrel mark.

Air India piles up \$2.8 bn loss in 2025-26

New Delhi: Air India piled up a loss of \$2.8 billion for the financial year 2025-26, according to the Singapore Airlines' annual report released.

Singapore Airlines Group reported a 57.4 per cent fall in net profit at Singaporean dollars (SGD) 1.184 billion for the financial year ended March 2026 as the losses of Air India, in which the company has a 25.1 per cent share, eroded the overall bottomline. The Singapore Airlines report states that Air India posted losses amounting to SGD 3.56 billion, or \$2.80 billion at current exchange rates, for the 12 months to end-March.

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cent investment in Air India, which is a core component of its long-term multi-hub strategy.

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"The swing from a share of profits of associated companies last year to a loss this year (SGD 846 million) was due to the Group accounting for its share of Air India's full year losses, versus only four months the previous year," the statement said. Loss-making Air India has been forced to cancel several international flights in recent months due to the closure of Pakistan's airspace and the Middle East conflict, which has adversely impacted its revival plans.

In assigning the grant of application of the undersigned for Grant of EC under the provision of the EIA Notification 2006 in respect of project DIKHOW RIVER STONE MINING PERMIT AREA-A (VII) submitted to SEAC & SEIAA vide proposal number SIA/AS/MIN/566328/2026 dated 21/01/2026. EC has been approved by the SEIAA. This is the reference - Particulars of the proposal

- EC Identification No. EC 26C0107ASS493200N
- File No. SEAC/SEIAA. 4408/2026
- Clearance Type EC
- Category B2
- Project/Activity Included Schedule No. 1(a) Mining of minerals.
- Name of Project DIKHOW RIVER STONE MINING PERMIT AREA - A(VII)
- Name of Company/Organization Denish Kukurachowa
- Location of Project (District, State) SIVASAGAR, ASSAM
- Issuing Authority SEIAA
- Applicability of General Conditions No
- Applicability of Specific Conditions No

This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority. The GPS Coordinates are as follows-

- 26°48' 08.00" N 94° 48' 11.60" E
- 26°48' 07.20" N 94° 48' 13.90" E
- 26°48' 03.03" N 94° 48' 49.00" E
- 26°48' 02.50" N 94° 48' 53.50" E

This publication has been made for information and it is officially available for the public to view.

Regards,
DENISH KUKURACHOWA
BOKOTA KOHAR GAON, P. S.
PATSAKU, SIVASAGAR, ASSAM.

Editorial



CERT-In Samvad 2026

The three-day national annual conference “CERT-In Samvad 2026,” organised with the objective of strengthening India’s cyber security audit ecosystem and enhancing the country’s overall cyber resilience, concluded successfully after bringing together more than 500 delegates comprising policymakers, Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) from leading industry organisations, representatives from regulatory bodies, empanelled auditing organisations under CERT-In, and cyber security professionals from across the country, thereby creating a comprehensive national platform for dialogue, capacity building, and strategic collaboration in the rapidly evolving domain of digital security, with the conference being organised in collaboration with BITS Pilani at its KK Birla Goa Campus from April 27 to 29, 2026 under the overarching theme “Securing Digital India through Future-Ready Audits: Adapt, Assure, Progress,” which reflected India’s growing emphasis on building resilient digital infrastructure supported by advanced audit frameworks, proactive risk assessment methodologies, and next-generation cybersecurity governance models aligned with the nation’s expanding digital economy; the inaugural ceremony was graced by Goa Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant, who highlighted that while Goa has traditionally been known for its tourism identity symbolised by “sun, sand, and sea,” it is now steadily emerging as a significant hub for cybersecurity awareness, research, and collaborative learning, and he emphasized that the gathering of national and international delegates was not only an opportunity to experience Goa’s cultural and natural environment but also a platform for meaningful engagement on securing India’s digital future in alignment with national development priorities, while underlining the critical role of CERT-In as the country’s nodal cybersecurity agency in strengthening preparedness, response mechanisms, and institutional coordination against emerging cyber threats; the conference was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Sanjay Bahl, Director General of CERT-In, and witnessed participation from key dignitaries including Shri K.R. Chaurasia (IPS), Inspector General of Police, Goa; Shri S.S. Sharma, Senior Director, CERT-In; Prof. Suman Kundu, Director, BITS Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus; Dr. Nirupam Mehrotra, Director, Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD), Lucknow; Scientist ‘E’ and Team Lead Assurance Shri Ashutosh Bahuguna; Managing Director, CERT-In; Shri Shashi Dharan, Managing Director, India Exhibition; and Shri Abhishek Solanki, Scientist ‘D’, all of whom contributed to discussions focusing on strengthening cybersecurity frameworks across sectors, enhancing audit quality standards, and integrating technological innovation into national security architecture; in his keynote address, Shri S.S. Sharma emphasized that CERT-In Samvad 2026 represents a crucial platform for auditing organisations to advance their methodologies, exchange knowledge, and collectively contribute towards building a more secure and cyber-resilient India, particularly at a time when digital transformation is accelerating across governance, finance, healthcare, and infrastructure sectors, thereby increasing the complexity and scale of cyber risks; Prof. Suman Kundu, Director of BITS Pilani Goa Campus, highlighted the rapidly evolving nature of cyber threats faced by Indian organisations and stressed the urgent need for strengthening cybersecurity auditing mechanisms to safeguard critical digital infrastructure, sensitive data systems, and national technological assets, while appreciating CERT-In’s initiative in bringing academia, industry, and government together on a common platform to enhance audit capability and foster innovation-driven cybersecurity practices; Ms. Revathi Kumar, CEO and Executive Director of Goa Electronics Limited, delivered a special address focusing on the initiatives undertaken by the Government of Goa in the digital domain and outlined a forward-looking roadmap for collaboration with CERT-In aimed at strengthening cybersecurity preparedness at the state level, improving institutional coordination, and integrating advanced security frameworks into public digital infrastructure systems; one of the major highlights of the conference was the launch of AMBAK (Audit Monitoring, Benchmarking, Analysis and Kinetic Intervention), an advanced initiative designed to modernise cybersecurity audit processes through structured monitoring, performance benchmarking, analytical evaluation, and responsive intervention mechanisms, alongside the release of progress reports by working groups focusing on emerging and critical cybersecurity domains, thereby reinforcing India’s commitment to continuous improvement in audit governance and digital risk management; additionally, CERT-In in collaboration with BIRD and NABARD introduced an advanced cybersecurity certification course for Rural Financial Institutions (RFIs), marking a significant step towards capacity building at the grassroots level, strengthening financial cybersecurity resilience in rural banking systems, and ensuring that digital financial inclusion is supported by robust security frameworks capable of mitigating cyber fraud and data vulnerabilities; the conference also featured a high-level panel discussion titled “Auditing the Future: Securing Emerging Technologies through Next-Generation Cybersecurity Audits,” moderated by Shri S.S. Sharma, which brought together experts from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Satcom Industry Association of India, CRIS, BSE Limited, and Airtel Payments Bank, who collectively deliberated on emerging cybersecurity challenges associated with rapidly evolving technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain systems, satellite communications, and digital payment ecosystems, while emphasizing the importance of adaptive audit frameworks capable of addressing dynamic threat landscapes; throughout the event.

Madhavdev: An Architect of Assamese Culture



GAUTAM SARMAH
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Among the great personalities who played a remarkable role in shaping Assam’s religious, literary, and cultural history, Madhavdev occupies a place of exceptional distinction. His life and works stand as a unique example of how devotion, creativity, discipline, and cultural vision can come together to transform an entire society. Although he is best remembered as the foremost disciple and spiritual successor of Srimanta Sankardev, his contributions extend far beyond the role of a devoted follower. Through his literary genius, extraordinary musical talent, organizational ability, and artistic innovation, he emerged as one of the principal architects of Assamese civilization and one of the foremost custodians of the Neo-Vaishnavite cultural renaissance that flourished in medieval Assam.

Born in 1489 at Letekupukhuri in present-day Narayanpur, Assam, Madhavdev belonged to an era marked by social divisions, elaborate religious rituals, rigid caste distinctions, and political uncertainty. During this period, the Bhakti Movement was spreading across various parts of India, emphasizing devotion over ritualism and spiritual equality over social hierarchy. In Assam, this movement found powerful expression through Sankardev’s Eka Sarana Nama Dharma. Madhavdev, who would later become its greatest propagator, was initially a devoted follower of Shaktism and possessed profound knowledge of scriptures, logic, philosophy, and theology. Consequently, his eventual conversion to Vaishnavism under the influence of Sankardev became a landmark event in Assamese cultural history.

The historic meeting between Sankardev and Madhavdev is regarded as one of the most significant turning points in the development of Assamese society. Sankardev immediately recognized the extraordinary intellectual and spiritual potential of the young scholar. Madhavdev subsequently dedicated his entire life to spreading and strengthening the Eka Sarana movement, fully justifying the faith placed in him. If Sankardev was the visionary founder of a new cultural order, Madhavdev was its master builder, providing it with stability, expansion, and institutional structure. Through his tireless efforts, the movement gained permanence, continuity, and deep roots among the people of Assam.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Madhavdev’s contribution was his realization that religion could not flourish through doctrine alone. He understood that music, poetry, drama, dance, and collective participation could communicate spiritual truths far more effectively than abstract philosophical discourse. Consequently, he transformed the performing arts into powerful instruments of devotion, education, and social cohesion. Through this approach, Neo-Vaishnavism evolved beyond a religious movement into a vibrant cultural tradition whose influence continues to shape Assamese society today. Among his artistic achievements, his contribution to music is particularly significant. The tradition of Borgeet, initiated by Sankardev, reached its fullest expression through Madhavdev’s genius. Borgeets are devotional songs composed in specific ragas and designed to awaken spiritual consciousness through the beauty of melody and poetry. These songs represent one of the finest treasures of Assamese musical heritage and continue to occupy a central place in the devotional life of Assam’s satras and namghars.

Historical records indicate that Madhavdev composed approximately 191 Borgeets, a number greater than the currently available compositions of his guru. Many scholars believe that after numerous Borgeets of Sankardev were lost, Madhavdev was encouraged to enrich the tradition further. He fulfilled this responsibility with extraordinary dedication, creating a vast musical treasury unparalleled in Assamese devotional literature. For more than five centuries, these songs have continued to be sung with equal enthusiasm in namghars and religious gatherings. The uniqueness of Madhavdev’s

Borgeets lies in their harmonious blend of spirituality, poetic beauty, and musical refinement. Most of them celebrate the childhood exploits of Lord Krishna, complete surrender to God, longing for divine union, and profound reflections on human existence. Written primarily in Brajavali, these songs transcended regional boundaries while remaining accessible to ordinary devotees. Through Borgeets, Madhavdev fostered a collective musical culture that united people beyond distinctions of caste, profession, or social status.

His contribution to the development of Assamese drama was equally important. The theatrical tradition established by Sankardev gained new momentum and wider acceptance under his guidance. He recognized that drama could make moral and spiritual teachings more engaging, memorable, and accessible to the masses. Consequently, he composed several dramatic works and firmly established theatre as an integral component of Assamese cultural life. His Jhumura plays represent a significant milestone in Assamese dramatic literature. Simpler, more humorous, and more dialogue-oriented than Ankiya Naat, these plays played an innovative role in disseminating religious and ethical messages. Through them, Madhavdev reflected the social realities of his time while connecting directly with ordinary people. As a result, religious education spread beyond scholarly circles and

verses centred on the remembrance of God’s name. Written under the guidance of Sankardev, it proclaims the chanting of God’s name as the supreme path to salvation in the Kali Yuga. The beauty of Namghosa lies in its simplicity, lyrical quality, and philosophical depth. Although primarily a theological work, its musical structure makes it ideal for collective recitation and singing. Even today, its verses remain an inseparable part of daily worship in Assamese households and namghars. In addition to Namghosa, Madhavdev composed several important works, including Bhakti Ratnavali, Janma Rahasya, Nama Malika, and Guru Bhatima, along with numerous devotional compositions. These works reveal his profound scholarship, spiritual maturity, and poetic sensitivity. He possessed a rare ability to communicate complex philosophical ideas in language that was simple, elegant, and accessible to ordinary people.

A distinctive feature of Madhavdev’s artistic philosophy was his belief that devotion and creativity were not opposing forces but complementary expressions of the same spiritual quest. For him, artistic creation itself was a form of worship. Music, dance, drama, and literature were not merely aesthetic pursuits; they were sacred means of elevating human consciousness. This philosophy protected Assamese performing arts from becoming either empty ritualism or mere entertainment. Another aspect of his greatness was his extraordinary balance between tradition and innovation. While remaining completely faithful to the ideals of his guru, he also adapted and expanded them according to the needs of the time. Such a balance is rare in history. Many followers preserve tradition without innovation, while many innovators abandon tradition altogether. Madhavdev successfully achieved both.

The social impact of his contributions was equally far-reaching. Through collective prayer gatherings, Gayan-Bayan performances, dramatic presentations, and communal participation, he helped reduce social divisions and foster a shared cultural identity. Institutions such as satras and namghars provided people from diverse social backgrounds with opportunities to participate in common spiritual and cultural experiences. Madhavdev’s influence did not end with the medieval period. The traditions he established

continue to shape Assamese cultural life even today. Borgeet remains central to devotional music. Sattriya has earned national and international recognition. Namghars continue to serve as vibrant centres of community life. The traditions of Jhumura and Bhaona continue to inspire theatrical practice. His literary works remain subjects of study, devotion, and cultural pride. Therefore, Madhavdev should not be viewed solely within the framework of religious history. He was simultaneously a saint, poet, musician, dramatist, philosopher, organizer, educator, and cultural visionary. His life demonstrates how artistic creativity can become a powerful force for spiritual awakening and social transformation. By weaving together devotion, literature, music, drama, dance, and communal life into a unified cultural fabric, he laid a lasting foundation for Assamese identity. For this reason, Madhavdev remains one of the greatest guiding figures of Assamese civilization. Through his unparalleled contributions to music, literature, theatre, dance, and cultural institution-building, he transformed the Neo-Vaishnavite movement into a living cultural tradition. His visionary ideas united spirituality and aesthetics, devotion and creativity, tradition and innovation within a single cultural framework.

As long as Assamese culture endures, the melodies of his Borgeets, the verses of Namghosa, the grace of Sattriya, and the living traditions of satras and namghars will continue to carry his timeless message. In essence, Madhavdev was not merely the greatest disciple of Sankardev; he was a co-architect of Assam’s cultural renaissance and one of the most enduring symbols of Assamese cultural consciousness. His legacy continues to inspire generations, reminding us that enduring civilizations are built not only through political power and material achievements but also through the transformative power of faith, art, knowledge, and collective cultural endeavour.

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reached the wider population.

Madhavdev also played a major role in the development and refinement of the Sattriya tradition. Today, Sattriya is recognized as one of India’s classical dance forms. Although its foundations were laid by Sankardev, Madhavdev made substantial contributions to its growth, codification, and propagation. He enriched the dance form by incorporating expressive gestures, rhythmic sophistication, devotional symbolism, and narrative depth. Under his influence, dance became a sacred medium for expressing spiritual experience. One of his greatest achievements was his successful integration of classical discipline with local cultural elements. While preserving the spiritual essence of Sattriya, he incorporated various aspects of Assamese folk culture into its framework. As a result, the dance form attained both artistic excellence and popular appeal. Performances in satras and namghars were not merely artistic displays; they were sacred acts of devotion, meditation, and collective participation.

Madhavdev’s contribution to establishing the institutional foundations of Assamese performing arts was equally remarkable. His organizational skills ensured that these artistic traditions would not depend solely on individual artists or teachers. Under his leadership, satras and namghars evolved into centres of music, dance, drama, literature, and community education. Knowledge related to costume-making, mask-making, instrumental music, choreography, recitation, and theatrical performance was systematically preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next. The namghar, in particular, emerged as a unique democratic cultural space where participation was valued more than mere spectatorship. Through this system, art became an integral part of everyday life for ordinary people.

Madhavdev’s literary accomplishments further demonstrate the depth of his cultural vision. His immortal masterpiece, Namghosa, remains one of the greatest works of Assamese religious literature. Also known as Hazari Ghosa, this text consists of nearly a thousand

2026 outlook: India set to rise amid a turbulent world

As we come to the end of the year 2025, we have seen the ongoing trend of chaos, conflict, and, at times, confusion in the geopolitical arena. The war in Ukraine continues, with a possible closure in 2026. Much to European angst, Vladimir Putin, the “Wizard of the Kremlin”, continues to stand steadfast and call the shots in his own way. Meanwhile, Trump continues to push Europeans and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to agree to his proposed peace deal that envisages concessions to Russia. The crisis in West Asia saw massive US and Israeli strikes on Iran. Iran has since fallen into a lull but is likely to remain a major source of interest and intrigue over the coming years. An unexpected war in Venezuela looks ever more likely. The G2 (the US and China) continue their economic war. Meanwhile, Trump continued to ravage the world through his punishing tariffs in his attempt to Make America Great Again (Maga) by balancing trade and reducing federal debt. As the US heads towards isolationism, and with war on Europe’s doorstep, alliances look ever more fragile. The US wants Europe to shoulder a much greater part of its own security. The Chicago-based Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, which runs the Doomsday Clock, set it at 89 seconds to midnight in January 2025. They decided to move the clock one second closer to midnight, from the previous 90 seconds, because of climate change, nuclear threats, and biological hazards. The world is already perilously close to the precipice. A move of even a single second should be taken as an indication of increased danger and an unmistakable warning that every second of delay in reversing course increases the probability of global disaster. The scourge of terrorism continued to visit India, as Pakistan remains the global fountainhead of terror. The Pakistan-backed Pahalgalam Massacre invoked a massive response from India, hitting Pakistan hard in “Op Sindoor”. Pakistan-Afghanistan relations hit a new low, as Pashtuns made the Durand Line live with cross-border action. Bangladesh remains in a civil-war state after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina, as the interim government tries to distance itself from India and makes overtures to China and Pakistan. The United States’ use of sanctions, technology dominance, and other tools of economic warfare has, at times, replaced military action as the weapon of choice for destabilising adversarial regimes, reflecting the US’ renewed vision of its place in the world and growing dissatisfaction with the previously self-championed ideals of globalisation. Mostly, sanctions have been found to be an ineffective tool, as seen from the growth of China, India, and Russia, among the most hit. Is the world heading for a new economic Cold War?

All of this has continued to remind the world of the criticality of geopolitics for governments, businesses, and populations alike. The year 2026 looks to be no calmer for analysts and global affairs watchers, with great power competition, conflict, and challenges to established global orders continuing to dominate the geopolitical landscape.

Major Global Events 2025

The 25th year of the third millennium and the 21st century saw an escalation of major armed conflicts, including the renewed Russian thrust into Ukraine, even as peace negotiations began between Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump. The Gaza war, including famine and a humanitarian crisis, as well as the Sudanese civil war, also continued throughout the year. Internal crises in Armenia, Bangladesh, Ecuador, France, Georgia, Germany, Haiti, Peru, Somalia, and South Korea continued into 2025. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was arrested and removed from office. The year also saw a wave of protests predominantly led by Generation Z, with some, such as those in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Madagascar, resulting in the overthrow of governments. Several brief conflicts arising from longstanding tensions emerged mid-year, including India-Pakistan in May, Iran-Israel in June, and Cambodia-Thailand in July. In economics and business, the return of Donald Trump to the US presidency ushered in a series of tariffs levied by America on most of the world, significantly disrupting global trade, in addition to reinvigorating the China-United States trade war. The technology sector was additionally hit with the release of DeepSeek’s chatbot, a Chinese large language model that competes with ChatGPT. Aviation and aerospace also saw accidents this year, including the crash of Air India Flight 171 in Ahmedabad, India. Several advances in space exploration were made as well, including the first crewed polar-orbit spaceflight and the first fully successful landing of a spacecraft on the Moon by a private company.

Challenges and Opportunities - India in 2025

In 2025, India’s geopolitical landscape was defined by balancing major power relations (the US, Russia, the EU, and China), navigating regional instability (Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Maldives), pursuing key trade deals (with the US and EU), managing energy security amid global conflicts (Ukraine and West Asia), and addressing economic pressures from Western tariffs, all while enhancing strategic partnerships in areas such as technology and cyber security. US-India dynamics included dealing with potential US tariffs, “America First” policies, renewed US-Pakistan ties, and efforts to secure a significant trade deal for better market access. India-EU relations are a deepening “Strategic Partnership” focused on trade (with FTA talks ongoing), EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) cooperation, security, climate, and digital transformation, with both seeking to build resilient economies and counter China’s influence under a shared goal of global stability and growth. However, EU-India differences on Russia create policy challenges. The EU sees India as a vital partner for supply-chain diversification, clean energy, and a rules-based Indo-Pacific, while India leverages EU technology and investment for its growth. This also meant navigating EU sanctions (including the Vadinar refinery), carbon border taxes, digital barriers, and balancing energy imports with other EU nations. India continues a delicate balance of trade with China despite border tensions while managing energy ties and geopolitical pressures over relations with Russia. President Putin’s state visit to India on December 4-5, 2025, for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit further strengthened the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia. Major trade agreements with the US, the UK, EFTA, Qatar, and New Zealand could boost investment. On regional security and stability, addressing anti-India sentiment in Bangladesh and the Maldives and managing complex counter-terrorism efforts with Pakistan, including incidents such as the Pahalgalam attack and Delhi bomb blasts, remained areas of concern. Increased militarisation in the Indo-

Pacific region remained a key apprehension. Strengthening energy partnerships with the US, Russia, and Middle Eastern nations, and navigating global energy market turbulence, was handled with relative resilience. Facing pressures from global protectionism, leading to efforts to diversify and secure critical mineral supply chains, remained a challenge. India’s 8.2 per cent GDP growth in Q2 of 2025-26 was very encouraging. The year was marked by global structural shifts, increased nationalism, trade protectionism, and cyber-security threats. India balanced its interests amid global power competition, seeking strategic partnerships while maintaining strategic autonomy.

Global Geopolitical Expectations - 2026

Will Gaza finally see peace? How will the fragile ceasefire be handled? Can there be a homeland for Palestinians ruled by a moderate government and not militant Hamas? Will Iran restart full support for Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, creating an environment for military escalation in the Middle East and forcing increased Israeli targeting of Iran-aligned groups throughout the region?

Israel is likely to receive continued support from the US to pursue its objectives of occupation and displacement in Gaza, along with settlement expansion and the likely annexation of the West Bank. The US may exert little or no pressure on Israel to restrain its military activity elsewhere in the region, and Israel may feel emboldened to conduct strikes in Turkey, Egypt, or other states hosting Hamas leadership. Gulf and Islamic countries may intensify diplomatic pressure on Israel, including reviewing diplomatic and economic ties and activating regional defence commitments. Iran may head towards acute economic and security destabilisation. Iran’s internal and regional security will continue to destabilise due to domestic unrest, proxy weakening, the possibility of further Israeli offensives, and



potential US supervision on its border with Azerbaijan and Armenia through management of the Zangezur Corridor, leading to possible military escalation. This could generate political pressure for moderation of ideological divisions. Turkey is tending towards political and security destabilisation, with the controversial arrests of over 100 politicians affiliated with the opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) under investigation for corruption and tender rigging. President Erdogan’s anti-terrorism initiative targeting the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) has had consequences. A substantial increase in defence sector exports may gradually lift the lira from its record low. Russian missile and drone strikes against Ukraine will continue as Russia makes incremental territorial gains in eastern Ukraine. Russia has identified securing all of Donbas as a key goal. Will Europe and Ukraine give in to American pressure and accept the Ukraine deal? What kind of security guarantees can exist for Ukraine and other frontline states? Who will position a peacekeeping or monitoring force — the UN, China, India, or the African Union?

If the war does not stop, Russia may continue to gain territory and increase its bargaining power. The USA is unlikely to inject further funds, and Europe cannot shoulder the burden alone. There is a moderate to high probability that the US will increase economic pressure through secondary tariffs and sanctions if Russia continues to avoid taking concrete measures towards a peace deal. The Indo-Pacific will see diplomatic de-escalation as the US and China make further progress towards a trade agreement that lowers tariffs. There will be modest trade enhancements as the White House’s tariffs and technology restrictions rebalance and settle into a new normal, while AI-driven increases in power consumption and climate-related threats raise the risk of energy disruption. The US has signed agreements with most trading partners in the region, with the notable exception of India. The US and India will likely attempt to reach a diplomatic settlement involving tariff removal through behind-the-scenes efforts by both sides for a more favourable trade agreement. The US and China continue to negotiate a trade agreement, as export restrictions on technology and rare earth elements are eased. China will continue to display strong diplomatic clout, negotiating a rapprochement with India, whose ties with the US deteriorated due to continued purchases of Russian oil. China deepened diplomatic relations with Russia and other partners through agreements on energy cooperation and technology sharing. In the South China Sea, showdowns between China and the Philippines are likely to continue. Other escalatory events could include increased joint Russian-Chinese military drills in the Pacific. China and North Korea may deepen cooperation on trade, potentially exacerbating threats perceived by the US. Donald Trump signalled an even harder edge towards Caracas, declaring that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro’s “days are numbered” and refusing to rule out the use of American ground troops. The USA has carried out a string of lethal strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific, and Trump has hinted that a land operation could come “very soon”. Despite vast natural resources, Venezuela’s economy remains fragile. With the US expanding its military operations, Washington clearly seeks to install a friendly regime.

Pakistan in 2026

Pakistan has begun to see some pseudo-economic stabilisation due to increased diplomatic ties with the US over sanctions negotiations and energy development, as well as continued relations with China through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. However, political destabilisation persists due

to contested election results and political violence against protesters and supporters of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, alongside security destabilisation stemming from tensions with India over insurgency and terrorism. Baloch separatist and Islamist militant activities have the potential to spill over into other provinces due to increased resource extraction from the region by the government alongside the United States. Continued political repression, confinement based on false accusations of inciting violence, contested election outcomes, and splintered support for the government are likely to continue. President Asif Ali Zardari has approved Asim Munir for the newly created position of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), while he also remains Chief of the Army Staff, solidifying the military’s disturbing dominance over Pakistan’s civilian government. This move, granting Munir command over all three services for five years, confirms that the army has once again outmanoeuvred political leadership, effectively subordinating the civilian government.

Technology ‘26

Artificial intelligence (AI) will remain a key priority for China and the United States. The US’ AI Action Plan emphasises the construction of critical infrastructure to support AI development. The year 2026 will see contracts for developing data centres, electricity grids, hardened infrastructure, and cyber security. China’s new plan covering 2026-2030 will unfold and boost domestic technology capabilities. China has renewed export licences for rare earths vital to AI and technology development, and if trade negotiations with the US progress satisfactorily, these licences are likely to extend into 2026, though they remain a key point of leverage. The US will continue diversification efforts for critical mineral extraction and refinement. The Trump administration has struck a revenue-sharing agreement with Nvidia for Chinese sales, indicating a strong probability of continued concessions. The year 2026 will likely see extensions of technology flows from the US to China. China will continue working towards domestic technology manufacturing capabilities, including in semiconductors, amid the ongoing threat of US export restrictions. Data centres are expected to see a continuous rise in power consumption due to the growing use of digital technologies. Demand for fossil fuels to power AI data centres and EV charging stations will continue to expand. In the energy and climate transition, solar and wind generation may surpass coal-fired electricity. Reactor restarts in Japan and new nuclear plants in China and India could increase global nuclear power capacity for low-emissions electricity. Global investment in renewable energy, particularly solar photovoltaic and wind, is expected to accelerate further. India’s technology growth plan focuses on strategic self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat), leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure (UPI and Aadhaar), and major investments in frontier areas such as AI, semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing, aiming for a \$35 trillion economy by 2047. This includes robust R&D, private-sector participation, and building global leadership in AI (IndiaAI Mission) and chips (Semicon India Programme). Technology giants Amazon (\$35 billion) and Microsoft (\$17.5 billion) plan major investments in India by 2030 to advance AI-driven digitisation, export growth, and job creation. Google’s major investment centres on a \$15 billion AI hub in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Geopolitical Expectations - India in 2026

Expectations for India in 2026 point towards continued strong economic growth, solid market performance driven by domestic demand and policy support, and significant anticipation surrounding Union Budget 2026, with a focus on tax fairness, support for sunrise sectors, and consumer-facing reforms in healthcare and insurance. India’s GDP is projected to grow between 6.5 and 7.4 per cent in 2026, reaching approximately \$4.1 to \$4.6 trillion in nominal terms, driven by strong domestic demand and robust liquidity. Focus areas include digital infrastructure, manufacturing incentives, and managing global economic uncertainties. Sector incentives should include GST refund fixes and manufacturing incentives, particularly in electronics and EVs. Continued emphasis on digital access and services is expected, alongside debates on policies such as genetically modified crops to boost yields. Overall, 2026 is anticipated to be a year of sustained growth, strategic policy interventions, and increasing global economic prominence for India. While the China-US relationship is widely regarded as the defining geopolitical issue of the 21st century, relations between China and India arguably hold greater long-term significance for Asia and the global order. Together, the two nations account for nearly 40 per cent of the world’s population. China is the world’s second-largest economy, with India currently fourth and soon to be the third-largest. Yet China-India relations remain complex. Tensions over a long-standing and unresolved territorial dispute play a significant role, but beyond that lies a broader geopolitical rivalry. Both view themselves as civilisational states, and their rising prominence is creating new areas of competition. The West increasingly sees India only as a counterweight to China, with limited interest in India’s success beyond that framework.

Indian Military in 2026

The Ministry of Defence has several vision documents, most notably the Technology Perspective and Capability Roadmap (TPCR), outlining a 15-year plan for defence modernisation, and the broader Indian Armed Forces Vision 2047, aligned with the national “Viksit Bharat - 2047” initiative. The TPCR guides both public and private defence industries on R&D priorities, identifying over 200 weapon systems and technologies. These include nuclear propulsion for naval vessels, hypersonic missiles, AI, stealth, unmanned systems, and space-based warfare capabilities, aimed at transforming the armed forces into a technologically advanced, combat-ready force capable of multi-domain integrated operations. The document strongly supports “Make in India”, encouraging domestic design, development, and MSME participation. The year 2025 was declared the “Year of Reforms” in the Ministry of Defence, emphasising jointness and integration across services. The Armed Forces Vision 2047 aims to create a modern, agile, adaptive, technology-enabled, and self-reliant force capable of deterring and winning wars across the spectrum of operations, in synergy with all services. India will continue to rise as a major economic and strategic power.

Air Marshal Anil Chopra

Myanmar President arrives in Bodh Gaya on five-day India visit

New Delhi: Myanmar President U Min Aung Hlaing arrived in Bodh Gaya as part of his five-day visit to India, marking an important occasion in the long-standing relationship between the two neighbouring countries that share deep historical, cultural and spiritual connections rooted in Buddhism. The visit drew considerable attention as the Myanmar

bridge connecting Buddhist communities from across Asia, and Myanmar has maintained a special relationship with the sacred town through its monasteries, pilgrims and religious institutions. Thousands of devotees from Myanmar visit Bodh Gaya every year to pay homage at sites associated with Lord Buddha, reinforcing a spiritual connection that tran-



President began his engagements in one of the most revered Buddhist pilgrimage destinations in the world. Upon reaching Bodh Gaya, President U Min Aung Hlaing offered prayers at the world-renowned Mahabodhi Temple, a sacred site that holds immense significance for Buddhists across the globe as the place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. The visit to the temple reflected the enduring spiritual bonds that connect the people of India and Myanmar and highlighted the central role of Buddhist heritage in fostering mutual understanding and goodwill between the two nations. The President also visited the historic Sujata Temple, another important religious and cultural landmark associated with the life of Lord Buddha. The temple commemorates the place where Sujata is believed to have offered food to Siddhartha Gautama before he attained enlightenment, making it a site of profound reverence for Buddhist devotees and scholars alike. During his stay in Bodh Gaya, President U Min Aung Hlaing is also scheduled to visit various Myanmar Buddhist monasteries located in the town, further underlining the close religious and cultural links that have developed over centuries between Myanmar and India through shared Buddhist traditions and exchanges. Earlier, Bihar Agriculture Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha accorded a warm welcome to President U Min Aung Hlaing at Gaya Airport upon his arrival in the state. The reception reflected the significance attached to the visit and the importance of strengthening engagement between India and Myanmar at multiple levels. President U Min Aung Hlaing was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising senior officials and Buddhist representatives, indicating the broad scope of the visit and its emphasis on cultural, religious and bilateral cooperation. The presence of senior officials and members of the Buddhist community highlighted the importance of people-to-people contacts and cultural diplomacy in enhancing relations between the two countries. Bodh Gaya has long served as a

scends borders and generations. President U Min Aung Hlaing's visit therefore carries significance beyond ceremonial engagements, symbolising the continued commitment of both nations to preserving and promoting their shared Buddhist heritage. The visit also reflects the broader historical relationship between India and Myanmar, which has been shaped by centuries of cultural interaction, religious exchanges, trade links and people-to-people contacts. Buddhism has remained one of the strongest pillars connecting the two countries, serving as a source of mutual respect and understanding even as bilateral relations have expanded into new areas of cooperation. Observers view the President's visit as an opportunity to further strengthen these historical foundations while exploring avenues for greater collaboration in diverse sectors. The Mahabodhi Temple, where the President offered prayers, remains one of the most iconic symbols of Buddhist faith and attracts pilgrims from every corner of the Buddhist world. For Myanmar, a country with a rich Buddhist tradition and a deeply religious society, the temple holds particular significance. The President's visit to the sacred site resonated with the sentiments of millions of Buddhist followers who regard Bodh Gaya as one of the holiest places in the world. Similarly, the visit to the Sujata Temple underscored the importance of preserving and celebrating the cultural narratives that form an integral part of Buddhist history. Such visits contribute to strengthening cultural awareness and promoting a deeper appreciation of the historical links that unite communities across national boundaries. The scheduled visits to Myanmar Buddhist monasteries in Bodh Gaya are also expected to provide an opportunity for interaction with monks, religious leaders and members of the Myanmar community associated with these institutions. These monasteries serve as important centres of religious learning, cultural preservation and spiritual practice, helping maintain the close relationship between Myanmar's

Buddhist community and India's sacred Buddhist sites. The presence of these monasteries in Bodh Gaya stands as a visible reminder of the enduring connections that have developed through centuries of pilgrimage and religious exchange. President U Min Aung Hlaing's engagement with these institutions is likely to reinforce the cultural and spiritual dimensions of India-Myanmar relations while encouraging continued cooperation in preserving Buddhist heritage. The visit comes at a time when both countries continue to recognise the value of cultural diplomacy as a means of strengthening bilateral ties and fostering greater understanding between their peoples. Shared heritage has often served as a foundation for closer cooperation, creating opportunities for dialogue, collaboration and mutual respect. Through visits to important religious and cultural sites, leaders can highlight common values and historical connections that contribute to stronger and more resilient relationships. President U Min Aung Hlaing's visit to Bodh Gaya therefore carries significance not only for religious communities but also for broader diplomatic engagement between India and Myanmar. The warm welcome extended by Bihar Agriculture Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha at Gaya Airport reflected the spirit of hospitality associated with the visit and demonstrated the importance placed on nurturing friendly relations between the two countries. The participation of a high-level delegation comprising senior officials and Buddhist representatives further underscored the multifaceted nature of the visit, combining diplomatic, cultural and spiritual elements. Such interactions help strengthen channels of communication and create opportunities for cooperation in areas of shared interest. The visit is also expected to enhance awareness of the rich Buddhist heritage that continues to connect India and Myanmar and inspire efforts to preserve these traditions for future generations. As President U Min Aung Hlaing continues his engagements in Bodh Gaya, the visit serves as a reminder of the enduring relevance of historical and cultural ties in shaping contemporary international relationships. The shared Buddhist heritage of India and Myanmar remains a powerful source of connection, bringing together people from different backgrounds through common traditions, values and spiritual beliefs. The visit also highlights the role of sacred sites such as the Mahabodhi Temple and the Sujata Temple in fostering international understanding and cultural exchange. By offering prayers at these revered locations and engaging with Myanmar Buddhist monasteries in Bodh Gaya, President U Min Aung Hlaing has reinforced the significance of these connections and contributed to efforts aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two countries. President U Min Aung Hlaing's visit is being viewed as a significant step towards further strengthening the historical, cultural and Buddhist heritage ties between India and Myanmar, while also providing fresh impetus to bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The visit stands as a reflection of the enduring friendship between the two nations and the shared commitment to preserving the values, traditions and cultural heritage that have connected them for centuries, ensuring that these bonds continue to flourish and contribute to stronger relations in the years ahead.

New Delhi: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), functioning under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, has initiated a major regulatory crackdown against the unauthorized online sale, listing and advertisement of hazardous chemicals, explosive substances and related precursors on digital marketplaces, in a move aimed at strengthening consumer safety, ensuring public security and promoting responsible practices across India's rapidly expanding e-commerce ecosystem. The action was initiated after the Authority received inputs regarding the online availability and sale of hazardous and regulated substances on several digital platforms, including IndiaMART, Justdial, Sigma-Aldrich India, Dial4Trade and ExportersIndia. According to the CCPA, the substances identified during the preliminary scrutiny included explosive precursors and hazardous chemicals that could pose serious risks to public safety and national security if sold without proper safeguards, licensing verification and regulatory oversight. Authorities noted that unauthorized online access to such substances may create unlawful supply channels while simultaneously exposing consumers and the wider public to severe safety risks. The CCPA observed that certain hazardous products were allegedly being listed or advertised online without sufficient compliance checks relating to licensing, buyer verification, storage protocols and transportation regulations, all of which are governed by strict laws due to the potentially dangerous nature of these substances. Following these observations, the Authority issued notices to the concerned e-commerce entities and online intermediaries seeking detailed information about the sellers operating on their platforms, including their licensing status, compliance with applicable regulations, quantities sold, buyer verification systems, import details and approvals obtained from relevant authorities. Officials stated that the purpose of the notices is to assess whether the platforms had exercised adequate due diligence before permitting the sale or advertisement of substances that fall under various legal and regulatory restrictions. During its preliminary examination, the CCPA found that several hazardous chemicals and explosive materials listed online are regulated, restricted, controlled or prohibited under different statutory frameworks dealing with public safety, explosive materials, chemical handling and hazardous substance management. The Authority emphasized that online platforms and digital intermediaries cannot ignore their responsibilities while facilitating trade in such sensitive products and must ensure strict compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements before allowing any listing, advertisement or sale involving hazardous substances. The CCPA further stressed that digital marketplaces have a responsibility to adopt stronger verification mechanisms and compliance systems so that regulated chemicals and explosive materials do not become easily accessible to unau-

thorized individuals or entities. Among the substances that came under scrutiny during the enforcement exercise were Ammonium Nitrate, Gun Powder, Picric Acid and Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate, commonly known as PETN, all of which are highly sensitive materials governed by strict safety and handling regulations due to their hazardous nature and possible misuse. Ammonium Nitrate, widely used in fertilizers and industrial applications, is also classified as a controlled substance because of its potential use in explosive formulations, while PETN is recognized as a powerful explosive compound subject to stringent controls under public safety laws. Similarly, Gun Powder and Picric Acid are substances associated with explosive and hazardous properties, requiring careful monitoring, regulated handling and licensed distribution. Officials involved in the regulatory process stated that the online availability of such materials without appropriate safeguards raises serious concerns relating not only to consumer protection but also to broader national security considerations. In continuation of its enforcement measures, the CCPA has issued a total of eight notices to different entities in connection with comparable violations involving regulated and potentially dangerous substances being offered or facilitated through online channels. The Authority indicated that the action is part of a wider effort to strengthen accountability in the digital marketplace ecosystem and prevent unfair or unsafe trade practices involving sensitive products. As part of the coordinated response mechanism, the CCPA also held discussions with officials of the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation, commonly known as PESO, to examine the existing legal and regulatory framework governing explosive materials and hazardous substances. The meeting focused on reviewing the current safeguards, compliance requirements and enforcement mechanisms applicable to the sale, storage, transportation and handling of such substances across physical and digital marketplaces. Officials familiar with the matter stated that the coordination between the CCPA and PESO is aimed at ensuring that all entities involved in the supply chain, including sellers, intermediaries and digital platforms, remain accountable under applicable laws and safety standards. The list of sellers operating on these e-commerce platforms, as shared by the online entities in response to the notices, has also been forwarded to PESO for necessary examination and action under relevant legal provisions. Authorities believe that closer coordination between consumer protection agencies and specialized regulatory bodies will help strengthen oversight and improve enforcement against illegal or unauthorized transactions involving hazardous products. Following the intervention by the CCPA and the initiation of regulatory proceedings, several online platforms and entities have already begun removing, blocking, restricting or delisting listings connected to hazardous chemicals and explosive substances.

CDS General Anil Chauhan retires after over four decades of military service

New Delhi: Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan bid farewell to military service after receiving a ceremonial Tri-Services Guard of Honour at the National War Memorial in New Delhi, bringing to a close an illustrious military career spanning more than four decades and marking the culmination of his distinguished tenure as the country's top military officer. The solemn and dignified ceremony reflected the nation's gratitude and respect for a military leader who dedicated over 40 years of his life to serving the country in a variety of challenging operational, command and staff appointments. The ceremonial Tri-Services Guard of Honour, presented by personnel representing the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, underscored the significance of General Chauhan's contribution to the armed forces and highlighted the respect he earned across all three services during his long and accomplished career. The occasion at the National War Memorial carried special significance as it symbolised not only the conclusion of his tenure as Chief of Defence Staff but also his transition from military service to civilian life after decades of unwavering commitment to the nation. The atmosphere at the National War Memorial was marked by dignity, tradition and military pride as senior officers, service personnel and officials gathered to witness the ceremony honouring one of the country's most distinguished military leaders. After laying a wreath at the National War Memorial, General Chauhan reflected on his years of service and described the moment as one of immense pride and gratitude. Speaking on the occasion, he said it was a matter of great honour for him to superannuate with a Tri-Services Guard of Honour, a recognition that carries deep meaning for any military officer who has devoted his professional life to the service of the nation. His remarks captured the sense of fulfilment and satisfaction that accompanied the end of a career marked by responsibility, leadership and dedication. Marking his transition to civilian life after more than four decades of service, General Chauhan described his tenure as satisfying and fulfilling, reflecting on a journey that saw him rise through the ranks of the Indian Army and eventually assume the country's highest military position. His words conveyed both humility and appreciation for the opportunities he received throughout his career, as well as the privilege of serving alongside generations of military personnel committed to safeguarding the nation's interests. The ceremony also served as an opportunity to acknowledge the remarkable career of an officer whose professional journey has been closely linked with some of the most important developments in India's defence and security landscape over the past four decades. Commissioned into the Indian Army in 1981, General Chauhan began a military career that would

eventually place him among the most respected officers of his generation. From the early years of his service, he demonstrated professionalism, commitment and leadership qualities that enabled him to undertake increasingly significant responsibilities within the armed forces. Over the course of more than 40 years, he served the nation in a wide range of operational, command and staff roles, gaining extensive experience across different theatres, formations and strategic assignments. His long tenure in uniform coincided with a period of significant transformation within the Indian military, and he played a role in helping strengthen the operational preparedness, strategic outlook and institutional capabilities of the armed forces. Throughout his career, General Chauhan held several key command and staff appointments that contributed to his reputation as a highly capable and respected military leader. These assignments provided him with opportunities to lead troops in demanding environments, oversee important operational responsibilities and contribute to defence planning at the highest levels. His ability to combine field experience with strategic understanding enabled him to effectively address the complex challenges associated with modern military leadership. Colleagues and fellow officers have often recognised his commitment to professional excellence, his emphasis on preparedness and his dedication to strengthening the effectiveness of the armed forces. As he progressed through the ranks, General Chauhan became known for his calm leadership style, operational insight and deep understanding of military affairs, qualities that would eventually define his tenure in senior leadership positions. The role of Chief of Defence Staff carries unique responsibilities within India's defence establishment, requiring coordination among the three services and the promotion of jointness and integration in military planning and operations. During his tenure, General Chauhan worked closely with the leadership of the Army, Navy and Air Force while contributing to efforts aimed at enhancing cooperation and synergy among the services. His position placed him at the centre of important discussions related to defence preparedness, strategic planning and the future direction of military reforms. The ceremonial Tri-Services Guard of Honour accorded to him at the National War Memorial reflected the significance of these responsibilities and the esteem in which he was held by personnel across the armed forces. The participation of all three services in the farewell ceremony symbolised unity, professionalism and shared respect for a leader who dedicated his life to the nation's defence and security. As General Chauhan prepared to enter civilian life, the occasion provided an opportunity to reflect on the values that have guided his military service. Commitment to duty, dedica-

tion to the nation and professionalism in the face of evolving challenges remained central themes throughout his career. His reflections on the occasion highlighted the satisfaction that comes from serving the country over an extended period and contributing to an institution that plays a vital role in protecting national interests. For many younger officers and service personnel, his career stands as an example of the opportunities available through dedication, discipline and perseverance. The farewell ceremony also underscored the traditions and customs that remain an integral part of military life, providing a dignified and respectful conclusion to a distinguished career in uniform. General Chauhan's contributions to the armed forces have been recognised through several prestigious awards conferred in acknowledgement of his exemplary service and leadership. He has been awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Sena Medal and Vishisht Seva Medal, distinctions that reflect the breadth and significance of his contributions to the nation's defence establishment. These honours represent recognition of exceptional service across different stages of his career and underscore the respect he earned through years of dedicated military leadership. The awards also serve as a testament to the impact of his work and the confidence placed in him by the institution he served for more than four decades. As the nation honoured General Chauhan at the National War Memorial, attention naturally turned to the legacy of service he leaves behind. His journey from a young officer commissioned into the Indian Army in 1981 to becoming the country's Chief of Defence Staff reflects a career defined by perseverance, responsibility and unwavering commitment to duty. Over the years, he witnessed significant changes in the strategic environment and contributed to the evolution of India's defence capabilities through various leadership roles. The culmination of this journey at the National War Memorial, where he received a ceremonial Tri-Services Guard of Honour and laid a wreath in tribute to the nation's fallen heroes, provided a fitting conclusion to a career devoted to military service. The ceremony served not only as a farewell to a senior military leader but also as a celebration of a lifetime dedicated to the security and service of the nation. It highlighted the enduring values of honour, courage and duty that define military life and acknowledged the contributions of an officer who spent more than 40 years in uniform. For General Chauhan, the occasion marked the beginning of a new chapter in civilian life; for the armed forces, it was an opportunity to express appreciation for a leader whose distinguished tenure and decades of service left a lasting imprint on the institution.

Milk: Essential nutrient for a healthy body



- Er. Prabhat Kishore

Milk is a major part of our diet. It is also considered a complete food. It is a major source of valuable nutrients such as vitamins A, B, D, B12, carbohydrate, potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, protein etc, that help in supporting a growing body. Milk and its products (i.e. curd and ghee) are three of the five elements of Panchagavya, which is used in Ayurvedic medicine for the treatment of various incurable diseases.

87% of cow's milk is water and the remaining 13% consists of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and other minerals. Vitamins A and B are essential for eye and red blood cell formation, B12 for proper nerve function, Magnesium for muscle function, Phosphorus for energy supply, Protein for body growth and repair, Calcium and Vitamin D for bone's strength and security. Due to the low sodium and potassium content, milk maintains normal blood pressure. Milk neutralizes the cholesterol of the body. It reduces the risk of cancer by 35 percent. According to the National Institute of Medicine, the human body requires 1000 to 1200 mg of calcium per day and milk is the major source of calcium.

Many nutrients are available in milk, which is essential for glowing skin. While the lactic acid present in it keeps the skin soft, the antioxidants protect it from the toxic effects of the environment. Milk and its products are good sources of calcium, phosphorus and protein, which are essential for bone's strength and

growth. Consuming one glass of milk daily is beneficial for us. This reduces the risk of osteoporosis. There are two types of proteins in milk. 80 percent of the total protein is casein and 20 percent is whey. Casein is useful for teeth, as it forms a thin layer on the enamel of the teeth, which is helpful in keeping the teeth and gums healthy.

The protein present in milk makes the muscles strong. Drinking milk after exercise, gives the body the necessary energy to repair the wear and tear of body cells. Along with this, it also makes up for the lack of liquid in the body due to work-out.

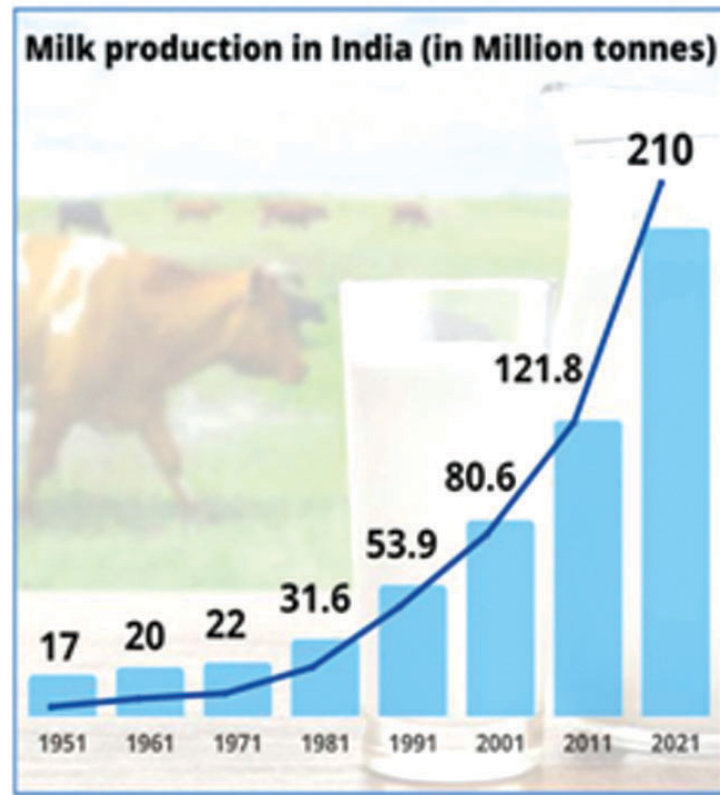
Drinking milk before sleeping at night gives relief to the muscles and nerves and leads to good sleep. The calcium, potassium and proteins present in milk keep the blood pressure balanced, which reduces the chances of stroke. Milk reduces the risk of cardio vascular diseases. due to the abundance of Vitamin B12, it also maintains the functioning of the brain.

Bharat is the largest producer as well as consumer of milk in the world contributing about 24 percent of the global milk production. In 1950-51, the milk production in the country stood at merely 17 Million Tonnes (MT). In 1968-69, prior to the launch of "Operation Flood" by

National Daily Development Board (NDDB), the milk production was only 21.2 MT which increased to 247.87 MT by 2024-25.

The decadal milk production in Bharatvarsha has been recorded as :- Year 1951 - 17 MT, 1961 - 20 MT, 1971 - 22 MT, 1981 - 31.6 MT, 1991 - 53.9 MT, 2001 - 80.6 MT, 2011 - 121.8 MT, and year 2021 - 210 MT.

Milk plays an important role in the food of



a healthy citizen in building a healthy nation and World Milk Day on 1st June and National Milk Day on 26th November every year inspires the human society to take positive initiatives in this direction.

(The author is an engineer and educationist, Patna, Bihar) (Mob- 8544128428)

Academic Extension Programme Conducted by Assamese Deptt of Dibrugarh University

M Hashim Ali, Correspondent, Dibrugarh, May 31: An academic extension programme organized by the Department of Assamese of Dibrugarh University was held on May 30 at Bhagamur



Nepali Block Middle English School in Dibrugarh. The programme was initiated by Assistant Professors Dr. Jitu Bora, Jintu Hazarika, Dipshikha Burhagohain, Jyotismita Dutta and Banisha Saikia of the Deptt of Assamese. A large number of students attended the programme, during which the faculty members conducted educational sessions in various subjects. The event was presided over by the school's Headmaster, Ranjit Kalita. Retired teacher Kesharam Hazarika, along with the president and members of the school management committee, parents, and teaching staff, were also present. During the programme, students were provided knowledge and guidance.

ance in areas such as poetry recitation, storytelling, riddles, and quizzes. Various cultural activities were also organized, contributing to the development of the students' talents and creative abilities. Several competitions were conducted among the students, and prizes were distributed to the winners.

Constantly tired or having muscle spasms? It could be this hidden health issue in your blood

There are days when you feel more tired than usual. Daily activities like commuting to work or typing out a report for your boss feel like wading through a thick sludge – laborious and sometimes, with a slow-burning headache to further remind you of your misery. But when malaise plagues you for weeks or even months on end, and you can't seem to pinpoint the cause, you might want to have your blood pH tested – especially if you've been taking a diuretic to manage your hypertension. That was the case for a patient seen at SingHealth Polyclinics, said associate consultant Dr Patricia Chia. When the 70-year-old retired teacher began feeling unusually tired and unmotivated, he chalked it up to the effects of ageing. But that was not what his routine check-up found. "A closer look at his blood work revealed elevated bicarbonate levels, a key marker of metabolic alkalosis, a condition where the blood becomes too alkaline," said Dr Chia.

The retiree's blood pH had changed from the introduction of a common diuretic three months earlier to help manage his hypertension. This was in addition to his usual regimen of steroids for his eczema, which he has been on for two years without any issues. Now, before you jump to the conclusion that we should all dump our medications, find out what is a blood pH imbalance – and what you can do to restore balance and feel better. And no, it doesn't involve investing in an alkaline water dispenser.

WHAT IS YOUR BLOOD'S NORMAL PH ANYWAY?

Your blood's usual pH is slightly alkaline and falls narrowly between 7.35 and 7.45, according to Dr Chia. "This range stays consistent throughout the body and does not change in relation to your body part, gender, or time of the day." In fact, it is important that your body keeps your blood pH within this range because the slightest deviation "can affect how our cells work and may lead to serious health issues if not corrected", she said. Your blood pH is not to be confused with the pH of your body parts. "For example, the stomach is very acidic to help with digestion, while the vagina is slightly acidic to protect against harmful bacteria. These differences are normal and necessary for each organ to do its job effectively, but they do not reflect or affect the pH of the blood," said Dr Chia.

HOW DOES YOUR BODY MAINTAIN ITS BLOOD PH BALANCE?

To prevent any change to the blood pH, you have your stomach, lungs and kidneys to thank. "The very acidic stomach acid will neutralise any alkaline substance you ingest before it even gets to your bloodstream," explained Dr Jasmin Koh, a general practitioner with Doctor Anywhere. "The kidneys also play a major role in filtering and balancing the pH of anything you consume," she added. Depending on your body's needs, your kidneys can excrete acid or alkali (such as bicarbonate) into your urine, or they can reabsorb them into your bloodstream, she said. Your lungs, too, are another major pH regulator. "Your body produces carbon dioxide as a waste product, and in the blood, carbon dioxide can become an acid," said Dr Koh. You may not notice it but "when your blood becomes a little too acidic, your brain will instruct your lungs to breathe faster and deeper to 'blow off' more carbon dioxide", she said. "This reduces the acid in your blood and brings the pH back up."

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BLOOD PH IMBALANCE? WHAT

ARE THE SIGNS?

There are two main types of blood pH imbalances: Acidosis (too acidic) and alkalosis (too alkaline). Each category is further segmented into:

ACIDOSIS

- Lactic acidosis: When intense exercise causes muscles to produce too much lactic acid.
- Diabetic ketoacidosis: A complication of Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes when there's insulin resistance or insufficiency, and the body breaks down fat for energy instead. The resulting ketones are what acidifies the blood.
- Renal tubular acidosis: When the kidneys fail to secrete acid, resulting in an increase in blood acid level.
- Hyperchloremic acidosis: Typically caused by severe diarrhoea when the bicarbonate level in your blood becomes too low.
- Respiratory acidosis: Your lungs can't expel enough carbon dioxide due to chronic lung diseases such as asthma or sleep apnoea. The buildup of carbon dioxide then lowers the blood's pH.



ALKALOSIS

- Metabolic alkalosis: Usually a result of surplus bicarbonate in the blood caused by severe vomiting, dehydration or the use of diuretics.
- Respiratory alkalosis: Carbon dioxide dissolves in blood to form carbonic acid. But when its level drops due to rapid exhalations during hyperventilation (caused by anxiety, fever or high-altitude exposure), it can increase blood's pH.

"The signs of a blood pH imbalance are often non-specific and can overlap with many other conditions. This is why a proper diagnosis by a doctor is crucial," said Dr Koh.

"For acidosis, the symptoms can include feeling very tired and lethargic, confusion, rapid breathing, or a headache," said Dr Koh. "For alkalosis, you might experience muscle twitching or spasms, lightheadedness, numbness or

That strawberry matcha latte has more caffeine than you think – is it okay for your kid to enjoy it?

You've just received your order of strawberry matcha and your child is clamouring to have one, too. Other than the energy-spiking sugar, you reckon it's basically green tea powder and fruit – all antioxidants and vitamins... and practically a dessert, right? Moreover, you grew up in a household where coffee or tea was as readily available to you as water. What could go wrong? You might want to put the strawberry matcha down and give your child something else instead. While caffeine may just keep you awake at night, in children, this stimulant can lead to negative effects. But does that mean lattes, matcha ice cream, chocolate and anything with a smidge of caffeine are off the table for kids? We find out how caffeine affects growing bodies and brains.

OTHER THAN SLEEP DISRUPTION, HOW ELSE CAN CAFFEINE AFFECT CHILDREN?

Sure, matcha has been credited to have anti-inflammatory effects, help lower blood pressure and bad cholesterol levels, as well as improve insulin sensitivity to some extent. The amino acid L-theanine, found in matcha, has also been associated with improved concentration and alertness. But if you're a coffee or tea drinker, you'd be familiar with the side effects of caffeine: Irritability, anxiety, and increased heart rate and blood pressure, said dietitian Anthea Zee from KK Women's and Children's Hospital's Nutrition and Dietetics Department. "Children have smaller bodies and rapidly developing brains, making them more susceptible to those negative effects," she said. "Additionally, caffeine can interfere with the nutrient absorption of essential minerals and vitamins such as calcium, iron, magnesium and B-vitamins," cautioned Zee. "All these can adversely affect the growth potential and immune function of a child." Further stunting their growth and health is the fact that caffeine can also affect children's sleep cycle and emotional wellbeing, said Rachel Cheang, a dietitian with National University Polyclinics. "Children who consume caffeinated drinks are more likely to have poor sleep quality, which indirectly affects the child's mental and physical development," said Cheang, citing a 2020 systematic review. "Higher degrees of anxiety and depression are seen with higher intakes of caffeine. Hyperactivity is also observed in children with excessive intake of caffeine." And like you, your child's prolonged intake of caffeinated drinks can result in a "vicious cycle of poor sleep and increased reliance on caffeine to beat fatigue", Cheang warned. "Caffeine withdrawal often results in crankiness, constant headaches and migraines."

HOW MUCH CAFFEINE IS THERE IN A STRAWBERRY MATCHA ANYWAY?

"A typical iced matcha strawberry drink may contain up to 120mg of caffeine per serving, depending on the size and brand," said Zee. Even a standard matcha drink uses approximately 2g of matcha powder, or has about 70mg of caffeine, she said.

"The amount of matcha used affects the drink's caffeine concentration – that is, more matcha powder equates to a higher caffeine content," said Cheang, adding that better quality matcha also tends to have a higher level of caffeine. How does matcha compare to green tea, the beverage you're often served in Japanese restaurants? Matcha is essentially ground green tea leaves, which means you're consuming the entire leaf, and so, you'll get a bigger hit of caffeine. Green tea, on the other hand, is made from steeping the loose leaves in hot water. "A longer steeping time and using hotter water can lead to a higher caffeine extraction," said Cheang. As a gauge, said Zee, steeping one teaspoon of loose green tea leaves in 240ml of hot water for two to three minutes can yield about 30mg of caffeine. Other than caffeine, drinks du jour such as the trending strawberry matcha aren't healthy choices for your little one. Starbucks' Grande Strawberry Matcha Staro Frappuccino, for instance, has 340 calories, 15g fat and 44g sugar. "The calories from such a matcha latte usually come from the other ingredients added," said Cheang, referring to the sugar-dense fruit purees, flavoured syrup and fruit jam used.

WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES ON CAFFEINE INTAKE FOR CHILDREN?

There is none for children under age 12, both in Singapore and internationally, said Cheang. For adolescents aged 12 to 18 years, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 100mg of caffeine daily – a strawberry matcha with 120mg of caffeine would have exceeded that limit. "While the occasional caffeine consumption might not pose harm, a regular intake could contribute to excessive caffeine exposure, especially when combined with other sources such as chocolates and caffeinated soft drinks," said Zee. "Ultimately, it is best recommended for children to avoid any caffeine intake to support healthy growth and overall wellbeing." If you don't want your child to feel left out at the cafe, order her a grown-up-looking caffeine-free babyccino instead, suggested Zee, which is made of steamed, frothy milk with a dusting of cocoa or cinnamon powder. If she prefers tea, try a caffeine-free one such as chamomile, peppermint, rooibos or fruit tea.

tingling in the hands or face, or a feeling of being very agitated."

She emphasised that for either acidosis or alkalosis to cause symptoms, the condition has to be "pretty severe".

WHAT ELSE CAN CAUSE A BLOOD PH IMBALANCE?

For the retiree patient, it was his diuretic medication. "Diuretics are very commonly used for lowering high blood pressure or to remove excess fluid from the body, especially in conditions like heart failure or kidney problems," said Dr Chia. "They work by helping the body get rid of extra water and salt through urine." However, diuretics also remove hydrogen ions, which can cause the blood to become too alkaline, leading to metabolic alkalosis, she explained. "In most people, their bodies can adjust and restore the pH balance on their own. But in some cases, especially if the diuretic dose is high, the body's natural balancing systems may struggle to keep up. When that happens, metabolic alkalosis can develop," said Dr Chia. What are your odds of developing a blood pH imbalance if you don't have a chronic condition or on any medication? It is still possible, though less common, said Dr Koh. For instance, very strenuous exercise can cause temporary mild acidosis as the muscles produce lactic acid, she said. Reiterating the abovementioned examples, other real-life situations can include severe food poisoning, and in pregnant women, extreme and persistent nausea and vomiting, cited Dr Chia. In these scenarios, losing large amounts of fluids and stomach acid can lead to dehydration and disrupt the delicate balance of pH in the blood, she said. "Severe respiratory distress, such as from an asthma attack, can also lead to acidosis," added Dr Koh. "These are usually acute and self-correcting once the underlying cause is resolved." High altitude sickness is another possible trigger, said Dr Chia. This can happen when you ascend to high altitudes without allowing your body time to adjust. "The sudden drop in oxygen levels can affect breathing patterns, which may in turn, alter the body's pH levels," she said.

CAN A BLOOD PH IMBALANCE BE DANGEROUS IF IGNORED?

In acidosis, said Dr Koh, it "can affect the central nervous system, leading to stupor or even a coma". Not only that, acidosis can also cause potential complications such as "heart rhythm abnormalities, which can be dangerous and may affect how well the heart pumps blood", added Dr Chia. Your bone health may suffer, too. To correct acidosis, your body will pull minerals such as calcium from the bones, explained Dr Chia. As a result, you may end up with fragile bones over time. That's not all the trouble the mineral leaching can cause. "Salt and mineral imbalances can lead to cramps, confusion, or even seizures," she said. Conversely, if you have alkalosis, "it can lead to seizures and muscle spasms", said Dr Koh. "Both acidosis and alkalosis, if severe and left untreated, can be life-threatening as they disrupt the function of multiple organ systems," she warned.

WHAT TEST AND TREATMENT ARE USUALLY USED?

Typically, a blood test known as an arterial blood gas or ABG is used. "This test gives a precise measurement of the blood pH, and the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood," said Dr Koh.

BRICS talks end without joint statement, exposing divisions over war in Iran

New Delhi: Top diplomats from BRICS nations, including rivals Iran and the United Arab Emirates, failed to issue a joint statement on Friday (May 15) after a two-day meeting in Delhi, leaving host India to release only a chair's state-

were the importance of upholding international law, ensuring safe and unimpeded maritime commerce through international waterways, and protecting civilian infrastructure and lives, it added. **CALL FOR DEVELOPING WORLD TO**



STICK TOGETHER

The statement said that BRICS ministers "recalled that the Gaza Strip is an inseparable part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". They also flagged the importance of unifying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the Palestinian Authority, and reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-

determination and an independent State of Palestine. One member had reservations on some aspects of the section on Gaza, the statement said, without naming anyone. India's statement, as the bloc's chair for 2026, said member countries called for the developing world to stick together to tackle global challenges. "They highlighted the importance of the Global South as a driver of positive change," it added. The region faces international challenges from growing geopolitical tension to economic downturns, technology shifts, protectionist measures and migration pressures, it said. BRICS brings together Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Ethiopia, Egypt, Iran and the UAE. **IMPACT OF MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT ON INDIA**

As the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, India has been hit hard by Iran's effective blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global supplies of oil and liquefied natural gas travel in normal times. Iranian attacks have been linked to the deaths of at least three Indian personnel in the waterway, and an India-flagged ship was sunk this week as Araqchi flew to Delhi. During a short visit to the UAE on Friday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the attacks on the Gulf nation. "The way the UAE was targeted is unacceptable in any form," he said. "In these difficult circumstances, the restraint and courage you demonstrated are highly commendable."

ment that exposed their differences. Tehran had wanted the grouping of emerging economies to condemn the US-Israeli war on Iran and accused US ally the UAE of direct involvement in military operations against it. Iran has struck the UAE with missiles and drones several times since the war began on Feb 28. "There were differing views among some members as regards the situation in the West Asia/Middle East region," India said in the statement and outcome document. Without naming the UAE, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi told a news conference that a BRICS member blocked some parts of the statement. "We have no difficulty with that certain country, they have not been our target in the current war. We only hit American military bases and American military installations which are unfortunately on their soil," he said, adding that he hoped things would change when BRICS leaders meet later this year. "I hope by the time that we come for the summit, they come to a good understanding that Iran is a neighbour, we have to live with each other, we have lived for centuries and we have to live for centuries to come." Members of the grouping had expressed respective national positions and shared a range of perspectives, India's statement said. These ranged from the need for an early resolution of the crisis and the value of dialogue and diplomacy to respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, it said. Also figuring in the talks

Xi's 'Thucydides' Trap' warning during summit with Trump revives debate over US-China rivalry

Chinese President Xi Jinping's mention of the "Thucydides' Trap" concept during his meeting with his US counterpart Donald Trump on Thursday (May 14) has thrust a centuries-old historical theory into the centre of modern geopolitics. The term – popularised by American political scientist Graham Allison in his 2017 book *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* – describes the danger that conflict can erupt when a rising power challenges an established one. It accurately captures the underlying tensions shaping relations between Washington and Beijing, Allison told CNA. "Thucydides, the founder and father of history, essentially nailed the issue of China," said the Douglas Dillon Professor of Government at the Harvard Kennedy School. "China... is a meteoric rising power. The US is a colossal ruling power, and when a rapidly rising power seriously threatens the position of the established ruling power – typically, the outcome is a catastrophic war."

NEW FORM OF GREAT POWER RELATIONS

The Chinese president's remarks on Thursday reflected growing concerns among world leaders that strategic rivalry between the world's two largest powers could spiral into open conflict. Xi had asked in his opening remarks: "Can China and the United States overcome the 'Thucydides' Trap' and establish a new paradigm for relations between great powers?" The term "Thucydides' Trap" originates from the ancient Greek historian Thucydides, who chronicled the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta more than 2,000 years ago. Thucydides famously wrote: "It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable." Allison said Xi understands the implications of that historical lesson "deeply", while Trump also appears to appreciate the risks. "The two of them have determined that they want to not be caught in Thucydides' trap; (to) not to have this relationship spiral into a war the way it has typically done in other cases," Allison told CNA's Asia First. He noted that instead, both leaders appear to be searching for what Xi has described as a new form of great power relations. On Thursday, Xi announced he and Trump had agreed to establish a Sino-US relationship based on "constructive strategic stability". This would guide ties between the two superpowers for the next three years and beyond, Xi said. Analysts said this indicates how Beijing wants to frame the next phase of US-China relations as long-term competition managed within limits. "That's easy to say, hard to do. But I'd say

it's a step in the right direction," Allison added. Xi and Trump on Friday wrapped up a two-day summit, in what was the first trip by a US leader to Beijing since 2017 during Trump's first presidential term. **TIMING OF LATEST WARNING**

While Xi has referenced Thucydides' Trap before, Allison said the timing of this latest warn-

Conflict is not bound to happen, but the risks are substantial, warned Allison. In his book, he had examined historical cases over the past 500 years in which a rising power challenged a dominant one. Among 16 such cases, 12 ended in war. "It would obviously be wrong to say war is inevitable. It would not be wrong to say



– delivered directly to Trump during a high-stakes summit – was significant. He noted that if both countries continue their current trajectory, it will produce "history as usual" – a "catastrophic war" that neither China nor the US would survive. "This is not just about one meeting. This is not just about one person. This is about international security," Allison added. The broader challenge, he argued, lies in balancing two competing realities. "The US believes that as the world leader, it's actually created an international security order that's been to the benefit of all of us," he added, pointing to the absence of a great-power war over the past 80 years as evidence of that system's success. "This is the longest period without great power war since the Roman Empire. It's produced greater well-being for everybody in the world, including Singapore, than previous periods in their history." At the same time, China increasingly sees itself as deserving "a bigger place in the world, a bigger place in the sun" as its economic, military and technological power expands, Allison said. He pointed out that Singapore's founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew had long anticipated this strategic dilemma. The late Lee once stated that the 21st century "will be a contest for supremacy in the Pacific" between the US and China. **"NOT WRONG TO SAY WAR IS LIKELY"**

war is likely," he noted. Among the examples he cited was the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union. Despite decades of intense rivalry, ideological competition and nuclear brinkmanship, the two superpowers ultimately avoided direct military conflict. The key to this was mutual recognition that neither side could survive a nuclear exchange, said Allison. "The two parties recognised that given that they had equal capabilities for destroying the other, they were going to have to find some way to live together," he said. That eventually evolved into a détente – a French term often used to refer to the easing of Cold War tensions from 1967 to 1979. Allison contrasted that outcome with Europe in 1914, when the rise of Germany challenged British dominance, ultimately leading to World War I. History shows how "neglect produces bad results" and how "thoughtful policy can do better", he added. He suggested that the long-term US-China relationship could resemble the Olympic Games: Intensely competitive, but ultimately peaceful. Competition itself is not necessarily dangerous, Allison added. "You and I run faster if we're running against each other and competing," he said. The real test, he added, is whether both systems can coexist without turning rivalry into military confrontation.

Emails show FBI Director Kash Patel's Hawaii trip included 'VIP snorkel' at a Pearl Harbor memorial

Washington: When Kash Patel visited Hawaii last summer, the FBI took pains to note the director was not on vacation, highlighting his walking tour of the bureau's Honolulu field office and meetings with local law enforcement. Left out of the FBI's news releases was an exclusive excursion that Patel took days later when he participated in what government officials described as a "VIP snorkel" around the USS Arizona in an outing coordinated by the military. The sunken battleship entombs more than 900 sailors and marines at Pearl Harbor. The swim, revealed in government emails obtained by The Associated Press, comes to light amid criticism of Patel's use of the FBI plane and his global travel, which have blurred professional responsibilities with leisure activities. The FBI did not disclose the snorkelling session or that Patel had returned to Hawaii for two days after his initial stopover on the island. "It fits a pattern of Director Patel getting tangled up in unseemly distractions - this time at a site commemorating the second deadliest attack in US history - instead of staying laser-focused on keeping Americans safe," said Stacey Young, who founded Justice Connection, a network of former federal prosecutors and agents who advocate for the Department of Justice's independence. With few exceptions, snorkelling and diving are off-limits around the USS Arizona. The battleship, now a military cemetery reachable only by boat, has stood as one of the nation's most hallowed sites since Japan bombed and sank it in 1941. Marine archaeologists and crews from the National Park Service make occasional dives at the memorial to survey the condition of the wreck. Other dives have been conducted to inter the remains of Arizona survivors who wanted to rest eternally with their former shipmates. Still, since at least the Obama administration, the Navy and the park service have quietly allowed a handful of dignitaries, including military and government officials responsible for management of the memorial, to swim at the site. The Navy and park service declined to provide details of those permitted to take such excursions. Former FBI directors have visited Pearl Harbor on official business, but none going back to at least 1993 has gone snorkelling at the memorial, according to those familiar with their activities and a former government diver who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution. The diver said it was unusual for a director or anyone not connected to the memorial to be granted such access because the swims come with physical risks and present security, safety

and logistical challenges. Patel has faced scrutiny over his leadership for the past year, with his use of government resources emerging as a recurring storyline of his tenure. The issue flared in February when video surfaced of Patel partying in the locker room with members of the US men's hockey team after their gold medal win at the Winter Olympics in Milan. Patel defended the trip as recently as this week as "purposefully planned" in connection with a cybercrime investigation involving the Italian authorities.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT EXCLUSIVE OUTING

Patel's excursion was in August as he spent two days in Hawaii on his return to the United States from official visits to Australia and New Zealand. On his way to those countries, he stopped in Hawaii to visit the Honolulu field office. An FBI spokesman did not answer questions about the snorkelling session. The FBI said in a statement that top regional commanders hosted Patel at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam "as they commonly do with US government officials on official travel". The Pearl Harbor visit, the spokesman said, "was part of the Director's public national security engagements last August with counterparts in New Zealand, Australia, our Honolulu Field Office, and the Department of War". It was not clear how Patel's snorkelling session was arranged. A Navy spokesperson, Capt Jodie Cornell, confirmed the outing but said the service was not able to track down who initiated it. Participants in Patel's swim were told "not to touch/come into contact with" the sunken ship in any way, Cornell said. She added that the snorkelers were also briefed about "the historic significance of the Memorial as the final resting place/tomb for hundreds of service members".

A "VIP SNORKEL"

Government emails obtained by the AP through a public records request show military officials coordinated logistics and personnel for the "VIP Snorkel". The National Park Service, which administers the site in coordination with the Navy, told AP it was not involved in Patel's swim and declined to comment on the excursion. It also declined to answer questions about any other such outings. Among those afforded invitations to snorkel have been Navy admirals and secretaries of defense and the interior, according to the former government diver. The diver added that the swims were intended to provide officials with insights into the memorial and its operations. The Navy declined to provide examples

or numbers showing how frequently it organises such excursions. It described Patel's outing as "not an anomaly." Hack Albertson, a Marine veteran, is part of a select group from the Paralyzed Veterans of America trained to dive on the Arizona annually to check on the condition of the wreck. He said it was inappropriate for Patel and other political figures to snorkel or dive at the memorial. "It's like having a bachelor party at a church. It's hallowed ground," he said. "It needs to be treated with the solemnity it deserves."

SOME FAMILY MEMBERS DON'T OBJECT TO SNORKELLING

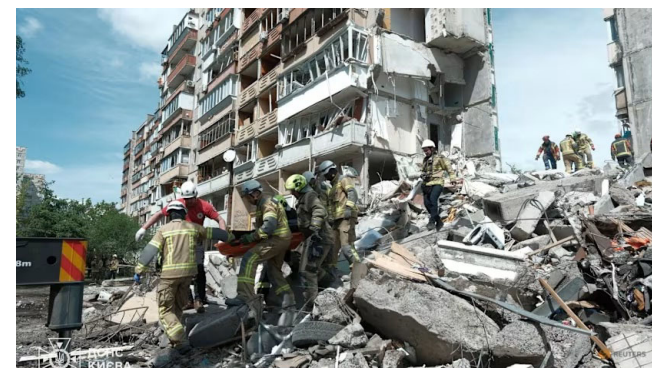
Some family members of Pearl Harbor survivors said they were not bothered by such official excursions, though some expressed a desire to also be permitted to snorkel at the site. They said they have not been permitted to do so. "I have not heard of anyone who would object to these visits as they are very rare and there aren't any survivors of the Arizona left alive," Deirdre Kelley, national president of the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors, wrote in an email. "Their children might have some objections but I haven't heard any." Patel visited Pearl Harbor several years ago during a trip he made to Hawaii while serving as chief of staff to Christopher Miller, then the acting secretary of defense, according to the former government diver. Miller said he snorkelled over the Arizona during an official visit to the base, but Patel was not present for that excursion. Miller said he was invited to snorkel by regional military officials and was told such a tour was for "special occasions and for special visitors, of which you're one". He called it a "meaningful" experience. "It was a very sombre and meaningful event," Miller said in an interview. "It was a historical tour. It wasn't a recreational thing."

FBI WILL NOT DISCUSS PATEL'S RETURN TO HAWAII

Beyond the snorkelling excursion, it is not clear what else Patel did during his second stop in Hawaii. Flight tracking data for the Gulfstream G550, typically used by the FBI director show the jet remained on the island two nights during that stay before flying on to Las Vegas, Patel's adopted hometown. The jet has a published range of about 12,391km, meaning the plane would have needed to refuel somewhere between New Zealand and Washington. The snorkelling session happened one day after Patel stopped in Wellington to open the FBI's first standalone office in New Zealand.

Russia pounds Ukraine in heaviest wartime drone attack over two days

Kyiv: Russia carried out its largest aerial attack over a two-day period



since the start of its war in Ukraine, pounding the capital Kyiv and other cities with hundreds of drones, Ukrainian officials said on Thursday (May 14). Russia had launched 1,567 drones since the start of Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. At least 27 civilians have been killed over the two days, officials said. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that the war, which has killed hundreds of thousands and ravaged swathes of Ukraine over more than four years, was "coming to an end". But, as Moscow launched what Ukraine said were more than 670 attack drones and 56 missiles overnight, Zelenskyy did not sound positive. "These are definitely not the actions of those who believe the war is coming to an end," Zelenskyy said. "It's important that partners do not remain silent about this strike. And it is equally important to continue supporting the protection of our skies." Kyiv was the main target of the overnight strikes, Zelenskyy said. Ukraine's State Emergency Services said at least 21 people, including three children, were killed in the capital and Mayor Vitali Klitschko announced a day of mourning for Friday. In a statement issued after midnight, the Emergency Services said rescue operations were continuing round the clock. There was no immediate comment from Moscow on Thursday's attacks. Reuters TV footage from Kyiv showed emergency workers moving carefully across piles of rubble and cutting through concrete at the site of a strike on a nine-storey residen-

tial building where an entire section had been destroyed. Speaking in his nightly video address, Zelenskyy said that, according to initial analysis, a recently manufactured Russian Kh-101 missile had struck the building. He called for renewed diplomatic efforts to keep such technology out of Russian hands. "There were people there, children. What happened to them? You have to understand, an entire building collapsed," Alla Komisarova, 74, a pensioner, told Reuters on the site of the strike, holding back tears. "I heard something flying, it's flying nearby... And then there was such a terrible sound, and our house, which is opposite (to the one hit) jumped and staggered."

DAMAGE ACROSS UKRAINE

More than 1,500 rescue workers have been deployed across Ukraine to deal with the aftermath of the strikes, including nearly 600 in Kyiv. Zelenskyy said that overall 180 facilities had been damaged in Ukraine, including more than 50 residential buildings. He said a UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs vehicle had come under fire from drones during a humanitarian mission in the southern city of Kherson. In Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, 28 people, including three children, were wounded and civilian infrastructure was targeted, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said. Ukraine's energy ministry said electricity supplies in 11 regions had been disrupted. The strikes also targeted port infrastructure in the southern Odesa region and railways, officials said. Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha said the attack - while US President Donald Trump is visiting China - showed Russia wanted to continue fighting despite Washington's peace push, and that pressure was needed on Moscow to end the war. "I am certain that the leaders of the United States and China have enough leverage over Moscow to tell Putin to finally end the war," he wrote on X.

TVSM inducts Ravindran Shanmugam as independent director

Guwahati: TVS Motor Company (TVSM), part of TVS Venu Group, and



a reputed two and three-wheeler manufacturer globally—announced the induction of Mr. Ravindran Shanmugam as independent director of the company for a period of five consecutive years effective May 13, 2026 subject to approval of the shareholders. Mr. Ravindran Shanmugam is a seasoned technology entrepreneur and business leader with extensive experience in scaling consumer-focused businesses, digital transformation, and AI-led platforms across global markets. He is currently the Co-founder and Executive Chairman of Mable, an AI-enabled interior design and renovation platform based in Singapore. He also worked as a management consultant with McKinsey & Company, advising businesses on growth and strategy. An alumnus of the University of Oxford, Mr. Shanmugam brings deep expertise in technology, innovation, platform businesses and strategic

governance. The appointment of Mr. Shanmugam will add valuable experience to the board and raise the company's already rigorous corporate governance standard. Sudarshan Venu, Chairman, TVS Motor Company said, "Mr. Ravindran Shanmugam brings deep expertise in digital & consumer-focused businesses, and AI-led transformation, along with strong experience in strategy, entrepreneurship and scaling businesses across global markets. His perspectives will add valuable depth to the TVS Motor board as we continue to strengthen our future-ready growth ambitions. We are delighted to welcome him and look forward to benefiting from his insights and guidance." Ravindran Shanmugam said, "I am honoured to join the board of TVS Motor Company, an institution with a strong legacy of engineering excellence, customer trust and global ambition. Mobility is being reshaped by technology, digital ecosystems, AI and evolving consumer expectations, and TVS Motor is well positioned to play a meaningful role in this transformation. I look forward to contributing to the board's deliberations and supporting the company's long-term growth journey with perspectives from technology-led transformation, platform businesses and consumer-focused innovation."

Dimapur IT dept launches New Income Tax Act awareness drive

Dimapur: The Income Tax Department, Dimapur, under the Office of the Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, North Eastern Region (NER), organised an extensive awareness campaign on the New Income Tax Act, 2025, as part of the nationwide outreach initiative 'PRARAMBH 2026.' The campaign held at Hotel Grand Maspel on May 14, was aimed at educating taxpayers, stakeholders and the general public on the provisions, reforms and implementation framework of the newly introduced Act, which came into effect from April 1, 2026. As per a DIPR report, it was held simultaneously across major North Eastern cities including Shillong, Imphal, Aizawl, Itanagar and Agartala. The Dimapur event formed part of a broader regional outreach drive following a Mega Outreach Event held in Guwahati on May 7, 2026. The Department also announced plans to extend such awareness initiatives to rural and remote areas to ensure last-mile dissemination of information and greater taxpayer inclusion. Giving the inaugural address, Commissioner of Income Tax, N Jungio underscored the importance of taxpayer awareness for the smooth implementation of the new tax regime, describing the Act as a "modernised and simplified framework" designed to make the taxation process easier, more accessible and user-friendly. "The Department aims to educate and engage stakeholders for better understanding and trust," Jungio said, adding that the "PRARAMBH 2026" initiative was launched to facilitate a smooth transition from the old tax system to the new regime. Detailed presentations on the key provisions of the new Act were delivered by senior officers of the Department. Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals) Imlimeren Jamir presented an overview of the New Income Tax Act, 2025 and Income Tax Rules, 2026, covering simplification, key features, taxpayer initiatives and digital tools. He highlighted the government's efforts to reduce procedural complexities and improve taxpayer convenience through digital initiatives. Commissioner of Income Tax (TDS) T James

Singson spoke on TDS provisions under the new Act, elaborating on updated tax deduc-

turing expert insights from officers involved in drafting the Act. Digital platforms such as



tion norms and compliance requirements. Deputy Director of Income Tax (I&CI) Upendro Nahakpam delivered a presentation on the Statement of Financial Transactions (SFTs), explaining reporting obligations and the role of financial transaction monitoring under the legislation. A major highlight of the programme was the promotion of "Kar Saathi," an AI-enabled chatbot developed by the Income Tax Department to assist taxpayers with real-time responses to income tax-related queries. A dedicated kiosk was set up at the venue, allowing participants to experience the platform firsthand. Officials stated that the initiative reflects the Department's commitment to leveraging technology to make taxpayer services more efficient and accessible. The Department informed that information on the new Act is being disseminated through social media, print and electronic media platforms. Officials also highlighted a range of taxpayer assistance resources developed under the initiative, including 12 comprehensive brochures in simple language, guidance notes, FAQs, and "Samvaad" video sessions fea-

"Kar Setu" and "Kar Saathi" are also being utilised for outreach. The Department said these materials are available on the official Income Tax Department website and are being provided in regional languages to ensure wider accessibility. Physical copies of brochures embedded with QR codes linking to digital content were distributed at the venue. The Department stressed the importance of stakeholder feedback in strengthening its outreach efforts. Participants were encouraged to share their views on the usefulness of educational materials, the effectiveness of "Samvaad" sessions, user experience with "Kar Saathi," and the Department's overall outreach initiatives. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Additional Commissioner of Income Tax Vinikupu H Arkha. The event witnessed participation from senior Income Tax officials, tax professionals, stakeholders from various sectors, media representatives and members of the public. The Department reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring a smooth transition to the New Income Tax Act, 2025 through awareness, capacity building and continuous stakeholder engagement.

National Dengue Day: Doctors warn India's cities need year-round dengue prevention

Guwahati: Every year National Dengue Day is observed on 16th May across the country to initiate pre-monsoon preventive activities. It is a timely reminder that preventing dengue requires sustained effort from individuals, families, and communities alike. This year, with rising temperatures and changing climate patterns, dengue risk is higher across India, making this reminder more important than ever. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has projected that large parts of the country will experience above normal temperatures and more heatwave days in 2026, potentially making it one of the hottest years on record. Scientists across the globe have also warned that climate patterns such as El Niño could intensify extreme weather events, increasing the risk of disease outbreak. Such conditions are likely to increase dengue risk, as higher temperatures create a favourable environment for the spread of vector borne diseases, contributing to Indian cities emerging as key hotspots for dengue transmission. Dengue is no longer confined to the monsoon season and is now a year-round public health concern, with cases being reported beyond traditional seasonal peaks. Rapid urbanisation, rising temperatures, and changing climate patterns are accelerating the spread of dengue. In addition, factors such as high population density, unplanned construction activity, and water storage practices are creating the ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes. India accounts for nearly one third of the global dengue burden, with transmission rising elevenfold over the past two decades. Dengue is endemic across most parts of India and periodically causes annual outbreaks, with cases reported from nearly every region. It has now become perennial (year-round) in southern and western parts of India. It is now being reported beyond traditional monsoon months and in previously low risk areas, including higher altitude regions such as Himachal Pradesh and parts of the North-east. For instance, in Assam, there were 570 cases reported upto Nov 2025 with Kamrup Metropolitan area reporting 74 confirmed

cases. These numbers may be an under estimation of actual cases as many mild cases may not visit the hospital or may not be tested at all. The scale of risk is expected to grow further, with an estimated 1.5 billion Indians projected to live in dengue risk zones by 2050. Dengue can affect people of all age groups; however, certain groups remain highly vulnerable to severe dengue. Children under 15 account for a large share of cases and face higher risk of severe dengue due to developing immune systems. Adults with underlying conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and cardiovascular disease are also more likely to experience complications. In addition, India has all four dengue serotypes in circulation, meaning individuals can be infected multiple times, with secondary infections often resulting in more severe disease and increased risk of hospitalisation. Dr. Rashna Dass, Paediatrician, Nemcare Superspecialty Hospital and RIGPA Children's Clinic, Guwahati, said: "Dengue remains a growing concern for children, especially as dengue-carrying mosquitoes are most active during the morning and late afternoon, when children are outdoors at school or play. In recent months, we have seen nearly 570 dengue cases in Assam, a rise that was previously uncommon in the region. This is worrying because children's immunity is still developing, making them more vulnerable to severe dengue. Parents should watch for warning signs such as persistent vomiting, severe abdominal pain, bleeding gums or nosebleeds, pale and cold skin, rapid breathing, fatigue, and restlessness. Seeking timely medical attention at the first signs of symptoms is essential to ensure proper monitoring and reduce the risk of serious outcomes." Dengue symptoms typically begin 4 to 10 days after a mosquito bite and may include high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pain, nausea, vomiting, and rash. While many cases are mild, warning signs can appear as the fever subsides and should not be ignored. These include severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, bleeding from the gums

or nose, extreme fatigue, restlessness, and blood in vomit or stool. If not treated on time, severe dengue can be life-threatening in up to 20 percent of cases, and may lead to complications such as fluid leakage, Dengue Shock Syndrome, and multi organ failure, placing additional burden on families and healthcare system. The Aedes aegypti mosquito, which transmits dengue, thrives in densely populated urban environments and breeds in small collections of clean, stagnant water commonly found in households such as water tanks, buckets, flowerpots, and discarded containers. As a result, dengue often spreads in clusters within homes and communities, where even a few infected mosquitoes can transmit the virus to multiple people. Regular checks in homes, schools, neighbourhoods and offices, along with eliminating stagnant water, using repellents, wearing full sleeve clothes and consulting a doctor if any symptoms appear, are essential to reduce the risk of infection. While weather is not in our control, preventing water stagnation in and around our homes and keeping our surroundings clean certainly is. Families, schools, and communities must act before cases rise, as individual actions play a key role in protecting both households and the local community. At the community level, resident welfare associations, neighbourhood groups, schools, and local authorities must work together to maintain clean shared spaces, improve waste management, and eliminate mosquito breeding sites. While vector control remains important, it is not sufficient on its own. WHO recommends integrated dengue prevention strategies including mosquito control, personal protection, community engagement, and vaccination in endemic areas. With no specific antiviral treatment available, prevention remains the most effective way to reduce dengue related illness and hospitalisation. Individual actions, when practiced consistently, contribute to collective protection and help break the chain of transmission, reducing the risk of small clusters developing into larger outbreaks.

Attabarrie Tea Estate honours nursing staff on International Nurses Day

Dibrugarh: As part of its observance of International Nurses Day, the Attabarrie Tea Estate held a special celebration in

remote areas with limited immediate access to advanced medical facilities. They



lauded the nursing staff as they praised the nursing staff for their tireless service, round-the-clock commitment, and empathetic care towards the estate's employees and their families. "The health and well-being of our community rest largely on your shoulders. Today we express our sincere appreciation for your selfless service," Mr. Saini remarked. Mrs. Diljan Khatun (GNM) and Mrs. Basonti Bhumji (ANM) of Attabarrie Tea Estate Hospital expressed their joy and gratitude for the management's recognition. "It is deeply motivating to be acknowledged for the work we love. This encouragement inspires us to serve even better," they shared. During the interactive session, the dignitaries recognized the pivotal role nurses play in the health and welfare of the estate community. They applauded the nursing staff not only for their clinical proficiency, but also for their empathy, resilience, and unwavering dedication to the people of the Estate.

recognition of its nursing staff at the Estate's Hospital for their continued dedication and outstanding service. Observed globally on May 12, International Nurses Day commemorates the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. Mr. Raj Saini, Group Engineer, Luxmi Tea, representative from the Head Office, alongside Mr. Sachin Singh Rathore, Estate Manager, extended their deepest gratitude to the nurses. In their addresses, they praised the nursing staff as the emergency response soldiers for both workers and management, especially

PMEGP

New Delhi: The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises implemented through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, has emerged as one of the country's most significant initiatives for promoting entrepreneurship, generating large-scale employment opportunities and strengthening rural industrialization by supporting first-generation entrepreneurs in establishing new micro-enterprises outside the agricultural sector, while the scheme during the tenure of the 15th Finance Commission

from FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26 achieved record growth in micro-enterprise development by fully utilizing the approved budgetary allocation of Rs 13,554.42 crore, facilitating the establishment of 403,706 micro enterprises, exceeding the target of 402,000 enterprises, and generating sustainable employment opportunities for nearly 36.33 lakh people across the country, thereby reaffirming its crucial role in strengthening the micro-enterprise ecosystem, promoting self-reliance, empowering women and socially disadvantaged communities, and accelerating inclusive economic growth in both rural and urban India.

Hypertension rising among young urban Indians, warn doctors at Peerless Hospital

Guwahati: Ahead of World Hypertension Day, Peerless Hospital Guwahati emphasised the concerning increase in high blood pressure among Indians in their 20s and 30s. They pointed out that hypertension is no longer confined to older adults and is quickly becoming a significant health issue for young adults. World Hypertension Day is observed globally to raise awareness about the "silent killer" – a condition that often has no warning signs but dramatically increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and premature death. According to the ICMR INDIAB study (2023), 25.3% of urban Indian adults aged 25-40 have elevated blood pressure, with most individuals unaware of their condition. In India, a large section of people still believe that hypertension is a problem of old age, or that if they feel healthy and fit, their blood pressure must be normal. Data from the National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS 5, 2021) shows that only 37% of adults aged 18-35 have ever had their blood pressure checked. The 2026 theme of World Hypertension Day, "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer," is an important reminder that high BP can strike at any age, and that early detection is the only way to prevent life threatening complications. "Young Indians today are developing high blood pressure at an alarming rate – something we rarely saw a decade ago. Sedentary desk jobs, chronic stress, late night work, frequent consumption of high salt processed foods, and

poor sleep hygiene are driving this epidemic in the 25-40 age group," said Dr. Pranab Barua, Medical Superintendent and Senior Consultant, Department of Emergency Medicine, Peerless Hospital Guwahati. He said that many young patients are shocked when they first see their blood pressure readings. "They come in for a routine health check or a minor illness, and walk out with a diagnosis of hypertension that will require lifelong management. The tragedy is that most of these cases could have been prevented or reversed with early awareness and lifestyle modification. Youth is not immunity." Among young Indians, several lifestyle and behavioral factors are contributing to the rising burden of hypertension, with doctors pointing to long working hours, chronic stress, unhealthy eating habits, and lack of preventive healthcare as major concerns. Frequent dependence on food delivery and restaurant meals often leads to excessive intake of salt, unhealthy fats, and processed ingredients, all of which can raise blood pressure over time. Sleep deprivation, especially getting less than six hours of sleep each night, further increases the risk by affecting hormonal balance, stress levels, and cardiovascular health. Adding to this is the tendency among many young adults to skip routine health check-ups, allowing blood pressure to remain undetected for years. Experts also warn that common warning signs such as persistent headaches, giddiness, unexplained fatigue, or dizziness are often ignored or dismissed as

work-related exhaustion, delaying diagnosis and treatment until complications begin to appear. "What people fail to realise is that uncontrolled hypertension silently damages blood vessels and vital organs over years. By the time a heart attack or stroke occurs in a seemingly 'healthy' young adult, the damage is already done," Dr. Barua added. He also pointed out that hypertension in young adults is closely linked to other lifestyle diseases. "High BP rarely comes alone. According to ICMR, hypertensive individuals have a three fold higher risk of developing diabetes and a significantly greater chance of kidney dysfunction later in life." Addressing common myths, Dr. Barua said many young people believe that "no symptoms means no problem," or that "since I exercise and am not overweight, my BP must be normal." Some also think that once they start BP medication, they can never stop. "In reality, many young patients with early stage hypertension can achieve normal levels with consistent lifestyle changes alone, without lifelong medicines – but only if they detect it early. That is why regular screening from the age of 18 is critical," he explained. Dr. Gautam Kr Das, CEO of Peerless Hospital Guwahati, strongly feels that hospitals today need to move beyond treating diseases to actively preventing them. "Hypertension is one of the most preventable yet ignored health risks today. A simple two-minute check can prevent decades of complications.

Rousey aims for big-screen opportunity in MMA return against Carano

May 15 : Former UFC champion Ronda Rousey and fellow trail-blazer Gina Carano will set their sights on a blockbuster movie deal after they clash in the mixed martial arts cage this Saturday, with the card being shown on streaming service Netflix. Now 44, Carano is arguably better known to current audi-



ences for her acting career than her fighting prowess and inspired Olympic judo bronze medalist Rousey to switch to MMA, launching a career that saw her become one of the sport's biggest names. The UFC set up its women's bantamweight division specifically to showcase Rousey's talents and now, almost 10 years after her final fight for the promotion, she is returning to MMA to steal some of the shine she lent UFC, which has been criticised in the past for underpaying fighters. "Who's to say we can't parlay the success of this to me and her (Carano) making a genre-shattering martial arts film with Netflix after this?" Rousey asked at a press conference in Los Angeles on Thursday. "Who says the success of this fight can't create the rival that UFC needs and give fighters the bargaining power that they've never had?" In sporting terms, the fight has little chance of living up to Rousey's description of it as the "biggest MMA fight

of all time" but the two pioneers of women's MMA have drawn eyeballs to the event backed by Jake Paul's Most Valuable Promotions.

"Hell, if we knock this out of the park I could become the face of MMA or the face of MVP in MMA and the most powerful figure in the sport since (UFC president) Dana (White)," Rousey said. Now 39, Rousey built her legacy on her superb judo, chasing opponents down and throwing them to the mat before going for her favourite armbar submission, a move she used to win her first eight professional fights, seven of them in the first round. However, her career came to a shuddering halt when she lost her bantamweight title in November 2015 after being knocked out by Holly Holm and just over a year later she was destroyed in less than a minute by Brazilian Amanda Nunes. Rousey has not fought in the cage since. The passing of time has, though, seen those two defeats become mere footnotes in the career of an athlete credited with bringing women's MMA and the sport in general into the mainstream. She will now share a bill with Carano and fan favourites Nate Diaz and lineal heavyweight champion Francis Ngannou as Paul's MVP stages its first MMA event. Asked for her definition of greatness in cage-fighting, Rousey said it remains the same as ever. "Mine is making history, having a cultural impact and influencing the future of the sport." Saturday's card takes place at the Intuit Dome in Inglewood, California.

Ronaldo judged on form not age as Portugal weigh World Cup role, says Martinez

Lisbon : Cristiano Ronaldo is 41, but Portugal coach Roberto Martinez said age is only a number and that his captain is judged on current form and by the same standards as everyone else. Ronaldo could play in a sixth World Cup with this year's tournament in North America set to begin in less than a month, a staggering possibility even for a player who has twisted football's record books into new shapes. Yet Martinez, speaking to Reuters in Lisbon on Thursday, insisted Portugal were not carrying a monument to past glory. "We manage the Cristiano Ronaldo that plays for the national team trying to get into the squad for 2026, not the iconic figure," Martinez said. The debate in Portugal is less whether Ronaldo, the record scorer in international football with 143 goals, belongs in the squad and more what his role should be when World Cup margins are razor-thin. For Martinez, the calculation is simple. Ronaldo the player is assessed on what he does in training and for the team. "Age is only a number," Martinez said. "Certainly in the national team we can measure exactly what's happening on the day, and you make the decisions for the next day. You never look any longer than the next day." **HOW TO USE RONALDO?** On the question of how to use Ronaldo at a World Cup where matches swing on substitutions, tactical shifts and games that stretch into extra time and penalties, Martinez argued modern football has moved past treating the starting lineup as the only measure of status. "Now we've got five substitutions. It's almost like we've got a starting team and a finishing team. There is no distinction," he said. "There are different roles and Cristiano has always accepted his role." The question of whether Ronaldo would accept a reduced role has lingered since the 2022 World Cup, when then-coach Fernando Santos benched him against Switzerland after the final group match against South Ko-

rea. Martinez declined to draw direct parallels between tournaments, saying form, style and context change. But he stressed that Ronaldo's place, like everyone else's, rests on merit. "All the players are in the same

'ELITE BRAIN'

Martinez insisted age should not be the starting point of any discussion about Ronaldo, but rather data, training, attitude and tactical fit. He said Ronaldo's longev-



space in the national team where when they play well, when they execute their role well to help the team to win, they have a better chance to play than when they don't do it. It's as simple as that," he said. Martinez said Ronaldo is far more than a ceremonial presence. He pointed to 25 goals in 30 Portugal appearances under his management, a better goals-per-game ratio than under any of Ronaldo's previous national-team coaches, and said his value also shows up in details that raw numbers miss. "He is fantastic at those movements, those runs, opening spaces, splitting centre halves," Martinez said. "He's been disciplined to be in the right positions, always executing the attacking patterns that we have. And that gives him opportunities to score as he's done, but the opportunity of opening space for our players."

ity is underpinned not only by physical gifts, but by "that elite brain" and a daily pursuit of improvement. What surprised him most after taking charge was not the aura of Ronaldo, but the appetite. "Somebody that has won everything has the hunger of somebody that hasn't won a trophy yet," Martinez said. That hunger, he added, had made Ronaldo "a very important figure in the dressing room, as a captain, as somebody that represents what it means to play for the national team". Martinez knows the noise will never fade. He said "every taxi driver" has an opinion about Ronaldo, even if they have not watched him recently. But his job, he said, is to examine the evidence and pick the team. "The players are always on the pitch on merit," Martinez said. "And when the environment shows you otherwise, it's a natural selection."

Tomiyasu makes Japan return as Moriyasu names World Cup squad

Tokyo : Former Arsenal defender Takehiro Tomiyasu has been included in Japan's World Cup squad by head coach Hajime Moriyasu despite not playing for the 'Samurai Blue' for almost two years due to a series of injuries. The central defender, who currently plays for Ajax after his contract was annulled by mutual consent with Arsenal last year, was included in the 26-man squad announced by the coach in Tokyo on Friday. Tomiyasu, who last played for Japan against Syria in 2024, was included in the squad for the March international window before withdrawing and Moriyasu suggested he would be given a run-out against Iceland in Tokyo on May 31. "Although he has not appeared in official matches recently for tactical reasons, our medical staff have confirmed ... that there are no issues with his condition," coach Moriyasu told reporters. "There is also the friendly against Iceland, which gives him another opportunity to prepare in a high-intensity match and continue raising his condition heading into the World Cup. That is why we selected him." Also selected were Liverpool midfielder Wataru Endo, who has endured an injury-hit season, while 39-year-old fullback Yuto Nagatomo gets a chance to go to a fifth World Cup. "He has begun working with the ball

again ... and is reaching a condition where he can play in matches," Moriyasu said of Endo. "He is a central figure in this team. Of course I expect him to contribute in terms of play ... but I also expect him to support the team mentally and emotionally." Brighton & Hove Albion midfielder Kaoru Mitoma did not make the cut due to a hamstring injury sustained against Wolverhampton Wanderers earlier this

month. "After Mitoma's injury, we received a medical report saying that it would be difficult for him to return during the tournament itself," Moriyasu added. "Based on that, we gave up on selecting him .. Deciding how to adjust the squad after that was my biggest final consideration." Japan reached the round of 16 at the last two World Cups, losing to Belgium in 2018 and to Croatia, on penal-

ties, in Qatar four years later. Moriyasu, who will be leading the team into his second World Cup as coach, said selecting the squad had been tough. "There are still many players who have the ability to compete and win on the world stage for Japan," he said. "So I honestly feel apologetic about not being able to select them - actually, not just a little apologetic, but deeply apologetic." (But) I feel that I have chosen the best 26 players for Japan to win on the world stage right now." Japan will kick off their eighth appearance at the World Cup finals against the Netherlands in Dallas on June 14 before taking on Tunisia on June 20 and Sweden on June 25 in their remaining Group F fixtures. **Squad:** Goalkeepers - Zion Suzuki, Tomoki Hayakawa, Keisuke Osako Defenders: Yuto Nagatomo, Shogo Taniguchi, Ko Itakura, Tsuyoshi Watanabe, Takehiro Tomiyasu, Hiroki Ito, Ayumu Seko, Yukinari Sugawara, Junnosuke Suzuki Midfielders/Forwards - Wataru Endo, Junya Ito, Daichi Kamada, Koki Ogawa, Daizen Maeda, Ritsu Doan, Ayase Ueda, Ao Tanaka, Keito Nakamura, Kaishu Sano, Takefusa Kubo, Yuito Suzuki, Kento Shoigai, Keisuke Goto



Auckland reach first A-League Grand Final with 3-0 win over Adelaide

May 15 : Auckland FC stormed into their first A-League Grand Final in their second season on Friday with a 3-0 win at Adelaide United securing a 4-1 aggregate victory in their semi-final. Jake Girdwood-Reich powered home a first-half header and joint-Golden Boot winner Sam Cosgrove scored a penalty after the break. Logan Rogerson iced the win with a late goal as the Black Knights silenced a sold-out crowd at Hindmarsh Stadium and became the first New Zealand team to reach the title-decider. Stopped by Melbourne Victory in last year's semi-finals, Auckland would not be denied again, and will meet the winners of Newcastle and Sydney FC who are tied 1-1 in their semi-final before their second leg at McDonald Jones Stadium on Saturday. "I'm so proud of the boys coming here, we know this is a tough place to come," said Girdwood-Reich. "I know a lot of people wrote us off today. We showed we're a great team. "We've been really good away from home this season and we backed ourselves to come here and win." Having held Auckland 1-1 in the first leg at Mount Smart Stadium, Adelaide's bid for a second A-League title, 10 years after their first championship in 2016, fell well short, the Reds bullied in midfield and vulnerable to counter-attacks. Adelaide-born Auckland winger Lachlan Brook turned villain in his home town, with his curling corner kick setting up Girdwood-Reich's goal on the cusp of halftime. It was a valiant win for the New

Zealanders, with several players carrying injuries from the bruising first leg. They combined superbly against a team with the strongest home record in the league this season.

RUTHLESS GROOVE

After soaking up early pressure, Auckland soon settled into a ruthless groove. Jesse Randall conjured their first chance after 19 minutes, his shot from just inside the area blocked by goalkeeper Joshua Smits. An early Auckland lead went begging again after the half-hour, when Brook's left-foot volley thudded into the post after he swooped on a messy clearance from a long throw into the box. The New Zealanders scented blood and poured forward in waves. Just before half-time, captain Hiroki Sakai burned off Reds defender Ryan Kitto with a dart into the box and smashed a fierce shot from the right that Smits did well to save. The resulting set-piece finally broke the hosts, though, as Girdwood-Reich's header slapped a lone Smits glove on the way into the net just before halftime. Cosgrove doubled the lead in the 58th minute after winning a penalty from a clash with Adelaide's Panagiotis Kikianis as both fought for a cross into the area. Cosgrove slammed his spot kick down the middle, and while a diving Smits blocked it partially with his legs, the ball dribbled over the line. In desperation, Adelaide pushed forward and pumped balls into the box but found no way to breach Auckland's wall.

Carrick says his future as Man United manager will be decided soon

May 15 : Michael Carrick said his future as Manchester United manager will be decided soon, as he looks to end the season on a high with a top-three Premier League finish, four places above their position in January when he took over as interim head coach. Carrick helped United clinch 10 wins in 15 top-flight games to ensure a place in next season's Champions League. A point against Nottingham Forest on Sunday will seal United's third-place finish. "The future for me is going to be decided pretty soon. We knew that was going to be towards the end of the season, if not the end of the season, so nothing's changed," Carrick told reporters on Friday, ahead of their final home game of the campaign. "There's no big swing on that. That is what it is, you know. Obviously, whatever's beyond that is pretty close around the corner anyway." Media reports have said that Carrick, a former United midfielder, has already been offered the role of permanent manager. "It's a unique football club, special, special football club," said Carrick, who had a brief stint as the club's caretaker manager in 2021 before managing Middlesbrough. "I'm immensely proud to have come back and to be part of it, to help as a supporter. As an ex-player and an ex-employee is

one thing, but as a pure supporter and caring about the club so much, to be in a position to come back and help as a group to move forward was important."

CASEMIRO FIT FOR LAST HOME GAME

United midfielder Casemiro, who is set to leave in the close season after four years at the club, called for Carrick to be retained as permanent manager earlier this month. Carrick said Casemiro, who missed last weekend's trip to Sunderland, will be fit for his last game at Old Trafford. "Casemiro is available... he gave absolutely everything in every aspect, knowing that it was going to come to an end at the end of the season," Carrick said about the Brazilian midfielder, who has played 146 matches for United since 2022. Striker Benjamin Sesko, who also missed the Sunderland game, is not fully fit, the manager added. Asked to evaluate the season, Carrick said he was happy with the improvement United have made after finishing 15th in the Premier League last season. "I think, to make the big step to get back into the Champions League is good... and I'm absolutely happy with the work that we've done so far," he said. United will end the season with a trip to Brighton & Hove Albion on May 24.

Lukaku included in Belgium squad for World Cup

Brussels : Belgium included striker Romelu Lukaku in their squad for the World Cup, even though he has played only an hour of competitive football this season. Lukaku, who turned 33 on Wednesday, has not started for Napoli this season, making seven substitute appearances and netting a goal at Verona in



February, and has been in Belgium for the last two months rehabilitating after a hamstring injury. But his role as the country's leading scorer has seen coach Rudi Garcia gamble on his fitness for the tournament starting next month where Belgium are in Group G along with Egypt, Iran and New Zealand. Lukaku has scored 89 times but won the last of his 124 caps in the 4-3 home win over Wales in World Cup qualification last June. As cover, Garcia included promising attacker Matias Fernandez-Pardo after he committed his international future to the country earlier this week. The 21-year-old, who was born in Brussels to Italian and Spanish parents, played for

Belgium at junior level but in 2024 chose to play for Spain but subsequently did not honour a call-up to their under-20 side. He has had a strong season at Lille and is chosen in place of Lois Openda, who has not played regularly for Juventus this season. Sporting defender Zeno Debast was also included despite being hurt in training for the Portuguese club and amid reports he might not recover in time. Debast has been a regular since Garcia took over as coach. The timely return from injury of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois is a bonus for the squad but speculation that Garcia would pick four goalkeepers in his 26-man selection proved incorrect. Garcia announced his squad in the lunchtime news bulletin on Belgian television and it will be a fourth successive World Cup for Courtois, Lukaku, Kevin De Bruyne and Axel Witsel.

Squad

Goalkeepers: Thibaut Courtois (Real Madrid), Senne Lammens (Manchester United), Mike Penders (Racing Strasbourg)

Defenders: Timothy Castagne (Fulham), Zeno Debast (Sporting Lisbon), Maxim De Cuyper (Brighton & Hove Albion), Koni De Winter (AC Milan), Brandon Mechele (Club Brugge), Thomas Meunier (Lille), Nathan Ngoy (Lille), Joaquin Seys (Club Brugge), Arthur Theate (Eintracht Frankfurt)

Midfielders: Kevin De Bruyne (Napoli), Amadou Onana (Aston Villa), Nicolas Raskin (Rangers), Youri Tielemans (Aston Villa), Hans Vanaken (Club Brugge), Axel Witsel (Girona)

Emotional Memorial Meeting Held in Honour of Cultural Stalwart Late Maheswar Sharma at Dhekiajuli

Tapan Sen Gupta, Correspondent, Orang, May Moncha, Sundaram Cultural Association and Li-



31: A solemn and emotionally moving memorial meeting in honour of noted cultural personality and social worker Late Maheswar Sharma was held on Sunday at his residence in Ward No. 1 of Dhekiajuli. The programme was organized under the initiative of the Dhekiajuli Xakha Sahitya Sabha with the active support and participation of several leading socio-cultural organizations and institutions of Greater Dhekiajuli.

Late Maheswar Sharma, a respected recipient of the Artists' Pension, had served as both the former Secretary and former President of the Dhekiajuli Xakha Sahitya Sabha. Widely admired for his lifelong dedication to literature, culture, and social welfare, Sharma played a significant role in strengthening the cultural fabric of the region.

The memorial gathering witnessed the participation of representatives from numerous prominent organizations, including Dhekiajuli Nagarik

ing, senior AGP leader and noted social worker Ratul Nath paid heartfelt tributes to the departed soul and remarked that the demise of Maheswar Sharma had created an irreparable void in the socio-cultural sphere of Greater Dhekiajuli. He highlighted Sharma's immense contribution towards literary advancement, cultural preservation, and communal harmony.

Several distinguished personalities, including Dr. Hari Prasad Boruah, Jadab Nath, prominent social workers Bidhubhushan Roy, Dhruvabhushan Mahanta, Bogiram Boro, Sunil Sharma, and many literary figures, social activists, and well-wishers from different walks of life, attended the programme and shared their memories and tributes.

The memorial meeting concluded with prayers, floral tributes, and heartfelt remembrance, reflecting the deep respect and affection people held for the late cultural stalwart.

brary, Dhekiajuli Senior Citizens' Association, Dhekiajuli Central Rongali Bihu Celebration Committee, Dhekiajuli Central Raas Celebration Committee, Dhekiajuli Bor Namghar Management Committee, Dhekiajuli Government Pensioners' Association, Dhekiajuli Press Club, Dhekiajuli AASU, the Dhekiajuli Anchalik Committee of Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad, Dhekiajuli Lekhika Samaroh Samiti, and Seuj Society's Dhekiajuli Anchalik Committee.

The memorial meeting was presided over by Khagen Bhuyan, President of the Dhekiajuli Branch Sahitya Sabha.

Addressing the gathering, senior AGP leader and noted social worker Ratul Nath paid heartfelt tributes to the departed soul and remarked that the demise of Maheswar Sharma had created an irreparable void in the socio-cultural sphere of Greater Dhekiajuli. He highlighted Sharma's immense contribution towards literary advancement, cultural preservation, and communal harmony.

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Tense Situation in Rangia...

primary school in the area of Nij Hasaong. In the evening, activists of the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal took out a protest rally. Starting from in front of the Gandhi Mandap in Rangia, the protesters demanded the arrest of the accused within 48 hours. The demonstrators also burnt the effigy of the miscreant involved in the incident. Meanwhile, the Bajrang Dal has strongly condemned the incident and called for a complete shutdown (bandh) in Rangia on Sunday. The area has been witnessing heightened tension since yesterday. According to police sources, the flag in question has no similarity with the Pakistani national flag. The police have launched an investigation to ascertain the full details of the incident.

A tragic road accident...

journey when the vehicle suddenly lost control and rammed into a roadside tree with great force.

Immediately after the accident, local residents rushed to the spot and rescued the injured passengers. With the assistance of 108 ambulance services, all the injured were shifted to Rowta Model Hospital for emergency medical treatment.

The injured have been identified as Mukibur Ali (15), Obaidur Ali (16), Shahidul Ali (16), Aminur Ali (16), Shahidul Islam (13), Mahidul Islam (15), Jamir Ali (17), Hamidur Ali (14), and Moinul Haque (15), among others.

Doctors at the hospital provided primary treatment to all the victims. However, four critically injured youths Obaidur Ali, Hamidur Ali, Mokibur Ali, and Moinul Haque who sustained serious injuries on different parts of their bodies, were later referred to Mangaldai Civil Hospital for advanced medical care through three separate 108 ambulance services.

Meanwhile, police seized the accident-hit vehicle and brought it to the police station for investigation. Authorities have initiated an inquiry into the exact cause of the accident.

World No Tobacco Day...

Sharma appealed to all sections of society to join hands in the fight against tobacco abuse. He also administered a pledge to the participants, urging them not only to refrain from using tobacco themselves but also to peacefully encourage others to give up the habit. The District Commissioner personally led the rally through the streets of Nagaon town.

Following the rally, an awareness meeting was held in the university auditorium. Among those who addressed the gathering were Jagat Das, Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority; Dr. Smitakshi Phukan, In-Charge Officer of the District Tobacco Control Cell; Dr. Dhruvajyoti Barua, Acting Vice-Chancellor of Nagaon University; Dr. D.J. Bora, Superintendent of the Tezpur Cancer Centre; and Bikash Sharma, District Information and Public Relations Officer.

The speakers elaborated on the health hazards associated with tobacco consumption and stressed the importance of public awareness in combating tobacco-related diseases. Dr. Smitakshi Phukan explained various provisions of tobacco control laws, while Dr. D.J. Bora delivered an informative PowerPoint presentation on cancer and its links to tobacco use.

As part of the observance, prizes were distributed among the winners of an essay-writing competition organized for school students to mark World No Tobacco Day.

The programme concluded with a strong message promoting a tobacco-free society and encouraging citizens, particularly the younger generation, to adopt healthy and addiction-free lifestyles.

India Korea...

between India and Korea. The discussions took place in a constructive and cooperative spirit and reflected the strong bilateral relationship and the "Futuristic Partnership" envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of the Republic of Korea Mr. Lee Jae-myung, underlining the growing strategic importance of India-Korea relations in the Indo-Pacific region as both countries seek to diversify trade partnerships, improve supply chain resilience and expand industrial cooperation. During the current round of negotiations, both sides reviewed the progress achieved so far in the IK CEPA upgrade negotiations and held extensive deliberations on key areas including Trade in Goods (TiG), Trade in Services (TiS), Rules of Origin (RoO), Origin Procedures (OP), Investment, and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards, indicating the broad scope of the proposed upgrade and the determination of both governments to address longstanding concerns while creating new opportunities for businesses and industries in both countries. Officials from India and Korea also discussed the need to align the agreement with emerging economic realities, technological advancements and evolving patterns of international trade, especially at a time when countries across the world are focusing on secure supply chains, digital trade and strategic industrial collaboration to strengthen economic resilience. Both sides acknowledged India's bilateral trade deficit, which has risen significantly since the IK CEPA came into force in 2010, and agreed to address the issue within the overall IK CEPA framework, a move seen as important from India's perspective as the country continues to seek more equitable market access and balanced trade outcomes through its bilateral and regional trade agreements. The issue of the widening trade deficit has remained one of the major concerns for India over the years, with policymakers and industry stakeholders repeatedly emphasising the need for greater access for Indian goods and services in the Korean market as well as stronger cooperation in areas that can help improve manufacturing competitiveness and export growth. The negotiations also reflected the shared understanding that a modernised trade agreement should not only facilitate greater trade flows but also encourage investments, innovation, technology partnerships and industrial cooperation that can contribute to economic growth and job creation in both countries. As part of the current discussions, it was decided to constitute sub-groups to discuss cooperation in the areas of digital trade, supply chain cooperation and strategic industrial cooperation, highlighting the intent of both governments to expand the scope of engagement beyond traditional trade matters and focus on future-oriented sectors that are increasingly shaping the global economy. The proposed cooperation in digital trade is expected to explore issues relating to digital commerce, technology-driven services, data-related frameworks and emerging business models, while discussions on supply chain cooperation are likely to focus on building stronger and more resilient production networks between India and Korea in sectors of strategic importance. Similarly, strategic industrial cooperation is expected to cover areas where both countries can work together through technology sharing, industrial partnerships, innovation-led growth and manufacturing collaboration in line with their broader economic and strategic objectives. The progress in the IK CEPA upgrade negotiations comes at a time when India has been actively pursuing trade agreements and economic partnerships with major economies across the world as part of its broader strategy to strengthen exports, attract investments and integrate more effectively with global value chains while safeguarding domestic interests. Korea, on the other hand, continues to view India as an important economic and strategic partner with significant market potential, a growing consumer base and expanding opportunities for investment and industrial collaboration. The ongoing negotiations are therefore being seen as an important opportunity for both countries to address existing concerns, modernise trade rules and create a stronger institutional framework capable of supporting long-term economic engagement in an increasingly uncertain global trade environment. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to conclude the CEPA upgrade negotiations in a time-bound manner with the objective of achieving a modernised and mutually beneficial agreement that supports the shared vision of balanced bilateral trade and enhanced cooperation, signalling a strong political and economic commitment to advancing bilateral ties through sustained dialogue and constructive engagement. The emphasis on concluding the negotiations within a defined timeframe also reflects the growing urgency among countries to secure dependable trade partnerships amid global economic volatility, geopolitical shifts and disruptions in supply chains. India and Korea have steadily expanded their cooperation over the years across sectors such as trade, investment, defence, technology, innovation, infrastructure and cultural exchanges, and the successful conclusion of the IK CEPA upgrade negotiations is expected to further strengthen this partnership by opening new opportunities for businesses, investors and industries in both countries. The talks in New Delhi also reinforced the importance of continuous engagement and institutional dialogue in addressing trade-related concerns and identifying mutually beneficial solutions that can support sustainable economic growth. Officials involved in the negotiations expressed confidence that the constructive approach adopted by both sides and the shared commitment to deepening economic cooperation would help accelerate progress in the coming rounds of discussions. The 12th round of negotiations therefore marks another important step in the evolving India-Korea economic partnership and underlines the determination of both countries to build a stronger, future-ready and balanced trade relationship that can contribute to greater economic cooperation, industrial growth and regional stability in the years ahead.

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Govt strengthens Fuel Security...

data demonstrating the strength of the current LPG distribution system. According to Ms Sharma, 1.78 crore LPG refill bookings were received during the last four days alone, while approximately 1.8 crore cylinders were delivered during the same period. She noted that 96 per cent of these deliveries were authenticated digitally, highlighting the increasing use of technology in improving transparency, efficiency and accountability within the fuel distribution ecosystem. The figures underline both the scale of LPG consumption in the country and the capacity of oil marketing companies to meet demand even during periods of heightened concern regarding energy supplies. To prevent disruptions and discourage malpractices, enforcement agencies and oil marketing companies have intensified inspections across the country. These efforts have resulted in fuel seizures, the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs), arrests and disciplinary action against errant dealers and distributors found violating regulations. Officials said such measures are essential to ensure that fuel reaches genuine consumers without diversion or hoarding and that market stability is maintained during periods of uncertainty. The government also indicated that commercial LPG supplies remain robust, ensuring that businesses and commercial establishments continue to receive adequate fuel support. Furthermore, natural gas supply has been restored to 99 per cent for industrial and commercial consumers, providing reassurance to sectors dependent on gas for manufacturing, production and operational activities. The inter-ministerial briefing also included updates from other departments involved in monitoring developments arising from the situation in West Asia. Additional Secretary (Gulf) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Asem Mahajan, said that the government is closely monitoring developments in the Gulf and West Asia region and remains committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of Indian nationals residing, working or travelling there. He stated that Indian Embassies and Consulates across the region are operating round-the-clock helplines to provide timely assistance and support to citizens whenever required. According to Mr Mahajan, diplomatic missions remain in constant contact with local authorities and community networks to respond effectively to emerging situations and facilitate assistance where necessary. He added that the overall flight situation continues to improve, with additional flights operating from the region to various destinations across India. The increase in air connectivity is expected to provide greater flexibility and convenience for Indian nationals seeking to travel between the Gulf region and India while also helping maintain stable transportation links despite the challenging regional environment. The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways also provided an update on maritime operations and the welfare of Indian seafarers in the region. Director in the Ministry, Opesh Kumar Sharma, said that the Ministry continues to coordinate closely with the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Missions and maritime stakeholders to ensure both the safety of seafarers and the uninterrupted functioning of maritime operations. Given the strategic importance of maritime routes in transporting crude oil and other essential commodities, maintaining secure and efficient shipping operations remains a key priority. Mr Sharma informed that the merchant vessel Nissos Keros, a crude oil tanker, has safely transited the Strait of Hormuz and is expected to arrive in Visakhapatnam on 3 June. The vessel is carrying around 2.7 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil, making its successful passage particularly significant at a time when global attention remains focused on the security of major energy shipping routes. The safe transit of the tanker serves as an encouraging indicator of the continued movement of critical energy supplies despite regional tensions and highlights the effectiveness of ongoing coordination among relevant authorities and stakeholders. Mr Sharma further stated that all Indian seafarers in the region are safe and that no incident involving Indian seafarers on either Indian-flagged or foreign-flagged merchant vessels has been reported. The update provides reassurance to families, maritime operators and industry stakeholders while reflecting the government's sustained efforts to monitor developments and respond promptly to any emerging concerns. The briefing collectively highlighted a comprehensive approach involving multiple ministries and agencies working together to address the challenges posed by the evolving situation in West Asia. Through strategic reserves, enhanced storage planning, optimum refinery operations, strong distribution networks, digital monitoring systems, strict enforcement measures, diplomatic engagement, transportation support and maritime coordination, the government is seeking to ensure that the country remains well prepared to manage any potential impact on fuel supplies or related sectors. Officials emphasized that adequate stocks of essential fuels are available, production levels remain strong and supply chains continue to function effectively, while contingency measures are being strengthened to provide additional resilience. The decision to direct public sector oil marketing companies to build LPG reserves sufficient for at least 30 days reflects a broader commitment to energy security and preparedness, ensuring that consumers, industries and commercial establishments continue to receive uninterrupted fuel supplies even in the face of external uncertainties. As the conflict in West Asia continues to be monitored closely, the government has reiterated its focus on maintaining stability, protecting national interests and ensuring that all necessary measures remain in place to safeguard the country's energy needs and support the welfare of Indian citizens both at home and abroad.

RPF of NFR Intensifies Safety...

and narcotic substances. Several consignments of unclaimed liquor bottles were recovered from trains and railway stations under Alipurduar, Katihar and Dalkhola areas. In separate operations conducted at Agartala railway station, RPF teams recovered over 16 kg of ganja and handed over the seized items to the concerned authorities for further legal action.

On the same day, RPF personnel also apprehended offenders involved in unlawful activities including ticketing irregularities and theft-related offences at railway premises. Rescue operations were simultaneously carried out at Rangapara and New Bongaigaon railway stations, where minors were rescued and safely handed over to Child Welfare Committees for proper care and rehabilitation.

As part of its humanitarian initiatives on 26th May, 2026, RPF teams rescued several minors from Guwahati, Silchar, New Bongaigaon and Dibrugarh railway stations and ensured their safe custody through coordination with Child Welfare Committees and child assistance agencies.

In another important initiative carried out on 26th May, 2026, RPF personnel along with railway engineering officials conducted an eviction drive at the Amingaon Eco Park area to remove unauthorized encroachments from railway land, ensuring operational safety and security.

Northeast Frontier Railway remains committed towards ensuring a safe, secure and passenger-friendly railway environment through continuous vigilance, coordinated operations and public safety initiatives undertaken by the Railway Protection Force, informed by CPRO of NFR Kapinjal Kishore Sharma.

World No Tobacco Day Observed at Pobitora Hut

Rally and Awareness Meeting Highlight Dangers of Tobacco Use

Achyut KR Nath, Morigaon, May 31: As various organizations,



part of the observance of World No Tobacco Day, the District Tobacco Control Cell, Morigaon, organized a rally and a public awareness meeting at Pobitora Hut on Saturday with the objective of spreading awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption and promoting a tobacco-free society.

The awareness rally was flagged off by Santosh Buragohain, Assistant Commissioner, Morigaon, and Archana Sharma, General Secretary of Lekhika Samaroh Samity, in the presence of District Nodal Officer for Tobacco Control Dr. Jaya Prabha Bodo, Jyotish Barman, and officials from the Office of the Joint Director of Health Services, Morigaon.

Students of the GNM Training School actively participated in the rally, carrying placards and raising awareness messages against tobacco use. The rally passed through important areas around Pobitora Hut, drawing the attention of local residents and visitors towards the importance of leading a tobacco-free life.

Following the rally, a public meeting was held at Pobitora Hut, which witnessed participation from members of

Anganwadi Workers, local residents, students, and members of the general public.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Jaya Prabha Bodo delivered an elaborate audio-visual presentation highlighting the adverse effects of tobacco on human health as well as on the environment.

She informed the audience that tobacco consumption is one of the leading causes of non-communicable diseases worldwide and is responsible for nearly eight million deaths globally every year due to various to-

acco-related illnesses.

Dr. Bodo further pointed out that tobacco use remains a major public health concern in Assam, where approximately 48.2 percent of the adult population consumes tobacco in one form or another. She appealed to all present to refrain from the use of tobacco products and encouraged them to spread awareness among their families and communities about its harmful consequences.

The programme also featured a cultural segment wherein members of the Lekhika Samaroh Samity rendered the inspirational song "Manuhe Manuh Babe," conveying the message of social responsibility, compassion, and collective well-being.

The programme concluded with all participants taking the No Tobacco Pledge, reaffirming their commitment to staying away from tobacco and working towards building a healthier and tobacco-free society.

21st Central Bishnu Rabha Divas to be Celebrated in Sivasagar; Statewide Drawing Competition on June 7

Khairuddin Ahmed, Staff Reporter Sivasagar, May 31: The Sivasagar District Cultural Mahasabha and the 21st Central Bishnu Rabha Divas Celebration Committee, with the cooperation of the people of Sivasagar, will organize Bishnu Rabha Divas with an extensive programme. As part of the celebrations, an All Assam Drawing Competition will be held on June 7 at Sivasagar Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School from 10:00 AM. Organizers have requested talented students to confirm their participation by June 5.

Registration and submission of forms will begin at 9:30 AM. The competition will be conducted in three categories:

Category A: Up to Class II

Category B: Class III to Class VI
Category C: Class VII to Class X

Participants may draw pictures on any subject of their choice. Art paper will be provided by the organizers.

For registration, participants should send their name, address, WhatsApp mobile number, and parent/guardian's name to 8486709555 via WhatsApp.

The top ten participants in each category will receive certificates and special prizes. The first, second and third place winners will also be awarded attractive memorial trophies, certificates and other prizes. For further information, interested participants may contact: 8486709555, 9365911056, 9101173014, or 9854839952. The

registration fee for the competition is ₹100, payable through GPay: 9435204936. Meanwhile, the Central Bishnu Rabha Divas will be observed on June 20 at the Sivasagar District Library premises with day-long programmes. The event will bring together artists and literary personalities and will feature flag hoisting, tribute offerings, an open session, memorial lectures, felicitation ceremonies, the release of the commemorative publication "Kalaguru", award distribution and cultural performances.

District Cultural Mahasabha president Prem Gogoi and general secretary Trailokya Dutta have appealed to the people of Sivasagar to extend their cooperation in making the celebrations a success.

Felicitation Ceremony for Over 100 Meritorious Students Held in Sivasagar

Sabir Ahmed, Sivasagar, May 31: A felicitation and award ceremony for meritorious stu-



dents was organized in Sivasagar by the Purvottar Hindustani Yuva Chhatra Parishad with the support of the Hindustani Yuva Manch. More than one hundred students who successfully passed the recently declared High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) and Higher Secondary Final Examinations with distinction were felicitated during the programme held at Sivasagar Yuva Dal. Before the commence-

ment of the event, Purvottar Hindustani president Sunil Singh lit a ceremonial lamp before the portrait of popular singer Zubeen Garg. Distinguished guests present at the programme included journalists Ratu Kumar Das and Himangshu Neog, National Sangrami Mancha leader Chito Baruah, social workers Ravi Srivastava, Pappu Sahu, Bijoy Sah, Jitendra Singh, secretary Samir Basfor, Ashish Prasad Sahu, Vicky Singh, and several other prominent personalities.

Addressing the gathering, Chito Baruah urged the students to work hard and strive to become doctors, engineers, ACS officers, IAS officers, APS officers and IPS officers in the future, while contributing to the service of the nation. The programme was conducted by young cultural activist and short film director Adi Akram Hussain of Sivasagar.

Each student was presented with a traditional Bihuwan, a certificate of felicitation and a gift.

Rajanu Bora Memorial T20 Cricket Tournament in Dibrugarh: Cricket Club of Dibrugarh Wins, Receives Rs 25,000 Cash Prize

M Hashim Ali, Correspondent, Dibrugarh Dibrugarh, May 31: The Cricket Club of Dibrugarh (CCD) emerged victorious in the Rajanu Bora Memorial Prize Money T20 Cricket Tournament, organized by the Dibrugarh District Sports Association at the Jalan Outdoor Stadium in Dibrugarh. In the final match held today, CCD defeated the Dibrugarh Cricket Coaching Centre by 6 wickets.

Earlier in the day, the Dibrugarh Cricket Coaching Centre won the toss and elected to bat first. They scored 120 runs for the loss of 9 wickets in their allotted 20 overs. Team captain Zayan Yasin Ahmed was the top scorer with 35 runs, while Azad Jalil contributed 23 runs and Wasim Babbar added 19 runs. For CCD, captain Gunjan Jyoti Deka claimed 3 wickets. In reply, CCD reached the target by scoring 121 runs for the loss of 4 wickets in 18.1 overs. Gunjan Jyoti Deka scored 43 runs, while Sambhav Agarwala remained unbeaten on 42 runs, guiding his team to victory. At the conclusion of the tournament, Gunjan Jyoti Deka was awarded the Best Batsman award. Deepak Gohain, a spinner from the Chabua Namasya Team, received the Best Bowler award. Wasim Babbar of the Dibrugarh Cricket Coaching Centre was named the Player of the Tournament, while Gunjan Jyoti Deka was adjudged the Player of the Final. The prize distribution ceremony was attended by Niranjan Saikia, President of the Dibrugarh District Sports Association; former state cricketers Nilam Baruah and Ajit Hazarika; trophy donor Rituporna Bora; Executive President of the District Sports Association Manas Jyoti Dutta; and Treasurer Pranab Sonowal, who presented the awards. The champion team received a trophy along with a cash prize of Rs 25,000, while the runners-up were awarded a trophy and Rs 15,000 in cash.



Nagaon District Sahitya Sabha Resolves to Build a People-Centric Literary Movement

Safiqur Rahman, Nagaon, May 31: The extended executive meeting of the Nagaon District Sahitya Sabha, hosted by the Raha Branch Sahitya Sabha at the office of the Raha Sports Association, today adopted a resolution to foster a vibrant movement of creative, people-oriented, and socially conscious literary activities across Nagaon district.

Sabha must exercise restraint, prudence, and foresight while expressing opinions on sensitive and emotionally charged issues concerning the mother tongue.

The gathering observed that the confidence and trust of the millions of members, well-wishers, and language enthusiasts associated with the Assam Sahitya Sabha should



The meeting was presided over by Dr. Sarat Barkotoki, President of the Nagaon District Sahitya Sabha, while the objectives of the session were explained by General Secretary Rajiv Kumar Hazarika.

Addressing the gathering, Hazarika stated that the executive committee held an extensive discussion on issues relating to the recognition of Assamese as the State Language, particularly in the context of the upcoming Census and the number of people expected to declare Assamese as their mother tongue. The meeting reaffirmed that preserving the status of Assamese as the State Language is the legitimate right of the people of Assam, as the language represents the historical, cultural, and linguistic identity of the state.

The executive body further resolved that, if necessary, the Government of India should be urged through the State Government to amend the Constitution of India to ensure permanent protection of Assamese as the State Language of Assam.

The meeting also emphasized the need to formulate and implement a well-organized language-centric programme focusing on the promotion of the mother tongue, social harmony, national integration, and human values. Participants stressed that office-bearers and responsible members of the Sahitya

not be compromised under any circumstances. The meeting called upon every individual connected with the organization to discharge their moral and organizational responsibilities with sincerity and dedication.

The programme was inaugurated by Padum Rajkhowa, Vice-President of the Assam Sahitya Sabha. Earlier in the day, the Sabha flag was ceremonially hoisted by Prahlad Masorang, President of the Raha Branch Sahitya Sabha, while the tribute ceremony was inaugurated by Branch Secretary Lakshmi Prasad Deka.

Among those present were executive member Thagit Chandra Mahanta, former president Ratimohan Nath, advisers Abul Khayer Ahmed and Dev Kumar Bora, vice-president Nabin Borthakur, regional office secretary Rewat Hazarika, assistant secretary Mriganka Bora, publication sub-committee convener Mahesh Chandra Nath, Akash sub-committee convener Dwitimoni Bora and Runumi Bora, organizational secretaries Lavakanta Sarma, Dipika Nath, Pradip Kumar Saikia, Manoj Kumar Sarma, Tridib Laskar, Chinu Rajkhowa, Renu Saikia, Jiten Sarma, Kamal Chandra Sarma, Pradip Saikia, Namita Hazarika, along with presidents and secretaries representing thirty-two branch units of the district.