



Brief Post

Heroin seized
City Correspondent, Guwahati, June 7: Acting on intelligence report, an East Guwahati Police District team from Sonapur Police Station raided a hideout out at Jugdal near toll gate and arrested one drugs peddler - Nizam Ali (29) of Sonapur. One soap box of Heroin weighing 12.06 grams and one Alto Car bearing Registration No. AS 23 AF 5646 were seized. Legal action initiated, informed by Police Commissionerate Guwahati.

4 arrested
City Correspondent, Guwahati, June 7: An East Guwahati Police District team from Basistha Police Station conducted a targeted anti drugs operation at Khanapara Golpark and near the Veterinary College parking area, leading to the apprehension of four drugs peddlers. 11 nos of drugs peddler were rescued and sent to rehabilitation center, informed by Police Commissionerate Guwahati.

Swami Vivekanand University Leadership Meets CM Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma in Guwahati

Guwahati, Jun 7: Swami Vivekanand University, Kokrajhar, continues its mission of advancing quality education and innovation. Today, University Chairman Mr. Manish Singh and Chancellor Dr. Ajay Karan met the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, in Guwahati to discuss the university's future roadmap.

The meeting focused on strengthening the university's role in delivering world-class education, fostering startup incubation and entrepreneurship, and promoting research and development initiatives that align with the vision of a

Indian Economy remains strong despite Global Crisis: PM Modi

New Delhi, Jun 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asserted that the foundation of the Indian economy remains exceptionally strong, emphasizing that the country recorded a robust 7.7 percent growth during the fiscal year 2025-26 despite facing a challenging global economic environment marked by uncertainty, slowing growth in several major economies, and ongoing geopolitical disruptions. Addressing a large gathering after launching a series of developmental projects worth around Rs 2,970 crore in Daman, the Prime Minister said India continues to remain among the fastest-growing

economies in the world and is steadily moving forward on the path of progress through a combination of reforms, infrastructure expansion, and welfare-driven governance. He stated that the resilience displayed by the Indian economy reflects the collective efforts of the government, industries, entrepreneurs, workers, farmers, and citizens who have contributed to the nation's development journey. Highlighting the country's economic achievements, Mr Modi noted that India has been able to maintain growth momentum even at a time when many economies across the globe are struggling

Guardian Ministers for Districts of Assam allotted

Staff Reporter, Guwahati, June 7: The responsibilities of Districts Guardian Ministers of Assam are declared by the Chief Minister of Assam Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma. As per the declaration



Tinsukia and Jorhat districts are allotted to Rameswar Teli, for

Over 260 Meritorious Koch-Rajbongshi Students Felicitated in Nagaon

Staff Reporter, Nagaon, June 7: The



Nagaon District

50 Bodo Youths from Udalguri Selected for Indian Army Under Agnipath Scheme

Tapan Sen Gupta, Correspondent, Orang, June 7: In a proud and inspiring moment



for the people of Udalguri district, 50 Bodo youths have successfully secured recruitment into the Indian Army under the Agnipath Scheme. To honour their achievement, the Udalguri district administration and the

NFR Records a Consistent Freight Performance During the Inception of FY 2026-27 with 1034 Rakes Unloaded in May

Maligaon, June 7: Northeast Fron-



May 2026, recording a notable mark in unloading activity. During the month, 1034 freight rakes were unloaded across the zone, marking an asteady inception for the zone during the FY 2026-27.

Throughout the month, NFR ensured smooth

transportation of essential and industrial commodities includ-

ing food grains, food grade items, fertilizers, sugar,SNTP-coal, salt,tank and other goods. These consignments were efficiently handled at various goods sheds across its jurisdiction, ensuring timely supply and operational reliability.

A significant share of the freight traffic was dedicated to meeting the requirements of the Northeastern states. Assam accounted for the highest unloading with 557 rakes, comprising 271 rakes of essential commodities and 286 rakes of non-essential commodities, underscoring

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Dibrugarh District Journalists' Association and Greater Dibrugarh Press Club Celebrate World Environment Day: 100 Nahor Saplings and Fruit Trees Planted

M Hashim Ali correspondent Dibrugarh, June 7: A call for a green



revolution echoed in Dibrugarh. With the resolve to save trees and protect nature, the Dibrugarh District Journalists' Association and the Greater Dibrugarh Press Club launched a

Marwari Mahila Samiti Inaugurates "Amrit Dhara" Drinking Water Facility at Bordowa Than

Safiqur Rahman, Nagaon, June 7: A cool drinking water facility



named "Amrit Dhara" was inaugurated at Bordowa Than by the Women's Wing of the Nagaon Marwari Sammelan for the benefit of devotees, Vaishnavites, and pilgrims visiting the sacred site. The facility was formally inaugurated by

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Assam leads sustainable development in Northeast India

Guwahati: Assam is making remarkable strides toward sustainable development under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, embracing a comprehensive approach to minimize its carbon footprint while aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on climate action through its "Assam 2030 Initiative," launched in 2016. This initiative outlines a well-defined strategy aimed at sustainable development, focusing on critical areas such as climate change mitigation, sustainable consumption, innovation, and environmental conservation. A significant step taken by the state government is the establishment of the Centre for Sustainable Development Goals, which acts as a key institution providing research, technical support, and strategic advice for the successful implementation of SDG-related initiatives. Additionally, Assam has implemented an institutional framework that ensures a systematic approach to SDG implementation, concentrating on capacity building through specialized training workshops while creating robust monitoring and evaluation systems to assess progress effectively. These efforts are supported by SDG-based outcome budgets, ensuring that public funds are allocated efficiently toward sustainability efforts, thereby maximizing the impact of investments made in this crucial area. Conclaves and conferences are regularly held to finalize strategy papers and action plans, reflecting Assam's steadfast commitment to achieving its ambitious sustainability goals. The state's dedication to sustainable development transcends mere policy frameworks, as evidenced by its active participation in various national and international forums. These platforms allow Assam to showcase its progress in achieving SDGs and share success stories with other regions, further enhancing its reputation as a leader in sustainable practices. Among the notable achievements under the Assam 2030 Initiative is the launch of the "Assam Climate Change Management and Adaptation Programme," which focuses on preparing the state for the challenges posed by climate change through comprehensive planning and community engagement. This program emphasizes the importance of local adaptation strategies, which are crucial for enhancing the resilience of vulnerable communities in the face of climate-related impacts. Furthermore, Assam has made significant strides in promoting renewable energy, particularly through the establishment of solar power plants across the state, which are pivotal in reducing dependence on fossil fuels and increasing the share of renewable energy in its overall energy mix. This initiative aligns with the state's goal of achieving energy security while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Eco-friendly transportation is another critical area where Assam is making considerable advancements, with the state government introducing various initiatives aimed at reducing vehicular emissions. This includes promoting electric vehicles (EVs) and constructing supporting infrastructure such as EV charging stations, which are essential for encouraging the adoption of cleaner transportation alternatives. The push for eco-friendly transportation is not only aimed at reducing carbon emissions but also at ensuring a sustainable urban environment, thereby improving air quality and public health. Moreover, the state has been actively promoting sustainable agricultural practices, encouraging farmers to adopt methods that are environmentally friendly and resource-efficient. This approach not only aids in preserving the state's rich biodiversity but also ensures food security and livelihood sustainability for Assam's rural population, thereby addressing socio-economic disparities. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has consistently been a vocal proponent of sustainable development, reiterating the necessity of striking a balance between economic growth and environmental conservation. "Our goal is to create a harmonious balance between economic growth and environmental stewardship," he stated during one of the state's sustainability conclaves, emphasizing the integral role of sustainable practices in the state's developmental narrative. Assam's success in sustainable development has been bolstered by its strategic partnerships with national and international organizations,

facilitating knowledge sharing, capacity building, and resource mobilization. These collaborations have yielded impressive results, including a 45% increase in forest cover, a 30% reduction in carbon emissions, a 25% growth in the state's renewable energy sector, and a 20% increase in the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, all standing as a testament to Assam's unwavering commitment to its sustainability goals. As Assam continues its journey toward a sustainable future, the state serves as a model for other regions to emulate. Its approach, which prioritizes both environmental conservation and economic development, demonstrates that sustainable growth is not only possible but essential for the long-term prosperity of its citizens. Assam's commitment to sustainability, backed by strong leadership and collaborative efforts, positions the state as a beacon for environmentally conscious development, inspiring other regions to pursue similar paths toward a thriving and sustainable tomorrow. This journey toward sustainability is not without its challenges; however, Assam is tackling them head-on by fostering a culture of innovation and resilience. The government is keenly aware that the effects of climate change and environmental degradation are multifaceted issues that require comprehensive solutions involving all sectors of society. To this end, Assam is engaging local communities in sustainability efforts, ensuring that they have a voice in decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods and environment. By empowering citizens through education and awareness programs, the state is fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards sustainable practices, enabling communities to play an active role in achieving SDG objectives. Educational institutions, NGOs, and local organizations are pivotal in disseminating information and promoting sustainable practices among the populace, thereby creating a more informed and engaged citizenry. Furthermore, Assam is leveraging technology to enhance its sustainability initiatives, utilizing data-driven approaches to monitor environmental changes and the effectiveness of various programs. This technological integration facilitates timely interventions and policy adjustments, ensuring that sustainability efforts remain responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities. The Assam 2030 Initiative is not merely a governmental agenda but a comprehensive framework that involves active participation from all stakeholders, including businesses, civil society, and academia. By creating an inclusive platform for dialogue and collaboration, Assam is ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in its sustainability strategies, enhancing the effectiveness of interventions while fostering social cohesion. As the state moves forward, it remains committed to building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable urban planning, and ensuring the conservation of natural resources for future generations. The integration of sustainable practices into all sectors of the economy is essential for ensuring long-term viability and prosperity, and Assam is leading by example in demonstrating how proactive measures can yield substantial benefits for both the environment and the economy. The state's holistic approach encompasses a range of initiatives, from waste management and pollution control to biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation, all of which are interconnected and critical for achieving comprehensive sustainable development. In addition to these efforts, Assam is prioritizing the enhancement of water management systems to address the challenges posed by floods and droughts, which are

increasingly becoming common due to climate variability. Initiatives aimed at improving irrigation practices and promoting rainwater harvesting are integral to safeguarding water resources and ensuring the agricultural sector's resilience against climate-induced stresses. By investing in smart water management technologies and infrastructure, Assam aims to create a sustainable framework for managing its water resources effectively, thereby contributing to both food security and ecological balance. The state's efforts also extend to community-led conservation initiatives that empower local populations to take charge of preserving their natural environments. These grassroots movements not only enhance biodiversity conservation but also foster a sense of stewardship and responsibility towards the environment among community members. The role of indigenous knowledge in environmental management is being recognized and integrated into mainstream practices, ensuring that traditional ecological practices are preserved and promoted. In promoting sustainable tourism, Assam is also capitalizing on its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, developing eco-tourism initiatives that generate employment while conserving the environment. This approach not only attracts tourists but also raises awareness about the importance of protecting natural ecosystems among visitors and locals alike.

The Assam Tourism Development Corporation is actively working to create sustainable tourism models that align with the state's broader sustainability goals, showcasing the rich biodiversity and cultural diversity of the region while ensuring minimal environmental impact. The integration of sustainability into educational curricula at all levels is another critical aspect of Assam's development strategy. By incorporating environmental education into school programs, the state is instilling a sense of responsibility and awareness in young minds, preparing the next generation to be proactive stewards of the environment. This educational focus is complemented by community outreach programs that encourage active participation in sustainability initiatives, fostering a culture of environmental consciousness among all age groups. Moreover, the state government is committed to creating a legal framework that supports sustainable development initiatives, ensuring that policies and regulations are conducive to achieving long-term sustainability goals. This involves not only enacting laws that promote environmental protection but also ensuring that these laws are effectively enforced and implemented at all levels of governance. The establishment of environmental courts to expedite the resolution of cases related to environmental violations is a significant step in this direction, reinforcing the government's commitment to upholding en-

vironmental standards and ensuring accountability. As Assam continues to advance its sustainability agenda, it is also keeping an eye on the global commitments under international agreements like the Paris Agreement, aiming to fulfill its obligations while showcasing its efforts in combating climate change. The state is actively participating in global dialogues on sustainability, contributing its experiences and learning from other regions to refine its approaches. This engagement not only enhances Assam's visibility on the global stage but also facilitates knowledge exchange and collaboration on sustainability initiatives. Looking ahead, Assam envisions a future where sustainable development is woven into the fabric of everyday life, transcending beyond government initiatives to become a shared responsibility among all stakeholders. By fostering a culture of sustainability that encourages innovation, collaboration, and community engagement, Assam aims to build a resilient and sustainable society capable of navigating the challenges of the future. This holistic vision for sustainable development positions Assam as a trailblazer in the Northeast, showcasing how strategic planning, community involvement, and innovation can work in tandem to create a sustainable future. The state's commitment to environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic viability reflects a

Skill-Based Education to Empower Students for Better Futures

Guwahati: Skill-Based Education to Empower Students for Better Futures has received a significant boost in Assam as Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya passionately advocated for its implementation, emphasizing the transformative impact it can have on students' employability and entrepreneurial abilities. This initiative aligns closely with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the urgent need for vocational training, industry-specific skills, and holistic development, thus preparing students to thrive in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing job market. The key highlights of this initiative include the vocationalization of school education, the establishment of skill hubs specifically aimed at addressing the needs of dropouts and students who have fallen out of the education system, and the introduction of impactful programs such as the Pradhan Mantri Koushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and the Employability Enhancement Training Programme. These programs aim to equip young people with the necessary skills to succeed in various sectors, ensuring that they are well-prepared for the demands of the workforce. During the 11th convocation of Assam Down Town University, held at its Panikhaiti campus, Governor Acharya reiterated the importance of skill-based education as he addressed a gathering of graduates, faculty, and dignitaries. He urged universities to evolve into pivotal centers for developing students' intellectual and practical abilities, ultimately transforming them into job cre-

ators rather than mere job seekers. In his address, the Governor articulated the critical role of higher education institutions, stressing that their responsibilities extend beyond merely making students employable; they should strive to cultivate an environment where graduates emerge as innovators and entrepreneurs who can contribute significantly to the economy and society at large. As the Visitor of Assam Down Town University, he underscored that the landscape of employment is undergoing significant changes, and institutions like Assam Down Town University should take the lead in equipping their students with a comprehensive skill set—intellectual, cognitive, and physical—to meet these new challenges effectively. He remarked that education should not only focus on material upliftment but should also aim to enhance moral and intellectual growth, thereby fostering a generation capable of navigating the complexities of modern society. Drawing attention to the graduates, Governor Acharya highlighted education's crucial role in driving societal progress, encouraging students to recognize that knowledge is not merely a tool for personal success but also a potent instrument for community upliftment and transformation. He acknowledged the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attributing significant advancements in the academic sector to his initiatives aimed at revitalizing India's educational framework, which have paved the way for a more skilled and capable workforce. Referring to India's illustrious educa-

tional heritage, Governor Acharya pointed to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 as a transformative blueprint with the potential to invigorate the nation's academic vigor. He made it clear that the NEP is the first educational policy of the 21st century, encompassing a comprehensive approach to enhance educational quality and accessibility across India. Furthermore, he reminded the audience of India's rich historical legacy in education, citing ancient universities like Takshashila and Nalanda as exemplars of the country's longstanding commitment to learning and knowledge dissemination, which attracted scholars from all over the world. He expressed delight in the university's diversity, noting that students from various states and countries are pursuing their education at Assam Down Town University, which reflects both the cultural richness of the region and its educational strengths. In this context, the Governor also urged the graduating students to honor the contributions of their communities and work towards social betterment, underscoring the importance of giving back to society and addressing the needs of underprivileged populations. This call to action resonated strongly during the convocation, echoed by Minister of Tourism Jayanta Mallabarua, who urged the graduates to leverage their skills for the betterment of Assam and its people. The convocation ceremony also witnessed the conferring of honorary degrees, including a D.Litt awarded to Prof. Achyuta Samanta, the founder Chancellor of KIIT and KISS, rec-

ognizing his immense contributions to education and social service. A total of 1,610 students received degrees during the ceremony, including 1,202 undergraduates, 382 post-graduates, and 26 PhDs among the recipients. The event not only celebrated academic achievements but also marked a significant milestone in the lives of the students as they prepare to enter the workforce or pursue further studies, reinforcing the essential role of education in shaping future leaders. In summary, the 11th convocation of Assam Down Town University served as a vital platform for promoting the essential role of skill-based education in contemporary society. Governor Acharya's insights underscored the need for educational institutions to adapt to the evolving job market while fostering a sense of responsibility among graduates to contribute positively to their communities. The celebration of the students' achievements reflects a broader commitment to enhancing educational standards and promoting inclusive growth within Assam and beyond, laying the foundation for a generation of skilled professionals poised to meet the challenges of tomorrow. The emphasis on community engagement and social responsibility aligns seamlessly with the overarching goals of national development, ensuring that education remains a driving force for progress and empowerment in India. As these graduates embark on their respective journeys, they carry with them the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to effect meaningful change, em-

bodying the spirit of service and commitment to societal upliftment that Governor Acharya passionately advocated during the convocation. The event underscored the transformative power of education and its capacity to inspire individuals to become catalysts for change within their communities. The vision articulated by the Governor, along with the call for skill-based learning, is integral to building a brighter future for Assam and India as a whole, ensuring that the next generation of leaders is equipped not only with knowledge but also with the empathy and dedication needed to uplift society as a whole. By nurturing both intellectual and practical skills, Assam Down Town University is poised to play a crucial role in shaping the future workforce, fostering innovation, and contributing to the broader socio-economic development of the region. As the university continues to evolve in response to the changing educational landscape, it remains committed to its mission of empowering students to become proactive contributors to society, ultimately leading to a more prosperous and equitable future for all. Through the implementation of skill-based education, the university aims to cultivate a generation of graduates who are not only academically proficient but also equipped with the practical skills necessary to thrive in a competitive job market, thereby reinforcing the need for ongoing investment in vocational training and skill development initiatives throughout the

region. The strategic approach to skill-based education being pursued in Assam is characterized by a commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary for successful careers. By establishing skill hubs, the government is not only addressing the immediate needs of dropouts and out-of-education students but also laying the groundwork for a more inclusive education system that caters to diverse learning needs and aspirations.

LOST

I have lost my Indian Passport bearing No L8251210 issued from Guwahati dated 10-04-2014 Given name Mohammad Anjar Hussain

Mohammad Anjar Hussain, Kaziranga, Kamrup, Nagaon

NAME CORRECTION

My Actual Name And Title Is Bhupen Chandra Kakati, Which Is Rightly Recorded In My School Documents, that In My All Relevant Documents, My Name Has Been Wrongly Recorded As Bhupen Kakati Instead Of Bhupen Chandra Kakati.that Bhupen Chandra Kakati And Bhupen Kakati Is The One And Same Person Having Single Identity, I.e. My Self.

Bhupen Chandra Kakati S/O-Madhab Chandra Kakati Vill-silagant, Mariyapatti, Amingaon P.o-amingaon P.s-north Guwahati,Kamrup, Assam.

AFFIDAVIT

I, ZAKIR HUSSAIN, S/o - Josim Uddin (Father) & Farida Bewa (Mother), a resident of Vill-Tengnerbhita, PO - Tulshibil, PS - Gossaigaon, Dist-Kokrajhar, Assam do hereby solemnly affirmed and declared by an affidavit before the Notary public, Govt of Assam at Gossaigaon on 06/06/2026 that My actual and correct name is ZAKIR HUSSAIN as per my Aadhaar card, PAN Card and other documents, But my name has been wrongly recorded in my AGV Bank Account vide A/C No. 7132026009424 under Binnakata - Bhowraguri Branch as Jakir Hosen instead of ZAKIR HUSSAIN. That, ZAKIR HUSSAIN and Jakir Hosen are the same person having one identical person i.e. myself.

NAME CORRECTION

My actual & correct name is Fakrul Islam which is recorded in my all official and non official documents including Aadhaar Card vide No-7475-5486-7666. But my name has been recorded in my Passport vide No-P0895772 as Mohammad Fakrul Islam instead of Fakrul Islam and also my address is recorded as PWD Road, H No-135, Vill-Dalaganj, P.O-Bidya Nagar, Dist-Karimganj, Pin-788166, Assam instead of Vill-Khanda Pukhuri, P.O. & P.S.-Mikirbheta, Dist.Morigaon(Assam). Both the names are same & single person. **Fakrul Islam S/o.Sayab Ali Vill-Khanda Pukhuri, PO & PS- Mikirbheta, Dist. Morigaon(Assam).**

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Shri Rajesh Doley, S/O Shri Budheswar Doley an inhabitant of Bandena Gaon, P/O-Kangkanchapori, N.C. Amlokhibandana, P/S-Dhakuakhana, Dist. LAKHIMPUR, ASSAM-787055, do hereby I declare that my daughter **Treshia Doley** has obtained an Aadhaar Card No. 968139024901 issued from Govt. Of India. Where her name has been recorded as **Treshia Doley** instead of **Treshia Doley**. For change of her name in Aadhaar vide Affidavit dated 05/06/2026 before the Notary Public Kamrup (M) at Guwahati.

AFFIDAVIT

I, SHANTI SHARMA, W/o - Rambrij Sharma, D/O - Singhasan Sharma, a resident of Vill- Boshgaon FV, PO - Saraibil, PS - Gossaigaon, Dist-Kokrajhar, Assam do hereby solemnly affirmed and declared by an affidavit before the Notary public, Govt of Assam at Gossaigaon on 06/06/2026 that My actual and correct name is SHANTI SHARMA and my husband's actual and correct name is RAMBRIJ SHARMA, as per my Aadhaar card, PAN Card and other documents, But my name has been wrongly recorded in my AGB Bank Account vide A/C No. 713601001873 under Kachugaon Branch as SMTI SANTI DEBI in place of SHANTI SHARMA as well as my husband's name has been recorded as RAMBRIS SARMA in place of RAMBRIJ SHARMA. That, SHANTI SHARMA and SMTI SANTI DEBI are the same person having one identical person i.e. myself as well as RAMBRIJ SHARMA and RAMBRIS SARMA are the same person having one identical person i.e. my father.

Xiaomi launches Xiaomi 17T co-engineered with Leica

Guwahati: Xiaomi India announced the launch of the Xiaomi 17T, bringing together advanced imaging, immersive entertainment, powerful performance, and long-lasting battery life in a

natural depth and cinematic character, creating images that feel both professional and personal. Today's smartphone users spend hours reading, streaming, gaming, working, and connect-

ing on their devices. Xiaomi 17T was created with that reality in mind. The device features a vibrant 6.59-inch 1.5K AMOLED display with up to 3500 nits peak brightness, delivering vivid colours and excellent visibility even under bright sunlight. A smooth 120Hz refresh rate ensures fluid scrolling, responsive gaming, and a premium viewing experience throughout the day. Beyond visual quality, Xiaomi has focused on long-term viewing comfort. The Xiaomi 17T introduces Xiaomi Vision Care, an intelligent eye-care system that automatically adapts to surrounding conditions while helping manage blue light exposure, flicker, and visual fatigue. As a result, the device has received TÜV Rheinland Intelligent Eye Care Certification along with a comprehensive suite of eye-comfort certifications. The Xiaomi 17T is built for users who expect their smartphone to keep pace with their lifestyle. A large 6500mAh silicon-carbon battery delivers reliable all-day endurance, whether users are navigating a busy workday, creating content, streaming entertainment, or staying connected on the move. When it's time to recharge, 67W HyperCharge helps get users back up and running quickly. The combination of higher battery capacity and improved energy efficiency means users can spend less time searching for a charger

and more time doing what matters most. Paired with Xiaomi HyperOS, advanced cooling technology, and a suite of intelligent features including Xiaomi HyperAI, Google Gemini, and Circle to Search with Google, the Xiaomi 17T delivers a smarter, more intuitive smartphone experience designed for the future. Designed to balance style and practicality, the Xiaomi 17T features a slim, lightweight form factor that feels comfortable in everyday use. Micro-curved edges, refined finishes, and a streamlined camera module contribute to a clean, modern aesthetic.

Available in Violet, Blue and Black, the Xiaomi 17T offers users a choice of colours that reflect their personal style while maintaining the premium craftsmanship expected from the Xiaomi T Series. For the launch period, the Xiaomi 17T will be available in 12GB+256GB and 12GB+512GB variants, priced at Rs. 59,999 and Rs. 64,999 respectively. Customers can avail an instant bank discount of Rs. 5,000 on both full swipe and credit card EMI transactions, bringing the effective starting price down to Rs. 54,999. To make the Xiaomi 17T even more accessible, consumers can avail flexible financing options, attractive exchange benefits, and a complimentary Assured Buyback Program. By guaranteeing up to 60% of the device's invoice value for up to one year, the program enhances the overall ownership experience while providing greater confidence in purchase and future upgrades. In addition, Xiaomi 17T users will receive a host of premium digital benefits, including 3 months of Google AI Pro, 3 months of YouTube Premium, 3 months of JioHotstar along with 5000GB cloud storage with Google Gemini Pro, and 4 months of Spotify Premium Standard, all at no additional cost. The Xiaomi 17T will go on sale at 12:00 PM on June 10, 2026, via Amazon.in, mi.com, and Xiaomi Retail stores across India.



refined flagship design. Combining Leica-powered imaging, an eye-care display, and a large-capacity battery, the Xiaomi 17T is designed to deliver a premium smartphone experience without compromise. Life rarely waits for the perfect shot. Whether it's a spontaneous road trip, a late-night concert, a family celebration, or a fleeting expression that lasts only a second, the Xiaomi 17T is designed to help users capture moments exactly as they happen. At the heart of the Xiaomi 17T is a Leica-powered triple camera system featuring a 50MP main camera and, for the first time in the Xiaomi T Series, a Leica 5x periscope telephoto camera. Whether capturing intricate details up close or bringing distant subjects into sharp focus, the advanced zoom system empowers users to frame every scene with confidence, precision, and creative freedom. The Xiaomi 17T also introduces Leica Live Moment, a new imaging experience that goes beyond a single photograph. Instead of capturing only the decisive moment, Leica Live Moment preserves the movement, emotion, and atmosphere that lead up to it, transforming everyday memories into richer visual stories. Whether it's a child taking their first steps, a performer on stage, or friends sharing a laugh, every frame feels more alive and authentic. For portrait enthusiasts, Leica Live Portrait adds

Lions Club of Gauhati launches first-ever free kids helmet distribution drive

Guwahati: In a pioneering road safety initiative, the Lions Club of Gauhati launched the first-ever Free Kids Helmet Distribution Drive in the history of Lionism in Northeast India. The campaign, centered around the message "Bachon Ki Suraksha, Bhavishya Ki Raksha" (Protecting Children, Securing the Future), aims to promote road safety awareness among parents and children alike. The inaugural distribution program was held at Hindustani Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bhangagarh, where around 100 children's helmets were distributed free of cost to students. Speaking on the occasion, Lions Club of Gauhati President Rajesh Hansaria described the initiative as his dream project. He said that during his morning walks, he often noticed parents wearing helmets while riding two-wheelers but failing to provide the same protection to their children. "This project was born out of a simple yet important observation. While parents are increasingly aware of their own safety, many children continue to travel without helmets. We want to change this mindset and ensure that every child is protected on the road," he said. The primary objective of the campaign is to create greater awareness about road safety among citizens and encourage responsible riding practices throughout the community. Project Chairman and donor Sarvan Saraogi shared that the club plans to distribute approximately 1000 children's helmets across various schools in Guwahati in the coming months. He emphasized that the initiative is intended to send a strong and

positive message to parents, schools, and society about the importance of road safety

actively participated in the launch event and pledged their support to the cause. The Li-



and child protection. "Through this project, we hope to inspire parents to make children's safety a priority and foster a culture of responsible road behavior," Saraogi said. The drive was formally inaugurated today and will continue in the coming days through various programs and events organized by the club. A large number of Lions Club members

ons Club of Gauhati remains committed to serving the community through meaningful initiatives that promote safety, awareness, and social responsibility. During the initiative Deepak Mittal, Dilip Saraf, Naresh Agarwal, Bharat Choudhary, Shrawan Sarawgi, Anand Saraf, Rajesh Hansaria along with other Lions Club of Gauhati members were present.

RSPL Group celebrates 50 years, contributing to India's growth story

Guwahati: India's leading FMCG conglomerate, RSPL Group marks 50 years since its inception, tracing an inspiring journey from Kanpur to a growing presence in India and across the globe. Over the decades, the company has championed a "Made in India, for India" approach by strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities with more than 24 plants across the country. To commemorate this milestone, RSPL Group unveiled a short film that brings alive its journey, values, and the evolving vision—narrated by renowned actor and filmmaker Rajat Kapoor, capturing the spirit of a brand that has grown alongside India. The Group marks five decades since the foundation was laid for its flagship brand Ghadi Detergent, which commenced in the heart of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh by Shri. Muralidhar Gyanchandani and Shri. Bimal Kumar Gyanchandani. Trusted by millions of families across the country, Ghadi Detergent today enjoys 32% household penetration* — a testament to its enduring promise of quality and value. What began as a singular vision has evolved into a global enterprise, with RSPL's products reaching across countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Ethiopia, amongst others. RSPL Group has empowered communities on a large scale by supporting initiatives in Education, Healthcare, Animal Welfare, Environment, Water and Sanitation, Disaster Relief, Sports Promotion, and Com-

munity Welfare. The Group has also bolstered workforce empowerment by strengthening female participation across operations to promote equal employment opportunities. The conglomerate, which began its journey with Soaps & Detergents, steadily evolved into a diversified business group with a strong presence across Hygiene Care, Personal Care, Dairy and Ice Cream, Chemical Manufacturing (Soda Ash), Fashion and Lifestyle, while also expanding into Food & Beverages. Its portfolio further extends into Real Estate & Infrastructure and Renewable Energy reflecting a well-rounded growth across essential and future-focused sectors in India. RSPL Group's growth is closely linked with the progress across the country and globally, where its expanding presence across states has strengthened manufacturing scale, enhanced production capabilities, and contributed to regional infrastructure and economic development—underscoring its commitment to a self-reliant India. With multiple manufacturing plants across Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Bihar, amongst others, the Group continues to contribute to state economies while building a strong distribution network that serves millions of households nationwide. As of today, the company stands among the country's leading employers, with a workforce of over 24,000+ individuals drawn

from across India—reflecting its enduring commitment to inclusive growth and large-scale livelihood creation. Built on a strong foundation of trust and entrepreneurship, RSPL Group is now seeing the next generation of leadership actively contribute to the business, blending legacy with new-age thinking to shape the company's future growth journey. Manoj Gyanchandani, Director, RSPL Group, said, "Marking 50 incredible years, RSPL Group's journey from a single offering to a diversified FMCG and consumer business underscores our ability to evolve with changing consumer aspirations. As we strengthen our presence across lifestyle and food categories, our focus remains on delivering differentiated value through innovation and quality.

HMSI reports 5.18 lakh units sold in May 2026

Gurugram: Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. (HMSI) recorded total sales of 5.18 Lakh units in May 2026, registering a 12% year-on-year growth compared to 4.65 Lakh units sold in May 2025. In May 2026, Domestic sales stood at 4.59 Lakh units, registering a 10% growth over 4.17 Lakh units sold in the corresponding month last year. Exports stood at 0.59 Lakh units in May 2026, recording a 24% growth compared to 0.47 Lakh units exported in May 2025. The two-wheeler market wit-

Acer climbs to No. 2 position in traditional PC market for q1 2026 with 21.3% market share

Guwahati: Acer India has achieved a significant milestone by securing the No. 2 position in India's overall PC shipments market for Q1 2026, according to the latest IDC India Quarterly Personal Computing Device Tracker Q1 2026. Acer recorded a strong 21.3% market share, reflecting the brand's sustained growth and increasing consumer trust across categories. The company delivered an impressive performance across multiple categories, further strengthening its position in the Indian PC market. In the education segment, Desktop, Notebook & Workstations, Acer ranked No. 1 with a 62.1% market share, while in the government segment, Acer secured the No. 1 position with a 37.1% market share in Desktop, Notebook & Workstations. The company also emerged as a leader in commercial desktop deployment, securing the No. 1 position in the education desktop segment with a dominant 56.99% market share, along with the No. 1 position in government desktops with a 40.85% market share. Acer also witnessed exceptional growth in the notebook category. In education notebooks, the company secured the No. 1 position with a commanding 63.7% market share, driven by large-scale deployments and increasing digital adoption across educational institutions. In the government notebook segment, Acer ranked No. 2 with a 33.63% market share, highlighting the company's

growing presence in public sector and institutional projects. Speaking on the achievement, Harish Kohli, President & Managing Director, Acer India, said, "Securing the No. 2 position in the Indian PC market is a proud milestone for Acer India and reflects the trust our customers and partners continue to place in us. This achievement is the result of our relentless focus on innovation, customer experience, and expanding access to technology across the country. As India continues to accelerate its digital transformation journey, we remain committed to delivering cutting-edge solutions across consumer, gaming, commercial, and AI-powered PC categories. We thank our channel partners, customers, and teams for their continued support and confidence in the Acer brand."

Over the past year, Acer has continued to strengthen its brand presence through strategic product launches, omnichannel expansion, and investments in next-generation technologies, including AI-focused computing solutions. The company remains committed to driving innovation and making advanced technology more accessible to users across India. With this milestone, Acer India further strengthens its position as one of the leading PC brands in the country and remains focused on sustaining growth momentum in the quarters ahead.

Radisson Blu presents 'The Dragon & The Botanist' at Nest Asia

Guwahati: Some dining experiences are built around a feeling. Bringing together the bold character of Asian cuisine and the delicate elegance of botanical infusions, Radisson Blu Guwahati presents "The Dragon & The Botanist" at Nest Asia—a specially curated dining experience celebrating the harmony between vibrant food and thoughtfully crafted beverages. Scheduled from 3rd to 7th June 2026, the event will be hosted at Nest Asia from 7:00 PM onwards, inviting guests to explore a unique interplay of spice, smoke, herbs and aromatics. "The Dragon & The Botanist" pairs a specially curated Asian signature set menu with botanical-inspired cocktails and mocktails, bringing together bold flavours and refined beverage craftsmanship. Guests can look forward to a signature Asian set menu featuring highlights such as Tom Yum Thukpa, La Zi Ji, Sichuan Chicken, Gaeng Matsaman Curry, and Chak-Hao Kheer, paired with botanical creations including the Sichuan Negroni, Thai Basil Smash, Shanghai Blossom, The Zen Garden, and Fiery Dragon. What sets the experience apart is its thoughtful use of ingredients that define some of Asia's most distinctive culinary traditions. From the citrusy freshness of lemongrass and

kaffir lime to the warmth of Sichuan pepper, star anise, basil and bird's eye chilli, the menu explores a spectrum of flavours that are bold, aromatic and layered. These ingredients are complemented by botanical infusions and herb-forward beverages, creating pairings that celebrate the balance between intensity and refinement. Speaking about the initiative, Gurmeet Randhawa, General Manager, Radisson Blu Guwahati, said, "Dining today is about creating memorable experiences that engage all the senses. With 'The Dragon & The Botanist,' we wanted to bring together two distinct worlds—the bold, expressive flavours of Asian cuisine and the refined character of botanical beverages. The result is an experience that encourages guests to slow down, explore unique pairings and enjoy an evening that is both sophisticated and immersive." The ambience at Nest Asia reflects its contemporary Asian identity, offering an intimate setting for guests to savour the carefully curated food and beverage pairings. The experience offers guests an opportunity to discover a unique blend of culinary artistry and beverage innovation. For reservations and further details, guests may contact Radisson Blu Guwahati at 8811099397.

HSBC Mutual Fund launches RedHex Hybrid Long-Short Fund for mid-ticket investors

Guwahati: HSBC Mutual Fund has launched RedHex Hybrid Long-Short Fund, a Specialised Investment Fund (SIF) strategy designed for investors seeking regular returns and capital appreciation. The strategy combines investments across asset classes - fixed income, equity arbitrage, REIT and INVIT units to pursue risk adjusted returns across market cycles. The New Fund Offer (NFO) will be open from 2 June 2026 to 16 June 2026. SIFs were introduced to bridge the gap between traditional mutual funds and higher-ticket products like Portfolio Management Services (PMS) and Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs). RedHex Hybrid Long-Short Fund offers an intermediate investment that combines the regulatory transparency of mutual funds with portfolio flexibility. The product is suited for 'mid-ticket' investors, with a minimum application of Rs. 10,00,000 (Rs. 1,00,000 for Accredited Investors). Benchmark: NIFTY 50 Hybrid Composite Debt 50:50 Index. Kailash Kulkarni, CEO, HSBC Mutual Fund, said, "Investors today are more aware and require unique solutions that are professionally managed, and built to navigate complex market conditions.

RedHexHybrid Long-Short Fund is designed as a practical middle ground - offering the clarity investors expect from mutual funds, with added flexibility of a product which is designed to be less volatile while giving superior, tax efficient risk adjusted returns. Shriram Ramanathan, CIO Fixed Income, HSBC Mutual Fund, said, "Our focus is on robust credit selection and risk controls, aiming to deliver high accrual potential with lower volatility across market cycles. In a measured way, the fund also aims to take exposure to REITs and INVITs, both of which are growing asset classes." The fund strategy aims to deliver strong accrual potential with relatively low volatility through a diversified allocation across asset classes designed to generate regular income with limited sensitivity to market swings, while also enhancing tax efficiency and risk-adjusted returns. Structured as an interval investment fund, it allows subscriptions on any business day and offers weekly redemptions. Underpinning all this is robust risk management, combining active portfolio management with strict strategy-level risk controls to help reduce volatility.

nessed steady demand during the month. Backed by its diverse product portfolio and extensive network of over 7,000 touchpoints across the country, HMSI continues to strengthen customer accessibility and expand its reach across markets. 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 76 million customers through a network of over 7,000 touchpoints.

Editorial

Judicial Strength

The Cabinet approved an increase of four judges in the Supreme Court of India, taking the strength from 33 to 37, marking a significant step aimed at enhancing the efficiency and capacity of the country's highest judicial institution, as the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the proposal to introduce the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 in Parliament, which aims to amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 to increase the number of Judges in the Supreme Court of India (excluding the Chief Justice of India) from the present 33 to 37, reflecting the government's continued focus on judicial reforms and the need to address the growing backlog of cases in the apex court, while the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 provides for an increase of 4 judges in the number of Supreme Court judges, that is from 33 to 37 excluding the Chief Justice of India, a move that is expected to significantly improve the court's ability to handle a rising volume of litigation, deliver timely judgments, and strengthen the overall justice delivery system in the country, and the major impact of this decision is that the increase in the number of judges will enable the Supreme Court to function more efficiently and effectively, thereby ensuring speedy justice, which has long been a critical concern for citizens and stakeholders across the legal system, as delays in the disposal of cases not only affect litigants but also have broader implications for economic activity, governance, and public confidence in the rule of law, while the expansion of judicial capacity is seen as a necessary response to the increasing complexity and diversity of cases being brought before the apex court, including constitutional matters, commercial disputes, public interest litigations, and appeals from lower courts, and by augmenting the strength of the bench, the government aims to facilitate quicker hearings, reduce pendency, and improve access to justice for people across the country, while the expense associated with this increase, including the salaries and other amenities of the judges and supporting staff, will be met from the Consolidated Fund of India, ensuring that the financial requirements for this institutional strengthening are fully supported by the state, and this allocation reflects the priority accorded to the judiciary as a cornerstone of democratic governance and the rule of law, while the background of this legislative move is rooted in Article 124(1) of the Constitution of India, which provides, inter alia, that "There shall be a Supreme Court of India consisting of the Chief Justice of India and, until Parliament by law provides for a higher number of Judges...", thereby granting Parliament the authority to determine and revise the strength of the Supreme Court in response to evolving needs, and to increase the number of judges in the Supreme Court of India, an Act was passed in 1956, namely the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956, with Section 2 of the Act fixing the maximum number of judges excluding the Chief Justice of India at 10, reflecting the relatively modest size and workload of the court at the time of its inception, while as the country's population, economy, and legal complexity grew, the need to expand the bench became increasingly evident, leading to a series of amendments over the decades, and the number of judges in the Supreme Court of India was increased to 13 by the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1960 and to 17 by the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1977, indicating a gradual scaling up of judicial capacity in line with rising demands, however, the number of judges of the Supreme Court of India excluding the Chief Justice of India was limited to 15 judges by the Cabinet until the end of 1979, when this limit was removed at the request of the Chief Justice of India, highlighting the dynamic interplay between the executive and the judiciary in shaping institutional frameworks, while the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1986 further increased the number of judges in the Supreme Court excluding the Chief Justice of India from 17 to 25, marking a substantial expansion aimed at addressing growing pendency and enhancing the court's ability to manage an increasingly complex docket, and subsequently, the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2008 increased the number of judges in the Supreme Court from 25 to 30, reflecting continued efforts to keep pace with the rising volume of cases and the expanding scope of judicial review in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment, while the number of judges in the Supreme Court of India was last increased from 30 to 33 excluding the Chief Justice of India by amending the original Act through the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2019, and the current proposal to further increase the strength to 37 represents the latest step in this ongoing process of judicial capacity enhancement, underscoring the government's recognition of the need for a robust and responsive judiciary that can effectively discharge its constitutional responsibilities, while the introduction of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 in Parliament is expected to initiate a legislative process that will involve detailed discussions and deliberations, reflecting the importance of the issue and its implications for the functioning of the judiciary, and once enacted, the amendment will pave the way for the appointment of additional judges, thereby strengthening the institutional framework of the Supreme Court and enabling it to better serve the needs of the nation, while legal experts and stakeholders have often highlighted the importance of increasing judicial strength as part of a broader strategy to reform the justice delivery system, which also includes measures such as improving infrastructure, leveraging technology, streamlining procedures, and enhancing coordination between different levels of the judiciary.

The Political Turning Point of Bengal ~The Convergence of Nationalism and Sanatani Culture in Indian Politics



Pradip Barman

The results of the 2026 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election will be remembered as a historic turning point in the state's political history. The outcome not only brought an end to the 15-year rule of the Trinamool Congress government but also marked the beginning of a new chapter in the political landscape of Eastern India. In a state that had long been regarded as a stronghold of regional politics, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured a full majority for the first time and became capable of forming the government. This mandate should not be viewed merely as an electoral victory or defeat. Rather, it reflects a profound transformation in Bengal's political psychology, social outlook, and voter priorities. For decades, West Bengal was portrayed as a state where ideological politics, class struggle, and the culture of the Bengali bhadralok (educated elite) held greater influence than caste, religious, or identity-based politics. However, the 2026 election results have challenged that perception. A closer analysis suggests a significant shift in voter thinking. This election was not driven solely by emotional slogans or ideological commitments. Issues such as cultural identity, social security, development, administrative transparency, and confidence in the future played equally important roles. For this reason, many observers have interpreted the BJP's rise as part of a broader "cultural renaissance." Several factors contributed to the BJP's success in the 2026 election. First, anti-incumbency sentiment played a crucial role. After fifteen consecutive years in power, dissatisfaction with the Trinamool Congress had grown among sections of the population. Critics alleged that democratic norms had weakened under Mamata Banerjee's administration. It was also argued that no election during the Trinamool Congress's tenure had concluded peacefully, with violence and political clashes becoming common features of Bengal's electoral politics. According to government data, 166 people lost their lives in election-related violence, many of whom were BJP workers. The BJP extensively highlighted these issues during

its campaign. Secondly, controversies surrounding law and order, women's safety, and administrative accountability intensified the political atmosphere. In particular, the rape and murder of a female doctor at RG Kar Medical College and the alleged atrocities against women in Sandeshkhali had a significant impact on the state's politics. The BJP took these issues to the public and questioned the accountability of the Mamata Banerjee government. Campaigns such as "Justice for RG Kar" helped the party mobilize substantial political support. Another major issue during the election was border security and illegal immigration from Bangladesh. The BJP placed concerns about illegal infiltration, demographic changes, and national security at the center of its campaign. The party also emphasized the strategic importance of the Siliguri Corridor, commonly known as the "Chicken's Neck," which is considered highly sensitive from a national security perspective. Its promise to

tory also demonstrates that regional parties are no longer entirely insulated from the influence of national political forces. A study of West Bengal's political history reveals a pattern in which ruling parties often remain in power for long periods, while defeated parties struggle to recover. After independence, the Indian National Congress governed the state continuously from 1951 to 1977, a period of approximately 26 years. During the tenure of the last Congress Chief Minister, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Naxalite and Maoist movements reached their peak. These movements had been gaining momentum since the 1960s. During the chief ministership of Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee, of congress beginning in 1967, Maoist activities created significant instability in the state. At that time, the Prime Minister of India was the late Indira Gandhi. Despite Congress governments at both the state and central levels, the party was unable to effectively resolve the Naxalite issue. Subsequently, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPI(M), came to power in 1977. Under the leadership of Jyoti Basu, the CPI(M) established a long-lasting government, while the Congress gradually lost its organizational strength in the state and has never fully recovered. The CPI(M) ruled West Bengal for 34 consecutive years. However, during the tenure of its last Chief Minister, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, a major farmers' movement emerged in Nandigram in 2010 over land acquisition for the Tata Nano project. Mamata Banerjee, who had by then left the Congress and formed the Trinamool Congress, became a leading figure in that movement. Riding on popular support, she contested the 2011 Assembly elections and successfully defeated the CPI(M) government, becoming the Chief Minister of West Bengal. Just as the CPI(M) was unable to regain its former strength after losing power in 2011, the Trinamool Congress now faces a similar challenge following its defeat by the BJP in 2026. After defeating the election in 2011 CPI (M) had lost their support in West Bengal and can be say this party in ICU till today. Whether the Trinamool Congress can recover from this setback remains to be seen. In conclusion, the 2026 West Bengal election result is not merely the story of a change in government. It also reflects a broader transformation within Indian politics. The BJP's greatest challenge now is to transition successfully from the role of an opposition party to that of a governing force. If the party can fulfill the expectations of the people, this mandate may serve as a new political model or blueprint for many other Indian states in the future.

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strengthen border security resonated strongly with voters in border regions. In addition, commitments to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in West Bengal influenced certain sections of the electorate. Political observers noted that these issues helped consolidate support among large segments of Hindu voters, including the Matua community. The active involvement of the BJP's central leadership was also significant. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah conducted extensive campaigns across the state. Their public meetings and criticism of the state government further strengthened anti-incumbency sentiment. The BJP's journey from having limited support in West Bengal in 2014 to attaining power in 2026 represents a remarkable chapter in Indian politics. The vic-

after losing power in 2011, the Trinamool Congress now faces a similar challenge following its defeat by the BJP in 2026. After defeating the election in 2011 CPI (M) had lost their support in West Bengal and can be say this party in ICU till today. Whether the Trinamool Congress can recover from this setback remains to be seen. In conclusion, the 2026 West Bengal election result is not merely the story of a change in government. It also reflects a broader transformation within Indian politics. The BJP's greatest challenge now is to transition successfully from the role of an opposition party to that of a governing force. If the party can fulfill the expectations of the people, this mandate may serve as a new political model or blueprint for many other Indian states in the future.

India-US Trade Deal Opportunity Amid Strategic Frictions

By: Shashanka Das
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As India and the United States move closer to concluding a bilateral trade agreement, the negotiations have entered a decisive phase. Recent statements from US President Donald Trump expressing confidence that a deal with India is imminent, coupled with intensive negotiations between Indian officials and the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), indicate that both sides recognize the strategic and economic importance of strengthening trade ties. Yet, the path to an agreement remains complicated by tariff disputes, non-tariff barriers, and the latest US proposal to invoke Section 301 provisions against several countries, including India.

The proposed trade deal comes at a time when the global trading system is under stress. Protectionist tendencies have returned to major economies, supply chains are being reorganized around geopolitical considerations, and economic security has become as important as market access. Against this backdrop, India and the United States are attempting to craft a framework that goes beyond conventional tariff reductions and addresses broader issues such as customs procedures, regulatory standards, digital trade, and economic resilience.

For India, the stakes are substantial. The United States remains one of its largest export destinations and a key source of investment and technology. A comprehensive agreement could provide greater certainty for Indian exporters in sectors such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, information technology services, and electronics. It could also attract

additional investment by integrating Indian manufacturing more deeply into global value chains.

For Washington, India represents both an expanding consumer market and a strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific. At a time when the United States seeks to diversify supply chains away from excessive dependence on China, India's large market, demographic advantage, and manufacturing ambitions make it an attractive economic partner. The logic of deeper engagement is therefore compelling on both sides.

However, trade negotiations rarely proceed without friction. The latest challenge arises from the USTR's proposal to impose additional tariffs under Section 301 investigations related to alleged failures by certain countries to prevent imports produced through forced labour. India is among the countries identified in the proposal, raising concerns that new duties could undermine the positive momentum in trade talks. Section 301 of US trade law gives Washington authority to investigate and retaliate against practices it considers unfair or discriminatory toward American commerce. Historically, the provision has been used as a powerful instrument of trade pressure.

The timing of this proposal is particularly noteworthy. Even as negotiators report constructive discussions and describe the trade agreement as being close to completion, the threat of additional tariffs introduces uncertainty. Indian exporters fear that higher duties could erode their competitiveness in the US market, particularly in labour-intensive sectors. At the same time, New Delhi has chosen not to escalate tensions and continues to engage

with Washington on both the Section 301 proceedings and the broader trade framework.

This dual-track approach reflects India's broader trade strategy. Rather than responding to every protectionist measure with retaliation, New Delhi has increasingly prioritized negotiated outcomes. The successful conclusion of trade agreements with several partners and the pursuit of market access through bilateral arrangements demonstrate a growing preference for pragmatic economic diplomacy. The ongoing US negotiations fit squarely within this approach.

Another important dimension of the talks is the growing focus on non-tariff measures. Modern trade disputes are no longer limited to customs duties. Regulatory standards, certification requirements, customs procedures, digital regulations, and technical barriers often have a greater impact on market access than tariffs themselves. Recent discussions between India and the United States have therefore expanded to include trade facilitation, customs cooperation, and broader economic security issues. This evolution reflects a recognition that twenty-first century trade agreements must address the full spectrum of barriers affecting commerce.

Yet, policymakers on both sides must avoid overestimating what a trade deal can achieve. An agreement may reduce friction, but it will not eliminate structural differences. The United States continues to seek wider access for agricultural products, medical devices, and digital services, while India remains cautious about opening sectors that affect livelihoods and domestic industry. Balancing these competing interests will require flexibility and political will.

The larger significance of the trade negotiations extends beyond

economics. India-US relations have evolved into a multifaceted partnership encompassing defence, technology, energy, and strategic cooperation. Trade remains the missing pillar that can provide a stronger economic foundation to this relationship. A successful agreement would signal that both countries are capable of managing differences through dialogue rather than confrontation.

At the same time, the current negotiations reveal an important reality: strategic convergence does not automatically translate into economic harmony. Even close partners pursue their national interests, and trade policy often reflects domestic political pressures. The challenge is not to eliminate disagreements but to create institutional mechanisms that prevent them from derailing broader cooperation.

The emerging trade deal should therefore be viewed neither as a diplomatic triumph nor as a concession by either side. It is better understood as a practical effort to align the interests of two major economies navigating an uncertain global environment. If successfully concluded, it could boost bilateral trade, strengthen supply-chain resilience, and reinforce the strategic partnership between New Delhi and Washington.

The ultimate test will be whether both governments can look beyond short-term tariff disputes and focus on the long-term gains of economic integration. In an era marked by fragmentation and protectionism, a balanced India-US trade agreement would send a powerful message that cooperation remains a viable path to prosperity.

Educational Transformation Is Possible Only Through Collective Efforts: Anamika Tewari

Achyut KR Nathm Morigaon, June 7: In a concerted effort to improve learning outcomes and strengthen the educational ecosystem of the district, Special Educational Gram Sabhas are being organized across Morigaon. These community-driven forums have brought together the district administration, education department officials, teachers, students, parents, School Management Committees, panchayat representatives, village heads, and local residents on a common platform to discuss the challenges hindering educational progress and to identify practical solutions through collective action.

Leading this initiative, Morigaon District Commissioner Anamika Tewari has been personally attending the Educational Gram Sabhas, urging parents, teachers, students, public representatives, and community members to shoulder their responsibilities towards building a stronger educational environment. One such Gram Sabha was held today at Kushtoli Barangani High School under the Laharighat Education Block.

Addressing the gathering, the District Commissioner said it is deeply concerning that many children today are unable to clear the matriculation examination. She emphasized that such a situation cannot be viewed merely as the failure of an individual student; rather, it is a reflection of the collective failure of parents, teachers, officials, elected representatives, and society at large.

Recalling earlier times, she observed that an entire village once shared responsibility for nurturing a child, with elders guiding and correcting young people whenever necessary. However, changing social realities have weakened this collective support system, making initiatives like Educational Gram Sabhas essen-



tial. She stressed that instead of blaming one another, all stakeholders must work together to improve the educational landscape of the district.

The District Commissioner also expressed concern over issues such as school dropouts, adolescent elopement, excessive mobile phone use, motorcycle-related distractions, and substance abuse, which are increasingly affecting the future of young students. She called upon every section of society to remain vigilant and actively participate in addressing these challenges.

Highlighting the role of parents, she remarked that mothers cannot simply send their children to school and then remain occupied watching reels on mobile phones. Education, she said, requires continuous involvement and supervision at home. Parents must take an active interest in their children's studies, behaviour, and overall development rather than assuming that schooling alone is sufficient.

Expressing concern over poor participation in parent-teacher meetings, she noted that many parents show little interest in understanding their children's progress and activities. Emphasizing the importance of a united approach involving School Management Committees, teachers, panchayat representatives, and parents, she said that the academic and personal development of every student should remain under close community supervision.

She further observed that many youngsters today hesitate to engage in agricultural work, considering it beneath their dignity, while traditional life skills are gradually disappearing. At the same time, mobile phones increasingly dominate the lives of young people. Parents, she said, must also ensure that children learn responsibility, discipline, and essential life skills at home. Such values are indispensable for building a progressive and educated society.

Calling upon every citizen to contribute towards improving the educational environment of Morigaon, the District Commissioner urged the community to remain alert, responsible, and actively engaged in shaping the future of its children.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Commissioner (Education) Anusuya Sharma, Inspector of Schools Dr. Apurba Thakuria, School Management Committee President Raju Deka, panchayat representatives, education department officials, school heads, students, and parents. The speakers unanimously underscored the need for coordinated and sustained efforts to ensure the holistic development of education in the district. The District Commissioner also interacted with parents and exchanged views on key educational concerns.

Meeting of Sankul Heads of Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam Concluded

Guwahati, June 7: A meeting of the Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam; Jagannath Acharyas (teachers).



Sankul Heads of Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Assam, an affiliated organization of Vidya Bharati, was held at Shankardev Vidya Niketan, Jorhat (Garmur). The meeting commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp before Goddess Saraswati. The programme was attended by Dr. Pawan Tiwari, Organising Secretary of Vidya Bharati Purvottar Kshetra; Kulendra Kumar Bhagwati, President of

Rajbanshi, General Secretary; Vice-Presidents Anima Sharma and Dr. Alakananda Barua; senior functionary Yogendra Singh Chichodia; full-time workers; and Sankul Heads. A total of 76 representatives participated in the meeting.

During the inaugural session, Dr. Pawan Tiwari spoke in detail about the Sankul system and its role in the personality development of Acharyas and

World Environment Day Observed in Dibrugarh by Ramdhenu Satadal Branch Sahitya Sabha and Soil Conservation Department

Correspondent Dibrugarh, June 7: World Environment Day was observed on June 5 in Dibrugarh through a day-long programme organized

eral other speakers also highlighted the importance of World Environment Day, discussing its benefits, adverse environmental impacts, and the need

the Ramdhenu Sub-Committee Ranjit Mech; advisor of Bongalgaon Puberun Sangha Montu Mech; Soil Conservation Department officials Karna Basumatary,

Several individuals also submitted applications for life membership during the meeting. Life members Mahesh Teli and Kalpana Saikia, Bongalgaon Primary

trophies by the department. Additional certificates were also distributed by the Ramdhenu Volunteer Team. Bhushan Jyoti Handique, Presi-



jointly by the Ramdhenu Satadal Branch Sahitya Sabha, under the Assam Sahitya Sabha, and the East Assam Soil Conservation Division. The event was hosted at Bongalgaon Primary School. The programme began with a group song performed by the schoolchildren. The meeting was chaired by Ratneswar Phukan, Vice-President of the Ramdhenu Satadal Branch Sahitya Sabha, while Secretary Anil Prasad Singha explained the objectives of the programme. Addressing the gathering, Tapasi Kalita, an officer of the East Assam Soil Conservation Division, spoke on the significance of World Environment Day and the practical importance of tree plantation. She emphasized that the survival of human beings depends on the existence of trees. Sev-

for greater public awareness.

As part of the programme, Momi Gogoi Mech, Anima Mech Gogoi, Devi Pradhan, Nalini Mech, Hemalata Gogoi, and Bharati Mech each received a sapling on behalf of the Ruprekha Women's Group. They subsequently planted the saplings within the premises of Bongalgaon Primary School. Among those present at the event were Bongalgaon Gaonburah member Madan Chandra Bharali; Cluster Primary Education Officer Rekhamoni Baruah; Ramdhenu advisor Ranjan Dutta; Joint Secretary Bimal Chandra Dutta; Publicity Secretary of the Ramdhenu Satadal Branch Sahitya Sabha M. Hashim Ali; Executive President of

Nomal Ch Mech, Nitumoni Kalita, Utpal Hazarika, and Tapasi Kalita, among others. During the programme, Moniruddin Ahmed, Joint Director of the Fisheries Department, was presented with a certificate in recognition of his membership in the Assam Sahitya Sabha.

School Headmistress Mrinalini Burhagohain, Mihir Chetia, Dilip Changmai, and Karabi Saikia Mech were also present. A total of 40 students who participated in an environmental-themed drawing competition were awarded certificates and

dent of Bandhoi Krishi Farm, one of Dibrugarh's prominent voluntary organizations, and Arpana Bora were thanked for donating 15 Bakul flower saplings. The saplings were planted within the school campus as part of the celebration.

Free Football Coaching Camp Inaugurated in Barpeta

The Free Football Coaching Camp, organized by the District Sports Office, Barpeta, was inaugurated on 5 June 2026, reflecting the growing en-



Coaching Camp, organized by the District Sports Office, Barpeta, was inaugurated on 5 June 2026, marking a significant initiative to promote and develop grassroots football within the district.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by the District Development Commissioner, Barpeta, who launched the camp in the presence of distinguished guests, including veteran footballers and sports pensioners.

thusiasm and interest in football among the youth of the district.

The primary objective of this initiative is to identify, nurture, and develop promising football talent at the grassroots level through systematic training, professional guidance, and opportunities for skill enhancement. Such programs play a vital role in strengthening the district's sporting ecosystem and empowering young athletes to realize their potential and achieve excellence in the field of sports.

The camp received an enthusiastic response on its opening day, with approximately 70 young footballers participating.

Anubhuti Celebrates World Environment Day in Sivasagar

Khairuddin Ahmed, Staff 7: To mark World Environment Day, the voluntary organization Anubhuti cel-



Reporter Sivasagar, June ment Day, the voluntary organization Anubhuti celebrated the occasion with a day-long programme at its headquarters located on Punjan Path.

The event was conducted by Anubhuti President Jahiruddin Ahmed. The Chief Advisor of the organization and veteran journalist journalist pensioner Khairuddin Ahmed attended as the special guest and delivered a brief speech highlighting the importance of World Environment Day and environmental conservation.

As part of the programme, valuable saplings of various tree species and fruit-bearing plants were distributed among local residents. A tree plantation drive was also successfully carried out.

The event witnessed the participation of several members of the Anubhuti family, including President Jahiruddin Ahmed, Secretary Simpi Bora, office-bearers Bikash Matowal, Sahidul Ahmed, Rajak Ali, Chumi Begum, Shehnaz Ahmed, Reena Begum, Latifa Begum, Mainu Begum, and advisor Nirmala Das, among others. They actively took part in the environmental awareness and plantation activities organized on the occasion.

Sivasagar AASU Felicitation Programme on June 7; General Secretary Samiran Phukan to Attend

Sabir Ahmed, Sivasagar, June 7: The All Sivasagar District Students' Union (AASU) has organized a special felicitation programme on June 7 at the Sivasagar Natya Mandir, in collaboration with the Sivasagar Regional Students' Union, to honour meritorious students who have brought laurels to the district by achieving outstanding results in the recently declared High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) and Higher Secondary Final Examinations.

The programme will begin at 11:00 a.m. and will be attended by the General Secretary of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), Samiran Phukan, as the chief guest.

Other distinguished guests expected to attend include Sivasagar District Commissioner Mridul Yadav, Senior Superintendent of Police Papor Chetia, Dibrugarh University Dean of Student Affairs Dr. Surajit Barkataki, and ONGC Assam Asset Executive Director Uday Paswan. Office-bearers of the central committee of AASU will also participate as special guests.

During the event, the district students' union will felicitate students from educational institutions under its jurisdiction who secured Distinction in the HSLC Examination and those who obtained 85 percent or above marks in the Arts, Science, and Commerce streams of the Higher Secondary Final Examination. In a statement, Dipankar Saikia, General Secretary of the All Sivasagar District Students' Union, has invited all successful students as well as well-wishers from across the district to attend the programme.

Prez Murmu will confer Padma Awards to 65 Personalities

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu will confer the Padma Awards to 65 eminent personalities for the year 2026 at the second Civil Investiture Ceremony to be held on the 23rd of this month, marking another significant occasion in the recognition of outstanding contributions made by individuals across diverse fields of national life. The ceremony will

individual accomplishment but also as a reminder of the values of perseverance, innovation, compassion, and commitment to society that drive progress and development. The second Civil Investiture Ceremony is expected to bring together distinguished awardees, their families, senior government officials, dignitaries, and representatives from various sec-

erature, arts, and sports. The recognition also reflects the evolving nature of achievement in contemporary India, where contributions from both well-known figures and grassroots changemakers are celebrated. Through the Padma Awards, the nation honours individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to their work and whose accomplishments have generated meaningful benefits for society. The upcoming ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan is expected to continue this tradition of honouring excellence and distinguished service. As recipients receive their awards from President Droupadi Murmu, the occasion will serve as a reminder of the important role played by individuals in driving social progress, fostering innovation, preserving cultural traditions, strengthening public institutions, and contributing to the country's overall development. The stories represented by the awardees collectively reflect the aspirations, resilience, and achievements of the nation itself. The Padma Awards have long been regarded as a prestigious platform for recognising contributions that transcend personal success and create wider benefits for communities and society. By honouring individuals from varied backgrounds and fields, the awards highlight the many ways in which excellence can be expressed and the diverse paths through which citizens contribute to national advancement. The conferment of 131 Padma Awards for 2026 demonstrates the continued importance attached to recognising merit, service, and achievement at the highest levels. As the second Civil Investiture Ceremony approaches, attention will once again focus on the remarkable accomplishments of the awardees and the enduring significance of these honours in celebrating dedication, innovation, and service to the nation. The ceremony will not only mark the formal presentation of the awards but will also reinforce the values that the Padma Awards represent—commitment to excellence, service to society, and contributions that leave a lasting impact on the country and its people. Through these honours, India continues to acknowledge and celebrate individuals whose work exemplifies the highest standards of achievement and whose efforts contribute meaningfully to the nation's growth, development, and collective progress. The recognition accorded through the Padma Awards serves as an enduring tribute to those who have devoted themselves to the pursuit of excellence and whose accomplishments continue to inspire future generations. As President Droupadi Murmu prepares to confer the remaining awards at the second Civil Investiture Ceremony, the nation looks forward to celebrating another group of distinguished personalities whose achievements reflect the spirit of service, innovation, creativity, and dedication that lies at the heart of India's continuing journey of progress and development. The event will further strengthen the tradition of honouring exceptional contributions across fields and reaffirm the country's commitment to recognising those whose work has enriched society, advanced knowledge, strengthened institutions, and enhanced the nation's standing through distinguished service and outstanding accomplishment.



continue the tradition of honouring exceptional achievements and distinguished service rendered by citizens whose work has left a meaningful impact on society, the nation, and the wider world. Earlier last month, the President had presented Padma Awards to 66 eminent personalities during the first Civil Investiture Ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, where awardees from various disciplines were recognised for their dedication, excellence, and commitment to public service and professional accomplishment. With the second ceremony, the process of honouring recipients selected for the year 2026 will be completed, highlighting the Government of India's continued emphasis on celebrating individuals whose efforts have contributed significantly to national development, cultural enrichment, scientific advancement, social welfare, education, healthcare, sports, public affairs, and numerous other fields. The Padma Awards remain among the highest civilian honours in the country and are widely regarded as a symbol of national appreciation for exceptional service and achievement. This year, the President has approved the conferment of a total of 131 Padma Awards, reflecting the breadth and diversity of talent and dedication present across the nation. The list includes five Padma Vibhushan awards, 13 Padma Bhushan awards, and 113 Padma Shri awards, covering a wide spectrum of fields and recognising individuals whose work has made a lasting difference. The honours are announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day, a practice that underscores the nation's commitment to acknowledging excellence and inspiring future generations through examples of dedication and service. Over the years, the Padma Awards have become one of the most respected recognitions in India, celebrating individuals from different backgrounds and professions, including artists, social workers, scientists, engineers, educators, doctors, sportspersons, public servants, entrepreneurs, writers, and innovators. The awards serve not only as recognition of

tors, creating an occasion that reflects the nation's gratitude toward those who have excelled in their respective fields. The Padma Awards are conferred in three categories, each representing a distinct level of recognition based on the nature and impact of the service rendered. The Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service, representing one of the highest civilian recognitions bestowed by the nation. The Padma Bhushan is awarded for distinguished service of a high order and honours individuals whose contributions have had a substantial and enduring impact in their fields. The Padma Shri is awarded for distinguished service in any field and recognises excellence and dedication demonstrated through sustained effort and achievement. Together, these honours reflect the nation's appreciation for a wide range of contributions that strengthen society and advance national interests. The significance of the Padma Awards extends beyond the ceremonial aspect of recognition. By honouring individuals from different regions, professions, and communities, the awards showcase the diversity and richness of talent across India. They highlight stories of perseverance, innovation, leadership, and selfless service that inspire citizens and encourage greater participation in nation-building activities. Many recipients have devoted decades to their chosen fields, often working under challenging circumstances to create positive change and contribute to the well-being of others. Their achievements demonstrate the power of dedication and vision in addressing societal challenges, advancing knowledge, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting inclusive growth. The annual announcement of the Padma Awards on Republic Day reinforces the connection between national service and individual excellence. It provides an opportunity for the country to acknowledge those whose efforts have helped shape India's progress in areas ranging from scientific research and technological innovation to social reform, healthcare, education, lit-

UPI expands in Cambodia

New Delhi: India's digital payments ecosystem achieved another significant milestone as the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) officially partnered with ACLEDA Bank to launch Unified Payments Interface (UPI) acceptance in Cambodia, marking a major step forward in cross-border digital payment connectivity between the two countries. The development is expected to strengthen economic ties, boost tourism, enhance convenience for travellers, and further expand the global footprint of India's highly successful digital payment infrastructure. Announcing the initiative, the Ministry of Finance stated that the first phase of the partnership enables millions of Indian travellers visiting Cambodia to make seamless digital payments by scanning QR codes at more than 4.5 million merchant locations across the Southeast Asian nation. The rollout represents a major advancement in efforts to create interoperable digital payment systems that facilitate secure, efficient, and real-time transactions across borders. With UPI now operational in Cambodia through the partnership with ACLEDA Bank, Indian tourists, business travellers, students, and professionals will be able to make purchases conveniently using their existing UPI-enabled applications without the need to exchange large amounts of cash or rely heavily on international card networks. The Ministry noted that this initial phase focuses on providing payment acceptance for Indian users in Cambodia while laying the groundwork for a fully integrated bilateral digital payments corridor. Officials emphasized that the collaboration reflects the growing international recognition of India's digital public infrastructure and demonstrates the increasing confidence of global financial institutions in adopting interoperable payment solutions built on proven technological frameworks. The launch comes at a time when digital payments are transforming financial ecosystems around the world, with governments and financial institutions seeking innovative methods to improve financial inclusion, reduce transaction costs, and facilitate seamless economic interactions. The Ministry of Finance highlighted that the partnership is only the beginning of a broader vision for cross-border payment integration. In the next phase of implementation, the corridor will become fully bi-directional, allowing Cambodian citizens travelling to India to use their domestic banking and digital payment applications to scan and pay through millions of UPI QR codes available across the country. This two-way functionality is expected to create a mutually beneficial ecosystem that simplifies payments for citizens of both nations while encouraging greater tourism, business exchanges, and people-to-people interactions. Once operational, Cambodian visitors will enjoy the same level of convenience that Indian travellers currently experience within India's extensive digital

payment network, enabling transactions at retail outlets, restaurants, transportation services, hotels, tourist destinations, and a wide range of merchant establishments. Financial experts view the initiative as a significant advancement in regional digital connectivity, demonstrating how interoperable payment systems can remove barriers to international transactions and support economic integration. The partnership also reinforces India's position as a leader in digital financial innovation. Since its introduction, UPI has revolutionized the way payments are made in India by enabling instant, secure, and real-time fund transfers directly between bank accounts using mobile devices. The platform has transformed daily commerce and financial transactions, becoming one of the most widely used digital payment systems in the world. Its simplicity, reliability, and scalability have attracted considerable international attention, prompting several countries to explore partnerships and collaborations that leverage India's experience in digital payments. The expansion into Cambodia further strengthens the international presence of UPI and highlights its growing role as a model for cross-border payment interoperability. Officials noted that one of the key advantages of the arrangement is the convenience it offers travellers. Traditional international payment methods often involve currency conversion charges, card processing fees, and dependence on cash transactions. By enabling direct UPI-based payments through QR code scanning, Indian travellers in Cambodia can enjoy a more seamless experience while merchants benefit from efficient transaction processing and improved customer convenience. The initiative is also expected to support local businesses in Cambodia by making it easier for Indian tourists and visitors to transact digitally, potentially increasing spending and improving the overall tourism experience. Industry observers have pointed out that tourism and business travel between India and Cambodia have witnessed steady growth in recent years, creating a strong case for enhanced payment connectivity. The launch of UPI acceptance is therefore expected to further strengthen economic engagement by reducing transactional friction and encouraging greater mobility between the two countries. The Ministry of Finance stated that the development aligns with India's broader efforts to promote digital cooperation with international partners and support the adoption of innovative financial technologies across borders. The success of UPI within India has demonstrated the transformative impact of digital public infrastructure in expanding access to financial services and creating a more inclusive economy. By extending this ecosystem internationally, India is contributing to the development of efficient and secure payment networks that can benefit consumers, businesses, and financial institutions alike.

RBI keeps Repo Rate unchanged at 5.25%

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept interest rates unchanged for the second time in a row in the current financial year, signalling a balanced approach aimed at supporting economic stability while remaining vigilant about inflationary pressures. Announcing the second bi-monthly monetary policy for the current fiscal, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has unanimously decided to retain the short-term lending rate, or the repo rate, at 5.25 per cent with a neutral stance. The decision reflects the central bank's assessment that while the Indian economy continues to demonstrate resilience amid global uncertainties, inflation risks and evolving domestic conditions warrant a cautious policy approach. The MPC's unanimous decision indicates broad agreement among policymakers that maintaining the existing rate structure is appropriate at this stage, allowing the economy to absorb previous policy measures while preserving flexibility for future action. The repo rate, which serves as the benchmark for lending rates across the banking system, remains a key tool for influencing borrowing costs, investment activity and overall economic momentum. By keeping the rate unchanged, the RBI seeks to strike a balance between supporting growth and ensuring that inflation remains within manageable levels. Alongside the policy decision, the RBI also announced revisions to its macroeconomic projections for the current financial year. The central bank lowered its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth projection to 6.6 per cent from the earlier estimate of 6.9 per cent. The downward revision reflects concerns arising from external economic headwinds, uncertainties in global trade, fluctuations in commodity prices and changing financial market conditions. While the revised growth estimate still positions India among the world's fastest-growing major economies, it highlights the challenges posed by an increasingly complex international environment. Economic experts note that the adjustment does not indicate a sharp slowdown but rather a realistic reassessment of growth prospects in light of emerging trends. Domestic demand, infrastructure spending, manufacturing expansion and services sector activity continue to provide support to the economy, but global developments remain a significant factor influencing the outlook. At the same time, the RBI revised its inflation forecast upward, increasing the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation target for the current financial year to 5.1 per cent from 4.6 per cent projected earlier. The higher inflation estimate reflects concerns over food prices, supply-side pressures, global commodity market volatility and weather-related uncertainties that could impact agricultural production. Inflation management remains one of the central bank's primary responsibilities, and the revised projection underscores the need for continued vigilance. While inflation has moderated from previous peaks, the RBI believes that risks persist and require careful monitoring. The upward revision suggests that policymakers expect price pressures to remain elevated for a longer period than previously anticipated. Analysts observe that main-

taining the repo rate while revising inflation expectations upward demonstrates the central bank's determination to keep inflation under control without unnecessarily constraining economic activity. The neutral stance adopted by the MPC further indicates that future policy decisions will be guided by incoming data and evolving economic conditions rather than a predetermined course of action. Market participants closely watched the policy announcement for indications regarding the future direction of interest rates. The decision to maintain the current rate was largely in line with expectations, as economists had anticipated a cautious approach from the RBI amid mixed economic signals. Financial markets generally interpret a neutral stance as a sign that the central bank remains open to either tightening or easing policy depending on how growth and inflation trends develop over the coming months. In addition to the rate decision and revised economic projections, the RBI announced an important measure aimed at enhancing investment opportunities and strengthening capital inflows. The central bank raised the limit for investments by Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) in equity instruments. The move is expected to encourage greater participation from the Indian diaspora in the country's financial markets and contribute to capital formation. By facilitating increased investment from NRIs and OCIs, the RBI seeks to deepen market liquidity, broaden the investor base and support long-term economic development. The decision aligns with broader efforts to strengthen India's financial ecosystem and attract stable sources of investment capital. Financial experts believe the measure could generate additional interest among overseas investors who maintain strong economic and emotional ties with India. Increased participation from NRIs and OCIs may also contribute to improved market depth and enhance the availability of funds for businesses seeking capital for expansion and innovation. The RBI's policy announcement comes at a time when central banks around the world continue to navigate complex economic conditions. Persistent inflation in several economies, shifting interest rate trajectories, geopolitical uncertainties and evolving trade dynamics have created a challenging environment for monetary policymakers. Against this backdrop, India's central bank has sought to maintain a balanced approach that supports economic growth while ensuring macroeconomic stability. The decision to keep rates unchanged reflects confidence in the economy's underlying strengths while acknowledging the need for caution in managing inflation risks. Industry leaders welcomed the RBI's move, noting that policy stability provides businesses with greater certainty for planning investments and managing financial operations. Stable interest rates help companies assess borrowing costs more effectively and support decision-making related to expansion, hiring and capital expenditure. The banking sector is also expected to benefit from policy continuity, as predictable interest rate conditions can support lending activity and financial planning. Economists observed that the revised growth projection of 6.6 per

cent remains indicative of robust economic performance despite global challenges. Strong domestic consumption, government investment in infrastructure, digital transformation initiatives and expanding manufacturing capabilities continue to underpin economic activity. At the same time, the upward revision in inflation expectations highlights the importance of addressing supply-side constraints and ensuring efficient distribution systems to mitigate price pressures. Policymakers are expected to continue monitoring developments in food prices, energy costs and global economic trends as they assess future policy requirements. The RBI's decision underscores the importance of maintaining flexibility in an environment characterised by uncertainty. By retaining the repo rate at 5.25 per cent and maintaining a neutral stance, the central bank has positioned itself to respond effectively to changing economic conditions. The policy framework reflects a commitment to balancing growth objectives with the need to preserve price stability, a combination that remains essential for sustaining long-term economic progress. Financial analysts suggest that future monetary policy decisions will depend on a range of factors, including inflation trends, economic growth performance, global market developments and domestic demand conditions. The revised forecasts provide valuable insight into the RBI's assessment of the economic landscape and offer guidance to businesses, investors and consumers regarding the challenges and opportunities ahead. The increase in investment limits for NRIs and OCIs is also expected to complement broader efforts aimed at strengthening India's position as an attractive investment destination. As the economy continues to evolve, measures that enhance investor participation and improve access to capital are likely to play an increasingly important role in supporting growth and innovation. The RBI's latest policy announcement therefore represents a comprehensive assessment of current economic realities, combining stability in interest rates with updated projections and strategic reforms designed to support financial sector development. With the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent, GDP growth projection revised to 6.6 per cent from 6.9 per cent, CPI inflation target increased to 5.1 per cent from 4.6 per cent, and investment limits for Non-Resident Indians and Overseas Citizens of India in equity instruments raised, the central bank has outlined a policy path focused on balancing growth, inflation management and financial market development. The measures announced by Governor Sanjay Malhotra and the Monetary Policy Committee highlight the RBI's commitment to maintaining economic stability while adapting to changing domestic and global conditions, reinforcing confidence in India's ability to navigate challenges and sustain its growth trajectory in the current financial year. Reserve Bank of India's decision to keep the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent for the second consecutive policy review reflects a cautious and balanced approach toward managing the economy.

Assam-Nagaland Border Dispute



-Rupak G. Duarah

The Assam-Nagaland border dispute is by no means a new problem. It is a prolonged territorial conflict in India's northeastern region, with significant tensions particularly evident in Assam's Golaghat, KarbiAnglong, Jorhat and Sivasagar districts. Originating from Nagaland's formation as a separate state, the dispute centres on competing claims over land. Even at the time of India's independence, border issues between the two states had already surfaced. However, rather than resolving the matter, the central government adopted a policy of tactical evasion. Consequently, in the years that followed, the problem escalated dramatically, resulting in the tragic loss of many lives. Even today, the fear and unrest generated by this dispute in the border areas have not subsided.

According to the historical records, the British Government established Assam as a province of British India in 1912. After independence, Assam officially became a constituent state of India in 1950. In contrast, the British created the Naga Hills District in 1866. After independence, as per the provisions of the *Naga Hills Tuensang Area Act, 1957* and the *Nagaland State Act, 1962*, Nagaland was officially formed as the 16th state of India in 1963 - without a clear boundary demarcation. Therefore, the Assam-Nagaland border dispute revolves around territorial claims made by Nagaland over parts of Assam's Golaghat, KarbiAnglong, Jorhat and Sivasagar districts.

The most contested areas along the Assam-Nagaland border are the A.B.C.D.E. and F sectors,

South Nambor, Rengma, C.C. Tiru Hills, DoyangDishoi Valley, Abhayapuri, Daldali Reserve Forest and the Geleki forest regions. The dispute has severely affected fringe populations in these regions. Recent media reports indicate that Nagaland has occupied approximately 59,490 hectares of land within Assam's territory. This includes 18,908 hectares in Jorhat district, 4,288 hectares in Sivasagar district, and 36,294 hectares in the border-adjacent areas of Golaghat district.

This long-standing border dispute has inflicted the greatest damage on Golaghat dis-



trict. A large portion of the district's land is already under Nagaland's control and aggression in the A.B.C.D.E. and F sectors continues unabated. Of the total 18,365 hectares in three forest areas, Nagaland has occupied 16,950 hectares. It has also seized approximately 10,000 hectares of the South Nambor forest area, 2,000 hectares of the Rengma forest area and about 2,000 hectares of the Doyang reserved forest area. In practical terms, the Assam government has no administrative presence in these regions.

This inter-state border dispute has triggered several violent clashes along the border over

the years. In January 1979, forces from Nagaland attacked the Chungajan and Uriamghat areas of Golaghat, killing hundreds of Assamese people and burning many villages. According to official government figures, 54 people were killed in the clash. Around 50,000 displaced people had to take shelter in 13 relief camps in the Sarupathar and Borpathar areas. Similarly, the Merapani area suffered a horrific attack in June 1985. Hundreds of Assamese people were killed, and approximately 7,606 families from 96 villages were affected. In the Merapani clash, 48 Assam Rifles



personnel also lost their lives. The entire area was engulfed in horror as houses and property were set on fire. Likewise, in April 1989, Nagas attacked several villages in the Rajapukhuri area, resulting in many deaths. Incidents of attack and counter-attack continue to occur in the border regions even today. Due to such atrocities, Assamese people have frequently been forced to abandon their homes and farmlands.

Despite decades of this ongoing dispute, no solution has yet been reached. In response to Nagaland's encroachment on Assam's territory, the Assam government filed two petitions in

the Supreme Court in 1988 and 1989. Yet even after more than three decades, there has been no resolution or meaningful progress. The judicial process continues in the Supreme Court. Although the judicial proceedings are ongoing, both Assam and Nagaland have signalled their readiness for an out-of-court settlement and have engaged with the Union Home Minister to find a negotiated solution. In 2025, the two states agreed to implement joint measures, including coordinated eviction drives, to reduce tensions in the Disputed Area Belt (DAB). But a final resolution regarding the boundary demarcation between these two states has not been officially finalized.

As such, it is clear that the extreme indifference of the concerned authorities is the primary reason this border problem has remained unresolved for so long. Therefore, in the interest of a secure future for Assam and the Assamese people, the state government should take firm and well-considered steps. It must engage in dialogue with the neighbouring state and adopt special measures to resolve this long-standing issue. Otherwise, residents of the border areas will continue to live in constant anxiety and uncertainty amid unrest, while aggression and encroachment by the neighbouring state on Assam's territory persist unabated.

Last month, Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio came to Guwahati to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma. The visit highlights renewed efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and resolve the long-standing Assam-Nagaland border dispute, coming soon after Rio's recent meetings with the Union Home Minister. This development brings fresh hope for a durable and amicable solution to the protracted border issue.

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Assam's Changing Landscape: Key Trends in Governance and Growth

-Sauravjyoti Nath

Over the past several years, Assam has witnessed notable changes across multiple sectors, ranging from law and order, security and governance to wildlife, tourism and social welfare. These developments have often been cited as indicators of a state attempting to move beyond the troublesome decades of insurgency, instability and administrative challenges.

While assessments of governance have inevitably attracted differing political interpretations, several measurable trends in recent times have suggested that Assam's socio-economic and security landscape has undergone significant transformation. Under the leadership of the present government led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, emphasis has been placed on strengthening law and order, promoting investment and tourism, protecting indigenous interests and addressing many long-standing social concerns.

Security, Law and Order and Counter-Insurgency Operations

For decades, insurgency and militant activities remained among the most significant challenges confronting Assam. It not only affected the everyday life of its citizens but also discouraged investment and constrained economic growth. In recent years, however, sustained counter-insurgency efforts, peace accords and rehabilitation initiatives have reportedly brought back stability to the state.

The scale of improvement becomes evident when the recent security indicators are compared with Assam's insurgency-hit decades. While the state witnessed 686 insurgency-related incidents in 1998, 643 in 2000 and 583 in 2009, the corresponding figures stood at just 18 in 2022, 13 in 2023 and 5 in 2024. Similarly, civilian deaths have declined from hundreds annually in the late 1990s and early 2000s to only 2 in 2022 and none in 2023 and 2024, while no security personnel fatalities were reported from 2019 to 2024.

For many years, the state-wide *bandhs* declared by various organizations had become a recurring feature of public life in Assam. Such disruptions often affected transportation, education and commercial activity in the state. But since senior IPS officer, Gyanendra Pratap Singh, assumed charge as the Director General of Police (DGP), Assam, in 2023, public unrest has witnessed a sharp decline. Today, *dharnas* are a rare sight in the state and it is a significant credit for the government in Assam which took a firm stand and eradicated what had kept the state paralysed for a long time.

During Singh's tenure, there were also multiple weapon seizures and surrenders by extremists with no new or active extremist groups emerging during this period. The improvement in the security situation has also been reflected in the phased withdrawal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from several districts of

Assam. It is now in effect in only three districts in Assam, namely, Tinsukia, Sivasagar, and Charaideo.

The Success Story of Rhino Protection

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, recently shared through Twitter (now X) some pictures of the pride of Assam, the beautiful one-horned rhino grazing amidst the greenery of the wild. "With ZERO poaching, every visit to Assam's national parks throws up such magnificent visuals of the one-horned rhino, basking in all its glory", he wrote in his post.

The poaching of the precious one-horned rhino in the state has been a continuing menace for many decades in the state. In 2022, however, Assam accomplished something that conservationists had long thought unattainable—recording no rhino poaching for the first time in 45 years. The reduction in rhino poaching incidents in recent times has led to a significant climb in the statistics of rhino population in Assam.

A key role in this shift was played by former Assam DGP and now Director General of CRPF, Gyanendra Pratap Singh, under whose leadership the Assam Police moved from traditional forest patrolling to a technology-driven intelligence and enforcement approach in anti-poaching efforts. Strengthened surveillance and coordinated efforts between the forest officials and the local communities have majorly contributed to these outcomes.

It is also to be noted here that G.P. Singh's work can be also extended to the strengthening of crime detection and overall law enforcement in Assam. For example, under his leadership, the Assam Police had successfully pushed back many Bangladeshi infiltrators along the India-Bangladesh border.

The Growth of Tourism in Assam

With improvements in security and connectivity, Assam has also successfully positioned itself as a major tourism destination in North-east India. The state's cultural heritage and wildlife reserves have attracted growing numbers of domestic and international visitors in recent times. Based on the data published by the government, domestic tourist arrivals rose from 22,86,630 in 2004-05 to 43,339,485 in 2011-12 and reached 98,12,195 by 2022-23, while international tourist arrivals steadily increased from 7,285 to 16,400 and finally to 18,946 over the same periods.

The Assam government has also launched several major ecotourism and heritage projects to boost tourism in the region that includes - the Kaziranga Orchid Park, the Saraihat Lake Park in Amingaon and the Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park just to name a few. Further, increased tourism activity has also generated economic opportunities for local communities and small businesses.

Fight against Corruption and Drugs

Further various efforts to strengthen transparency and accountability have also featured prominently in public discourse surrounding governance in Assam. Various actions targeting corruption and administrative irregularities have been undertaken with the stated objective of improving public service delivery and institutional credibility. From 2021 to 2024, a total of 256 accused individuals indulged in corruption have been arrested, out of which 236 were public servants.

Meanwhile, as drug trafficking and substance abuse emerged as major concern across the region of North-east India, the Assam government has in response facilitated extensive crackdowns and enforcement drives to curb the spread of drugs. In line with the government's zero-tolerance policy on narcotics, the Assam Police under G.P. Singh conducted extensive anti-drug operations. The intensified crackdown led to 5,427 cases registered, 8,769 arrests, and drug seizures valued at ₹1,304.73 crore in the

year 2023 and 2024.

The Focus on Women and Children

Alongside the concerns of security and law and order, much attention has also been directed towards social welfare and the protection of vulnerable groups like women and children. Initiatives aimed at reducing crimes against women and children, improving access to welfare schemes and strengthening legal enforcement have formed part of this broader agenda of the government.

In 2023, the state launched two major drives against child marriage, resulting in the registration of 5,877 cases and the arrest of more than 6,000 individuals. These interventions contributed to a significant decline in teenage pregnancies, which fell from 9,330 cases in 2022 to 3,401 in 2024. The campaign also coincided with improvements in key social indicators, including the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Through a collaborative effort involving the Assam Police, UNICEF, and the UTSAH Child Rights Organisation, The Assam Police Sishu Mitra Programme was launched in 2019 to ensure the sensitive, empathetic, and legally compliant handling of child-related cases. Further, effective investigation and prosecution have resulted in 1,174 convictions in crimes against women and children between 2021 and 2024.

Conclusion

The concept of protecting *Jati, Mati and Bheti* has remained a recurring theme in Assam's political discourse. Policies relating to indigenous rights, cultural preservation and demographic concerns have frequently been framed within this broader objective.

Supporters of the present government argue that several administrative and legislative measures, like eviction against illegal encroachments on places of cultural importance and forest areas across the state, have been carried out to safeguard Assamese identity. According to official data, 238 sq km of area has been cleared through 170 eviction drives in the state.

While the challenges continue to exist, the government's focus on development and the broader narrative in Assam has increasingly shifted from a concern of instability and conflict to one focusing on better governance and building development for the region.

Warm Felicitation to Indian Women's Cricketer Uma Chetry by Dibrugarh District Sports Association

M Hashim Ali, Correspondent, Dibrugarh, June 7: Indian women's cricket team player and Assam's daughter, Uma Chetry, who is in Dibrugarh to participate in the ongoing Liberty Cup Women's T20 Cricket Tournament at the Jalan Outdoor Stadium of the Dibrugarh District Sports Association, was warmly felicitated today at the association's office. At a function held at the Sarbananda Sonowal Sports Project Office of the Dibrugarh District Sports Association, the association's President Niranjan Saikia, General Secretary Kamakhya Saikia, Working President Manas Jyoti Dutta, and Cricket Secretary Abdur Rahman extended a warm welcome and felicitated the international cricketer with a gamosa, chheng chador, traditional Assamese muga attire, flower bouquets, and other gifts. They also conveyed their best wishes for her continued success and progress in her



sporting career. Uma Chetry expressed her happiness at getting the opportunity to play at the Jalan Outdoor Stadium of the Dibrugarh District Sports Association and praised the stadium's infrastructure and facilities.

During the event, officials of the tournament organizer, M Power NGO, including Imdad Ahmed and other office-bearers, also honoured Uma Chetry by presenting her with a felicitation certificate, a ceremonial xorai (traditional Assamese offering tray), and other gifts. Additionally, representatives from the Dibrugarh Press Club, including General Secretary Ripunjay Das, the Dibrugarh Students' Association, the Greater Dibrugarh Press Club, and the Dibrugarh Youth Society were present and extended a warm welcome to Uma Chetry. The programme was conducted by Bipul Chutia, Secretary of the Athletics Deptt of the Dibrugarh Dis-

Astronomers discover exoplanets with magnetic fields

Washington: Based on the behaviour of winds on seven large and hot gas exoplanets, astronomers have obtained the strongest evidence to date that planets beyond our solar system possess magnetic fields, like Earth and five other planets in our solar system. The finding, based on observations by telescopes in Chile and Hawaii, deepens the understanding of exoplanets by showing that at least some share an important characteristic present in all but two of the solar system's eight planets. A magnetic field is an invisible force field generated by the movement of electrically conducting material deep inside a planet - a molten metal core - combined with the planet's rotation. While none of the gaseous exoplanets in this study are candidates for hosting life, a magnetic field could be one of the factors that helps make a rocky planet like Earth habitable. These exoplanets each orbit very close to a large and hot star, with one side permanently facing the star and the other side perpetually facing away, as the moon does with Earth. This type of planet is called a "hot Jupiter" because of a comparable size and composition to our solar system's largest planet, though with a much higher temperature. The seven planets ranged in mass from roughly the same as Jupiter to more than three times as massive. Strong winds blow from the hot "dayside" to the cold "nightside" on these planets. The orbital proximity of the planets to their host stars leaves them with scorching atmospheric temperatures on the dayside. All are closer to their host star than the solar system's innermost planet, Mercury, is to the sun. "What you would expect is that the planets with hotter temperatures would have stronger winds. The more energy you put into the system, the more violent the winds become. But we see the opposite," said astronomer Julia Seidel of the Observatoire

de la Côte d'Azur's Lagrange Laboratory in Nice, France, lead author of the study published on Tuesday in the journal *Nature Astronomy*. "It's the hottest planets that have the least strong winds mixing the atmosphere. And that's really strange from what we know of how atmospheres behave," Seidel said. "That means all that energy that the star puts into the planet's atmosphere has to be dissipated in a different way. And the only possibility to brake the atmosphere that much that fast is via the magnetic field and its interaction with the moving charged particles of the atmosphere." Wind speeds on the seven exoplanets ranged up to 25,000kmh, stronger than on Jupiter. Considering that most of our solar system's planets have magnetic fields, the researchers said it is not surprising that exoplanets do too. But they said that scientists until now had struggled to come up with convincing evidence. "We do not look at a singular exoplanet, but we look at a population of them and see a trend emerge," Seidel said. Jupiter's magnetic field is the largest and most powerful one in our solar system. The seven exoplanets generated magnetic fields smaller than that of Jupiter but comparable to solar system planets in general. Mercury, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune join Earth and Jupiter as the solar system's planets generating a global magnetic field. Venus and Mars are the two planets lacking a magnetic field, though Ganymede, a large moon of Jupiter, generates its own magnetic field. Earth's moon long ago also generated its own magnetic field. A magnetic field is one of the factors behind whether a planet is able to maintain its atmosphere over long periods of time. For instance, Mars once had a magnetic field, but lost it billions of years ago after its interior cooled, and now has only a tenuous atmosphere and an inhospitable landscape.

Israel says US backs striking Beirut suburbs if Hezbollah attacks

Beirut: Israel warned on Tuesday (Jun 2) that its US ally would not restrain it from striking Hezbollah's bastions in Beirut's suburbs if the Iran-backed group continues to target northern Israeli towns. US President Donald Trump had announced an agreement to halt attacks, but neither side has publicly accepted it, and Israel's defence minister said the Lebanese capital's southern suburbs remain potential targets. The warning came hours after Israel's air defences intercepted two projectiles that crossed from Lebanon. According to Lebanon's National News Agency, Israel also conducted fresh air strikes on south Lebanon on Tuesday. Recent days have seen a dramatic escalation in fighting and bombardment as Israeli troops stage their deepest incursion into Lebanon in two decades. "If Israeli towns continue to be attacked, we will evacuate and strike the Shiite Dahiyeh quarter in Beirut, Hezbollah's stronghold," Defence Minister Israel Katz told a conference. "The US endorsed this principle and conveyed it to the Lebanese government and all relevant actors." According to Lebanese authorities, Hezbollah would no longer fire into Israel under the agreement revealed by Trump, while the Israeli military would spare Beirut's southern suburbs, a group of Shia-majority districts where the militants have long held sway. An adviser to Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, told AFP that he would guarantee that Hezbollah would respect a "global ceasefire", if one was agreed. The aide, Ali Hamdan, said a "global ceasefire means a halt to Israeli strikes by air, land or sea, and that it will not carry out detonations or demolitions" in the south, where Israel is accused of razing entire villages. "FORETERNITY!" Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on Mar 2 by firing rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader, and Tehran has insisted that Lebanon be included in any peace deal with Washington. As the violence threatened to scupper a ceasefire in the wider Middle East war between the US and Iran, Leila Shahab, 35, a resident of Beirut's southern suburbs, told AFP that she and her

family had fled the area after the Israeli threats "because of the kids". "But now we've come back. We found the situation has calmed down a bit," she said. "Israel's strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs will cease, and in exchange Hezbollah will not attack Israel. And we will work to ensure the ceasefire expands to include all of

tations between Israel and Lebanon was due to take place later Tuesday and on Wednesday. Military delegations held security talks last week. A truce to halt the fighting in Lebanon began on Apr 17, but has never been observed. Both Israel and Hezbollah accuse each other daily of violat-



Lebanon's territory," the Lebanese presidency said, echoing Trump. "There will be no troops going to Beirut, and any troops that are on their way have already been turned back," Trump said, after what he described as a "very productive" call with Netanyahu, later adding in a social media post that he hoped Israel and Hezbollah would stop fighting "for eternity!" According to Axios, however, Trump called Netanyahu "fucking crazy" and accused him of putting Iran peace talks at risk. "Likewise, through highly placed representatives, I had a very good call with Hezbollah, and they agreed that all shooting will stop - that Israel will not attack them, and they will not attack Israel," Trump said. According to Iran's Tasnim news agency, Tehran is no longer engaging in talks with Washington due to Israel's offensive. TRADING BLOWS The fourth round of US-hosted direct nego-

ing the ceasefire, justifying their attacks by blaming the other for breaches. According to Lebanon's health ministry, Israeli attacks since Mar 2 have killed at least 3,433 people. Lebanon's civil defence agency said six people had been killed in an Israeli strike on the south Lebanon village of Marwanieh, two of them children. Lebanon's public university postponed some examinations on Tuesday, after two students and their father were killed while returning to south Lebanon after sitting exams a day earlier. Israel's military said two of its soldiers had been killed in southern Lebanon, bringing to 27 the number of Israeli military deaths since early March. On Sunday, Israeli troops seized Beaufort Castle, which commands sweeping views of south Lebanon. Israeli forces used the castle, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, as a base during their previous two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon that ended in 2000.

Lebanon says Hezbollah accepted US proposal to stop attacks

Washington: Lebanon said on Monday (Jun 1) Hezbollah had accepted a US proposal to stop attacking Israel in exchange for Israel halting attacks on south Beirut, after President Donald Trump reported having a "very good call" with the Iran-backed group. Under the arrangement, which Hezbollah has accepted, according to a statement from the Lebanese embassy in Washington shared by the Lebanese presidency, "Israeli strikes on Dahiyeh" - Beirut's southern suburbs - "would cease in exchange for

Hezbollah refraining from launching attacks against Israel". Israel had threatened to strike the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital again on Monday. Israel's growing offensive in Lebanon, including heavy bombardment and its deepest ground invasion in two decades, has threatened to scupper the ceasefire between the United States and Iran in the wider Middle East war. Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the conflict on Mar 2 by firing rockets at Israel in retaliation for the US-Israeli killing of Iran's supreme leader. Trump said he had persuaded Israel and Hezbollah to de-escalate. "There will be no Troops going to Beirut, and any Troops that are on their way, have already been turned back," Trump said on his Truth Social network after a "very productive" call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "Likewise, through highly placed Representatives, I had a very good call with Hezbollah, and they agreed that all shooting will stop - That Israel will not attack them, and they will not attack Israel," he added. Netanyahu later said he had told Trump "that if Hezbollah does not cease attacking our towns and our citizens, Israel will strike terrorist targets in Beirut". But Trump doubled down on his ceasefire push, posting on Truth Social that "hopefully" Israel and Hezbollah would stop fighting "for ETERNITY!"



"COMPREHENSIVE CEASEFIRE" The announcements came on the eve of a fourth round of US-hosted direct negotiations between Israel and Lebanon on Tuesday and Wednesday. Military delegations held security talks last week. Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah said his group's position was "clear and stipulates a comprehensive ceasefire across all Lebanese territory", Hezbollah's Al-Manar television channel reported. But Hezbollah claimed multiple attacks on Israeli targets, mainly in southern Lebanon, including after Trump's announcement. Earlier on Monday, Tehran said a Lebanon ceasefire remained a key condition for any deal with Washington, as Iran's Revolutionary Guards threatened to open "new fronts" in the war over Israel's offensive in Lebanon. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported Israeli airstrikes on dozens of locations in the country's south, including one that damaged a hospital in the city of Tyre. An AFP correspon-

dent saw heavy damage in the area and first responders putting out a blaze at the Jabal Amel hospital's car park, which had been hit. The health ministry shared videos showing damage inside a hospital ward, with rubble and debris on the ground, blown-out ceilings, blood on the floor and shattered glass. Near the border, Father Antonios Farah, a priest for the village Qlayaa, where some residents are still holding out despite Israeli evacuation orders, told AFP a strike on a car had killed a man, his son

"to respect the cessation of hostilities". The UN Security Council was holding an emergency meeting on the war in Lebanon on Monday. In a report to the Security Council seen by AFP, Guterres said it would be necessary to maintain peacekeepers in Lebanon after the mandate of the current mission expires at year-end. Earlier, Netanyahu and his Defence Minister Israel Katz said they had ordered strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs in light of Hezbollah's "repeated violations of the ceasefire ... and the attacks on our cities and citizens". Israel's military later urged residents of the area, a Hezbollah stronghold mostly spared heavy attacks since April, to evacuate. Katz said there would be "no calm in Beirut" if Hezbollah attacks continued, vowing to establish a military-controlled zone in the area of southern Lebanon's Litani River. AFP journalists saw families fleeing the densely populated southern suburbs. South Beirut resi-

dent Hadi, 24, said he had hoped for some stability during the truce, but "that feeling did not last long". "Our fears intensified this morning" after the Israeli announcement, which "caused widespread panic, and we immediately left the area", he told AFP by telephone. A truce to halt the fighting in Lebanon began on April 17, but has never been observed. Both Israel and Hezbollah accuse each other daily of violating the ceasefire, justifying their attacks by blaming the other's alleged breaches.

and his daughter, who were students, as he drove them back from university exams in Beirut. Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli attacks since Mar 2 have killed at least 3,433 people. Israel's military said two of its soldiers had been killed in southern Lebanon, bringing to 27 the number of Israeli military deaths since early March. "FEARS INTENSIFIED" Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, urged all sides

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land or sea, and that it will not carry out detonations or demolitions" in the south, where Israel is accused of razing entire villages. "FORETERNITY!"

Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on Mar 2 by firing rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader, and Tehran has insisted that Lebanon be included in any peace deal with Washington. As the violence threatened to scupper a ceasefire in the wider Middle East war between the US and Iran, Leila Shahab, 35, a resident of Beirut's southern suburbs, told AFP that she and her family had fled the area after the Israeli threats "because of the kids". "But now we've come back. We found the situation has calmed down a bit," she said. "Israel's strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs will cease, and in exchange Hezbollah will not attack Israel. And we will work to ensure the ceasefire expands to include all of Lebanon's territory," the Lebanese presidency said, echoing Trump. "There will be no troops going to Beirut, and any troops that are on their way have already been turned back," Trump said, after what he described as a "very productive" call with Netanyahu, later adding in a social media post that he hoped Israel and Hezbollah would stop fighting "for eternity!" According to Axios, however, Trump called Netanyahu "fucking crazy" and accused him of putting Iran peace talks at risk. "Likewise, through highly placed representatives, I had a very good call with Hezbollah, and they agreed that

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The fourth round of US-hosted direct negotiations between Israel and Lebanon was due to take place later Tuesday and on Wednesday. Military delegations held security talks last week. A truce to halt the fighting in Lebanon began on Apr 17, but has never been observed. Both Israel and Hezbollah accuse each other daily of violating the ceasefire, justifying their attacks by blaming the other for breaches. According to Lebanon's health ministry, Israeli attacks since Mar 2 have killed at least 3,433 people. Lebanon's civil defence agency said six people had been killed in an Israeli strike on the south Lebanon village of Marwanieh, two of them children. Lebanon's public university postponed some examinations on Tuesday, after two students and their father were killed while returning to south Lebanon after sitting exams a day earlier. Israel's military said two of its soldiers had been killed in southern Lebanon, bringing to 27 the number of Israeli military deaths since early March. On Sunday, Israeli troops seized Beaufort Castle, which commands sweeping views of south Lebanon. Israeli forces used the castle, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, as a base during their previous two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon that ended in 2000.

council's agenda, particularly during the month in which they hold the rotating presidency. The Philippines has centred its campaign on regional security, climate change and the upholding of international law, rather than the contentious issue of territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Forti said this suggests Manila, if elected, would be keen to avoid turning the council into a battleground over a single issue. "Inevitably, the Philippines will have to deal with China as the major player on the security council and in its neighbourhood," he told CNA. "Manila will have to very carefully balance the positions it takes, not only on its own region, but also other issues of world affairs where the US and China are on opposing sides."

SPOTLIGHT ON MYANMAR INSTEAD? Christopher Ankersen, a clinical professor of global affairs at New York University, said a Philippine term on the council could instead draw renewed international attention to Myanmar, which continues to face significant humanitarian and political challenges following years of instability. "We could probably see some broad support for a resolution talking about the need for forward progress, convening some kind of discussion about the situation in Myanmar," said Ankersen, a former senior UN official in Southeast Asia. "I think that's something that the Philippines could and should bring to the table." Meanwhile, experts say the ongoing tensions between Thailand and Cambodia may not feature prominently on Manila's security council agenda.

Philippines' UN Security Council bid could amplify ASEAN voice on global issues

New york: The United Nations General Assembly will vote on Wednesday (Jun 3) to elect new non-permanent members to the UN Security Council for two-year terms beginning in 2027. The Philippines and Kyrgyzstan are vying to fill the vacant Asia-Pacific seat. Manila has mounted a high-profile campaign for the position, with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr travelling to the UN's New York headquarters in March to personally advocate for the Philippines' candidacy. "The Philippines has regularly proven itself to be an independent, trusted partner, an innovative pathfinder, and committed peacemaker," he told the UNGA during a special address. Analysts say a successful Philippine bid could provide an opportunity to elevate Southeast Asian concerns within the UN's most powerful body. "Elected members ... represent not only their national interests, but also those of their neighbours," said Daniel Forti, head of UN affairs at the International Crisis Group. "(We) could certainly expect to see a lot more thinking and influence of ASEAN in how the Philippines would explain its positions and advocate for certain priorities on the UN Security Council."

ASEAN PRIORITIES ON A GLOBAL STAGE

The 15-member body tasked with maintaining international peace and security has five permanent members: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the US. Ten non-permanent members are elected for staggered two-year terms, with five members replaced each year. They vote on resolutions and help shape the

International Seminar on Environment Day Observed at DIET Morigaon

Achyut KR Nath, Corres- Narayan Sharma and Dr Pranam Jyoti Sarma and on Generation Z consumers,



spendent, Morigaon, Jun 7: In observance of World Environment Day, the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Morigaon, in collaboration with Cotton University, Guwahati and Bodoland University, Kokrajhar organized an International Seminar on the theme "Environment at the Crossroads: Balancing Development with Sustainability" at the DIET Morigaon auditorium which kicked off on Friday and concluded today. Today a panel discussion on the theme held where experts spoke on balancing development with sustainability at length. Earlier the Director of SCERT, Assam Nirada Devi inaugurated the panel discussion programme. She delivered a speech on the theme at length which mesmerized everyone in the programme. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from academicians, researchers, teachers, students, and environmental enthusiasts. The seminar was inaugurated with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp and Saraswati Bandana. Addressing the gathering, Kishor Kumar Das, Principal of DIET Morigaon, emphasized the urgent need to strike a balance between economic development and environmental sustainability. He highlighted the role of educa-

ing environmental awareness and fostering responsible citizenship. A major attraction of the event was the release of DIET Morigaon's annual magazine "Rashmi", showcasing the academic and creative achievements of students and faculty members. The academic sessions featured distinguished resource persons from various institutions, discussed planetary boundaries, biodiversity loss, and climate change, stressing the importance of conservation efforts. delivered a thought-provoking lecture on overconsumption and the environmental consequences of industrialization, highlighted the impacts of climate change on agriculture, food security, and human well-being, while captivated the audience with his presentation on bird watching and avian conservation in Northeast India. The speakers collectively emphasized the importance of sustainable lifestyles, environmental education, biodiversity conservation, and community participation in addressing contemporary environmental challenges. Participants were encouraged to adopt eco-friendly practices and contribute actively to environmental protection. The Day 1 Technical Session in Room no 1, under the chairmanship of Dr

Sailajananda Saikia. The session featured six presentations covering diverse themes such as environmental communication for conservation, eco-friendly nanotechnology for environmental solutions, artificial intelligence in wildlife conservation, ecological perspectives in Boro folktales, environmental ethics through education, and the role of children's literature and television in promoting environmental awareness. The presentations generated meaningful discussions among participants and chairpersons, highlighting innovative approaches to sustainability, biodiversity conservation, environmental education, and cultural ecology. The session concluded with a vote of thanks, certificate distribution, and a photo session, leaving participants enriched with valuable insights and a deeper commitment to sustainable development. At the same time, in Room No 2, another technical session chaired by Dr. Palmee Borthakur with Dr. Marami Goswami as resource person, featured five insightful presentations. Dr. Priti Rupa Saikia discussed the environmental rights guaranteed under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution with special reference to the pollution crisis in Byrnihat and the need for stricter environmental governance.

Devendra Das Sarma explored biodiversity conservation through the Arthashastra, highlighting ancient Indian environmental ethics and conservation practices. Ahnik Sanjib Kashyap presented a study on the impact of greenwashing

on Generation Z consumers, emphasizing the importance of authenticity and ethical marketing in the FMCG sector. Parismita Hazarika, Puja Chutia, and Nishamani Kar examined the cultural, nutritional, and economic significance of Assam's traditional glutinous rice varieties and stressed the need for their conservation. Professor Dharitri Kalita delivered an engaging presentation on eco-horror in Indian cinema, demonstrating how films portray nature's response to environmental degradation and encourage ecological awareness. The programme of 1st day concluded with Dr. Palmee Borthakur planting a Nahor tree in memory of the late Zubeen Garg as a tribute to his legacy and contribution to Assamese culture.

World Environment Day Observed with Emotional "Nahor" Plantation Tribute to Zubeen Garg in Dhekiajuli

Dhekiajuli, June 7: In a unique blend of environmental awareness and cultural emotion, nature based organization Seuj Society observed "World Environment Day 2026" across Dhekiajuli with a massive "Nahor" plantation drive dedicated to Assam's beloved musical icon, Zubeen Garg.



The green mission turned into an emotional tribute as hundreds of saplings were planted in memory of the legendary artiste. The central programme at Dhekiajuli drew special public attention with the active participation of Kajal Bora, a close former associate of Zubeen Garg, and renowned Orang-based journalist Naba Kumar Deka. Their symbolic plantation of "Nahor" saplings at Ward No. 1 Shiva Temple premises, the public library campus and the Chah Janajati Karmachari Parishad office created a deeply emotional atmosphere among nature lovers and admirers of Zubeen Garg. Observers described the presence of Kajal Bora and journalist Naba Deka as the "heart of the programme," as both personalities passionately spread the message of environmental protection while recalling Zubeen Garg's deep love for nature and humanity. The saplings were offered by retired veterinary officer Dr. Umesh Chandra Das and noted environmental promoter Girish Chandra Das. The campaign witnessed enthusiastic participation from youth leaders, environmental activists, and social workers from different parts of Assam. The Seuj Society units carried forward the green mission under the leadership of State President and environmental journalist Sanjay Baruah. The organization successfully concluded the programme with the plantation of hundreds of "Nahor" saplings, sending a strong message of ecological responsibility and cultural unity among all sections of society.

Luit Blue organises free sapling distribution drive on World Environment Day

Guwahati: Assam's homegrown women-led packaged drinking water brand Luit Blue organised a free sapling distribution drive at Hajongbari, Panikhaiti in Guwahati on the occasion of World Environment Day 2026, and encouraged community participation. The initiative also received valuable support from Manoj Goswami, AFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Guwahati SF Division, Basistha. The programme was guided by Smti Sayambrita

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were urged to clean and reuse empty bottles for planting saplings, turning everyday packaging into a small but meaningful step towards sustainability. "As a women-led homegrown brand from Assam, Luit Blue believes that responsibility goes beyond providing safe hydration. Through this sapling distribution drive, we wanted to encourage people to plant a tree in honour of mothers and also adopt simple sustainable habits such as reusing bottles as planters. Every sapling planted and nurtured today is a step towards a greener future," said Mondalica Chaliha, founder of Luit Blue. Participants were urged to plant and nurture the saplings as a meaningful contribution towards protecting the environment and creating a greener tomorrow. Luit Blue expressed gratitude to the Forest Department, community leaders, volunteers and local residents for their support in making the initiative a success. Luit Blue is a Guwahati-based packaged drinking water brand inspired by the Brahmaputra, locally known as Luit, and is built around the values of purity, safe hydration, community participation and sustainability.



LGBI Airport celebrates Environment Day through green and awareness initiatives

Guwahati: Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi International (LGBI) Airport commemorated World Environment Day through a series of initiatives aimed at promoting environmental awareness and sustainability. The programme commenced at the GIAL Administrative Office with an oath-taking ceremony, followed by a cleanliness drive from the office premises to the New Airport SOS Road. Employees of Guwahati International Airport Limited, along with Central Industrial Security Force personnel, actively participated in the initiative. As part of the observance, 150 saplings were planted along the SOS Road. In parallel, passengers were encouraged

to adopt eco-friendly practices through a sapling distribution drive

also noted the healthy growth of saplings planted during previous



at the terminal. To further engage travellers and spread awareness on environmental conservation, a Nukkad Natak was performed by Creative Galaxy team at the airport terminal, drawing significant interest from passengers. The airport

Malabar Group's hunger free world shows how a daily meal can drive social transformation

Guwahati/Dibrugarh: Malabar Group's humanitarian initiative, Hunger Free World, has highlighted the broader social impact of its Street Meal Distribution Programme, demonstrating how regular meal outreach can serve as a gateway to rehabilitation, healthcare, shelter access and family reunification for vulnerable individuals. Marking World Hunger Day, the group released its Rehabilitation Impact Report titled "Impact Stories: How a Daily Meal Opens the Door to a Transformed Life", documenting cases where daily interactions through meal distribution led to life-changing interventions. The programme is implemented on the ground by Thanal. Operating across 20 states in India and nine countries, including six GCC nations, the United States, the United Kingdom and Zambia, the initiative currently reaches over 1.43 lakh beneficiaries through its two major interventions — the Street Meal Distribution Programme and Micro Learning Centres. Commenting on the initiative, M. P. Ahammad, Chairman of Malabar Group, said that consistent meal out-

reach helps build trust, often becoming the foundation for rehabilitation, healthcare access, emotional support and dignity restoration. The report cites several success stories from across India. In Nagercoil, an elderly man was connected to a care home after expressing his desire for a safer life. In Kumbakonam, a bedridden man received rehabilitation and hygiene support, while in Chennai, a woman living in distress was helped into a care facility through sustained outreach. The programme also facilitated a family reunification between Udupi and Chennai and enabled medical intervention and shelter support for a physically challenged senior citizen in Tiruchirappalli. The initiative forms part of Malabar Group's wider CSR strategy focused on inclusive development. The company contributes five per cent of its net trading profit towards social responsibility programmes spanning hunger eradication, education, healthcare, housing, women empowerment and environmental sustainability.



Tata Trusts' Antaran initiative empowers women artisans

Guwahati: Tata Trusts' Antaran initiative is leading a major socio-economic transformation in India's handloom sector by shifting the paradigm from traditional wage-employment to creative entrepreneurship. This strategic intervention is empowering rural women artisans to become independent business owners, preserving India's rich textile heritage while ensuring long-term financial resilience for their families and communities. By establishing comprehensive incubation and design hubs, the program provides weavers with critical tools in business management, contemporary design, financial literacy, and direct-to-market digital strategies to transition them from anonymous laborers into confident industry leaders. Despite comprising over seventy-two percent of the country's handloom workforce, rural women artisans have historically been relegated to low-wage, behind-the-scenes labor with limited market visibility and minimal control over their own earnings. The core

of the Antaran model directly addresses this disparity by breaking the traditional dependency on intermediaries. Historically, weavers relied heavily on local middlemen who dictated design choices and captured the majority of the profit margins. To dismantle this restrictive cycle, Antaran's incubation centers offer a structured, multi-stage curriculum focused on design innovation, teaching artisans how to adapt traditional weaves for modern global sensibilities without losing cultural authenticity. The program also integrates essential business and financial literacy, instructing weavers on pricing, budgeting, costing, and managing micro-enterprises. Finally, the curriculum builds crucial digital skills that allow women to showcase their work on e-commerce platforms, coordinate directly with urban buyers, and manage logistics independently, ensuring a larger share of the economic value remains within the local community. The real-world socio-economic impact of this approach is

vividly reflected in the growth of its participants, who are rapidly transitioning from weavers to job creators in their own right. Dipika Kakati of Assam, founder of Poni Handlooms, has evolved from an anonymous weaver into a highly organized entrepreneur who now manages her own brand, experiments with contemporary color palettes, and employs other women from her village. "After joining Antaran, I started seeing it as my own small business," reflects Dipika Kakati. "Nothing is as fulfilling as seeing my name tagged on orders." Similarly, Pratibha Kalita, founder of Chandrodoy Weaves, has successfully built direct trade channels with design houses and premium retail markets in metros like Delhi and Mumbai, proving that traditional craftsmanship can meet modern demand when coupled with robust business acumen. Beyond individual financial stability, the Antaran program acts as a vital custodian of India's diverse cultural fabric.

Teenage sensation Sooryavanshi called up to India's T20I squad, Iyer named captain

June 6 : India have called up teenager Vaibhav Sooryavanshi for their upcoming Twenty20 international series against Ireland and England, the country's cricket board (BCCI) announced on Saturday, while Shreyas Iyer has been named captain.



Sooryavanshi, 15, is fresh off a breakout campaign in the Indian Premier League in which he topped the scoring charts with 776 runs in 16 matches, while also breaking Chris Gayle's record for most sixes in a season. His performances for the Rajasthan Royals made him the first player in IPL history to be named both the Most Valuable Player (MVP) and the Best Emerging Player, with many tipping him for a spot in the senior Twenty20 International side. Should Sooryavanshi go on to make his debut against either Ireland or England, he would become the youngest player to represent an Indian men's senior team, bettering great Sachin Tendulkar, who made his debut aged 16. "We've seen what he can do, towards playoffs, almost single-handedly carried Rajasthan Royals," selection panel chairman Ajit Agarkar told reporters. "Not just this season, had a great start and to back-it up in a competition that is as competitive and high-pressure, he's a game-

changer. We've got high hopes of him and he has picked himself."

Agarkar added that Iyer, who replaces Suryakumar Yadav, had been appointed captain after guiding Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to the Indian Premier League title in 2024, while also leading other franchises in the league.

Iyer last played a T20I in 2023.

"Led a team to (IPL) title, his own performances been good. He was close to being part of the World Cup squad, in my opinion was a 'stand-out candidate'," Agarkar added. India play Ireland in two T20Is later this month, before a five-match series against England in July. The BCCI also named their squad for this year's men's cricket competition at the Asian Games in Japan, which includes veteran bowler Jasprit Bumrah. The Asian Games men's competition will begin on September 24, with the final scheduled for October 3.

T20I Squad for Ireland and England series: Shreyas Iyer (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma, Nitish Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Mohammed Siraj, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

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

France to edge out Spain for World Cup glory, economists say

Bengaluru : France will beat Spain to lift the World Cup trophy on July 19 and five-time winners Brazil are expected to be the biggest flops, according to a Reuters survey of economists who said football was still harder to call than inflation. For 160 respondents from nearly every continent, this poll conducted once every four years is a welcome break from their macroeconomic forecasting in an era of wars, energy shocks and revived "transitory" versus persistent inflation debates. Their brief this time is the biggest World Cup yet - a 48-team tournament spanning 104 matches across the United States, Canada and Mexico - the first staged across three countries. Les Bleus drew 35 per cent of the vote in the May 11-June 5 poll to add a third star to their badge, edging Spain on 31 per cent - broadly in line with betting platforms like Polymarket - a result that would return Europe to the pinnacle of international football. France's Didier Deschamps would become the first coach since Italy's Vittorio Pozzo in 1938 to win two World Cups - and the only one to do so after also lifting the trophy as a player in 1998. Argentina, reigning champions and top of the current FIFA world rankings, Portugal and England rounded out the top five choices. "After the disappointment of the 2022 final, France looks well equipped to go one better this time," said Cathal Kennedy, senior economist at RBC and based in London. "The squad retains a number of members of the team that reached the final who are now reaching the peak of their careers, complemented by the emergence of some members of the Paris St Germain side." "Added to that, they should have a well-rested Kylian Mbappe to call on for the tournament." Mbappe, who just finished another prolific season at Real Madrid, was the poll's pick for both the Golden Ball, awarded to the tournament's best player, and the Golden Boot for top scorer. He only just pipped England captain Harry Kane, the European Golden Shoe winner after a career-best 61-goal season with Bayern Munich. There's likely another milestone within reach for both. Mbappe and Kane, on 12 and eight

World Cup goals respectively, are among those chasing German great Miroslav Klose's all-time record of 16, along with Lionel Messi on 13.

BASIC INSTINCT

There were the dreamers. Two respondents picked Japan, one Mexico and one Morocco -

may supply the drama - picked by 21 per cent as the underdogs most likely to surprise, ahead of Japan on 15 per cent. The search for breakout stars was wide open. Respondents scattered their votes across 46 names but Spain's 18-year-old forward Lamine Yamal topped the list. France's



any of which would make for a World Cup fairytale - among the 8 per cent who said loyalty had guided their choices. An overwhelming 73 per cent said they went with gut feeling. "As with any model, the forecast was adjusted with a heavy dose of gut feel!" quipped Shannon Bold, senior economist at the Bureau of Economic Research in Johannesburg. Around 20 per cent relied on data and models for their predictions. "The macroeconomists sat around together and created a house view," said Claudio Govenor at RMB.

But for Brazil, the poll view was bleak. Even Carlo Ancelotti's arrival as coach has failed to lift confidence, with nearly a third picking the Selecao - quarter-final losers to Croatia in 2022 - as the biggest football powerhouse likely to disappoint, followed by England and Germany. Norway, powered by Manchester City striker Erling Haaland,

Mike Maignan, Argentina's Emiliano Martinez and Spain's Unai Simon were among the favourites for the Golden Glove, awarded to the tournament's best goalkeeper.

COSTLY CUP

Off the pitch, organisers face a daunting logistical test as millions of fans prepare to descend on North America, with affordability already a flashpoint. Expensive tickets, accommodation and cross-country travel have raised fears this could be the costliest World Cup yet for fans.

So much for the break from inflation. Over 60 per cent said 2026 inflation was still easier to forecast than football's biggest prize - though recent years have made that a low bar. "We know when the World Cup is going to end," said Ozan Can Turkmen at Turkey's Sekerbank. "On the other hand, the energy supply crisis..."

Spain embrace favourites tag but De la Fuente warns World Cup offers no guarantees

Madrid : Spain arrive at the World Cup as favourites and manager Luis de la Fuente, architect of the side who won the Euros in remarkable fashion two years ago, is in no mood to play down the hype. Sitting down with Reuters before the tournament, he embraced the favourites tag as a long-overdue pat on the back for a project he has dedicated his life to for over a decade, working his way from Spain's grassroots programmes to the senior squad.

"We're delighted that's the case," De la Fuente said. "It helps us approach this World Cup with great enthusiasm, with the enthusiasm of those who want to achieve something significant, of those who are insatiable in their competitive spirit and who want to keep improving." He is, however, wary of complacency, not mistaking plaudits for any guarantee of success in a

World Cup he believes may be too crowded with contenders for anyone to swagger in as if they have won anything in advance. "If we think that being favourites guarantees anything, we're on the wrong track ... it guarantees nothing!" he said. "There are eight or 10 teams where you say, 'They're absolutely top-class teams'. As good as ours? Of course! Do we feel as strong as them at this point? Of course we do! But that guarantees nothing."

SPAIN'S INJURY CONCERNS ARE EASING

Spain open Group H against World Cup debutants Cape Verde on June 15, with De la Fuente confident that injury concerns over Lamine Yamal, Nico Williams and Mikel Merino are easing. Yamal and Williams sustained hamstring injuries in mid-April while Merino has been sidelined since January after undergoing sur-

three different countries - Canada, Mexico and the United States. That is why, he said, Spain will treat their 26-man squad as a flexible pool of players rather than having a fixed hierarchy. "It's going to be a very unique tournament, with high demands and little time for recovery," he said. "A lot of fatigue, long journeys, intense heat, varying temperatures, humidity, time zones and so on. Fundamentally,

it's going to take its toll physically. "We will rotate as we see fit at any given moment, depending, of course, on the needs and the actual condition of each player. They all arrive in good shape and ready to start, if not the first match, then the second. But my biggest concern right now is that no injuries should occur." Spain's 2024 Euro triumph raised expectations not only because they won but because they did so with vibrant, attacking football. De la Fuente accepts the responsibility but not as a burden. "We take it all in our stride and that's one of our strengths. We've always been aware of our potential but, at the same time, we realise that every match presents different challenges and that, alongside the responsibility we have for what we represent - which is crystal clear to us - there's another guiding principle: we go out there to enjoy ourselves, to do what we love. We're lucky to be able to make a living from football."



gery on his right foot to address a stress fracture. "I believe they will all be available for the first match," he said. "That doesn't mean they'll play, though. We might decide to give them less playing time in that first match, or none at all." For De la Fuente, the issue is not whether Spain arrive in good shape but whether they can survive a tournament he expects to test bodies as much as ideas. The 2026 World Cup will be the first after expanding to 48 nations and will be played in

NZ lock up Super Rugby semis as Crusaders, Chiefs and Blues progress

June 6 : The Canterbury Crusaders and Waikato Chiefs joined the Wellington Hurricanes in the Super Rugby Pacific semi-finals on Saturday, taking the Auckland Blues through with them after the Queensland Reds failed to break Australia's playoff hoodoo. Johnny McNicholl scored a hat-trick of tries as the Crusaders overpowered the Blues 52-31 in Christchurch before the Chiefs downed the Reds 46-24 in Hamilton to ensure the rest of the competition will be an all-New Zealand affair. The Blues still progressed as the highest-ranked losing team and will travel to Wellington next Saturday to take on the top-seeded Hurricanes, who underlined their title credentials with a record 66-12 demolition of the ACT Brumbies on Friday. The Chiefs, runners-up for the last three years, will stay in Hamilton to host the Crusaders in a re-match of last year's final on Friday. The Reds gave it everything they had to try and keep the competition international by becoming the first Australian team to win a Super Rugby playoff in New Zealand at the 23rd attempt. Lock Lukhan Salakaia-Loto gave them the perfect start with a try in the sixth minute at a rain-soaked Waikato Stadium but 12 minutes later was sent to the sinbin for a high tackle on All Blacks number eight Wallace Sititi. Hooker Samisoni Taukei'aho immediately crossed on the back of a rolling maul to give the Chiefs a 15-7 lead only for the Reds to hit back through prop Aidan Ross just before Salakaia-Loto returned. A Carter Gordon penalty edged the Reds in front soon after Chiefs centre Kyle Brown had been shown a yellow card but winger Kyren

Taumoefolau scored his second try just before the break to send the home side into halftime with a 22-17 lead. Flyhalf Damian McKenzie extended it to 29-17 with a try from a quickly-taken penalty under the posts in the 47th minute and the Chiefs then held out the Reds over more than 25 phases of attack. McKenzie added his second try 14 minutes from time and also slotted a second penalty after replacement hooker Matt Faessler crossed for the Reds. Fullback Isaac Hutchinson grabbed a sixth try for the home side in the last minute, which McKenzie converted to take his match tally to 26 points. "Really proud of that effort," said McKenzie. "We knew they were going to come out firing. They did exactly that ... so extremely proud of how we fought in that second half."

DISCIPLINARY BLOW FOR BLUES
An early disciplinary blow also undermined a strong start for the visitors at Christchurch's Te Kaha Stadium when Blues number eight Malachi Wrampling received a red card for a high tackle on Leicester Fainga'anuku. Crusaders fullback McNicholl took advantage with his first try almost immediately but in-form Blues flanker Anton Segner levelled up the scores with a try just before the half-hour mark. The next 10 minutes were all Crusaders, however, with skipper David Havili, winger Chay Fihaki and flyhalf Taha Kemara crossing to give the reigning champions a commanding 33-14 lead at the break. Havili sent McNicholl in for his second try five minutes after the restart to extend the lead to 40-14 and give the Blues a mountain to climb.

West Ham co-chair Sullivan steps down over 'false' historic allegations

London : West Ham United co-chairman David Sullivan resigned from his position with immediate effect on Saturday after becoming aware of what he called "factually incorrect and entirely false, decades-old allegations" about to be published. The 77-year-old businessman also stepped down as a director of WH Holding Limited and West Ham, who were relegated from the Premier League on the final day of the season. In a lengthy personal statement, Sullivan said he had become aware that the "factually incorrect and entirely false, decades-old allegations" concerning his personal life were due to be broadcast and published. "The false allegations levelled against me have been sensationalised by the media," Sullivan said. "After a lifetime spent building businesses in the adult industry in which I have met thousands of women, it is sadly inevitable that a small number of improper conduct claims are being made against me. I categorically deny these claims." Sullivan also declared that he would be suing the BBC for libel, along with any other media outlet that "repeats any libelous allegations."

Reuters has contacted the BBC for comment.

ALLEGATIONS UNRELATED TO WEST HAM

The club said none of the allegations relate to West Ham or any of its operations. "Interim Chief Executive Officer Karim Virani, reporting into the current Board of Directors, will continue to be responsible for leading the club's day-to-day operations," West Ham said. "The club will provide an update on the future structure of the Board of Directors in due course." Sullivan described his decision to step down as "incredibly painful" but one that was required. "None of these allegations relate to my more than 30 years in football; West Ham United has been one of the greatest passions and privileges of my life," Sullivan added. "I care deeply about the club, its supporters, its players, its staff, and its future. "At what is already a challenging and important time for the club, I refuse to allow personal matters concerning me to become an unnecessary distraction or a source of instability." Following their relegation, West Ham will play in the second-tier Championship for the first time since the 2011-12 season. "I am stepping down to apply my full energy and attention on fighting these false allegations," Sullivan said.

Zverev bids to end Grand Slam near-misses in French Open final with Cobolli

Paris : Alexander Zverev's long pursuit of a maiden Grand Slam title has led him back to the threshold at a topsy-turvy French Open, where the German's resolve will be tested by Italian dark horse Flavio Cobolli on Sunday. Long blocked by the golden generation of Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Novak Djokovic, and more recently by young guns Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner, the 29-year-old will hope his fourth trip to a major final turns into an overdue breakthrough. After holder Alcaraz's withdrawal and the early departures of Sinner and Djokovic reshaped the Roland Garros draw, second seed Zverev has capitalised with a calm surge through the field to earn his second Paris final appearance in three years. "The only thing I can control is that I play good tennis," Zverev told reporters after dismantling Czech 26th seed Jakub Mensik in the semi-finals. "I mean, I'll try to show my level. I'll try to do the right things. That's the only thing that matters to me." Roland Garros has long held promise for Zverev, but it is also where his hopes have frayed, from the brutal ankle injury that cut short his 2022 semi-final against Nadal to his defeat by Alcaraz in the 2024 final.

PERSONAL EDGE

Zverev carries another near-miss into the French Open final after his loss to Sinner in the 2025 Australian Open final, but he now has a golden chance to finally get over the line with a personal edge over his close friend Cobolli.

"I look forward to playing him in the final. Of course, it's his first final, so I'm happy for him that he reached it," added Zverev, who holds a 3-1 advantage in their head-to-head record. "He's a great player and a great guy. I like him. I like his dad a lot. Two very good people, just generally. "We got closer at the Laver Cup in 2024 in Berlin ... he's just a nice person. He has a good heart. He's extremely funny if you get to know him." The 24-year-old Cobolli booked his place in the title clash after fellow Italian Matteo Arnaldi pulled out of their semi-final due to a viral illness, and the 10th seed will be the fresher player heading into Sunday's clash. "Sometimes it helps. Sometimes it doesn't," Cobolli said. "Maybe having almost four days off is a lot, so you lose the rhythm, but I think also during the warm-up I played well. "I think I'll be ready for the final, for sure, but I also know that I'll be fresh."

Neerva Aqua Solution mineral water plant inaugurated in Chachal

Guwahati, June 7: The Neerva Aqua Solution mineral water plant was formally inaugurated at Chachal in Guwahati Assam Agricultural University of Upar Chachal Bihu and recipient of the Bharat Sanmilan. In his inaugural address, Dr Gaurav Award, inaugurated the project at a solemn ceremony. Hazarika expressed hope that



today.

The plant, with a production capacity of 2,000 litres per hour, has been set up by young entrepreneur Tafizul Islam near his residence on Mahapurush Madhavdev Path. It will operate under M/s Rif Life (Neerva) as a drinking water project.

Dr Mineshwar Hazarika, retired professor of Assam Veterinary College under

emony.

Several dignitaries attended the inaugural event, including advocate Lohit Hazarika; Dr Naba Nahar Deka, retired professor of Khanapara Veterinary College under AAU; Haji Abu Bakkar Ali, Tamizuddin Ahmed, Darbez Ali; local social worker Harendra Manta; and Naba Kumar Mudoi, General Secretary of the Central Committee

of the mineral water project would grow into a major project for the region and the state while maintaining quality and originality. He also congratulated the entrepreneur.

The event was anchored by noted cultural organizer Dhananjay Talukdar and saw the presence of over a hundred people who extended special best wishes to Tafizul Islam.

Contd. From Page 1 - - - - -

Swami Vivekanand University...

progressive Assam. The leadership emphasized the institution's commitment to nurturing talent, driving innovation, and contributing to the socio-economic growth of the region.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma appreciated the efforts of Swami Vivekanand University in building a strong academic ecosystem and encouraged the leadership to further expand opportunities for students in skill development, industry collaboration, and global exposure.

Chairman Mr. Manish Singh and Chancellor Dr. Ajay Karan reaffirmed the university's dedication to creating a vibrant learning environment that blends traditional values with modern educational practices, ensuring holistic growth for students.

This strategic dialogue marks a significant step towards positioning Swami Vivekanand University as a hub for quality education, innovation, and impactful research in Assam and beyond.

Guardian Ministers for...

Kamrup (M) and Dhemaji districts-Atul Bora, for Kokrajhar, Barga and Chirang districts-Charan Boro, for Morigaon and Kamrup districts-Ajanta Neog, for Bongaigaon and Barpeta districts-Ashwini Rai Sarkar, for Darrang and Dhubri Districts-Ashok Singhal, for Sibsagar and Charaideo districts - Bimal Bora, for Sonitpur and Nalbari districts - Biswajit Daimary, for Tamulpur and Goalpara districts - Jayanta Malla Baruah, for Sri Bhumi and Hailakandi Districts-Koushik Roy, for Mancachar, South Salmara and Lakhimpur districts - Keshab Mahanta, for Dima Hasao and Cachar districts - Krishnendu Paul, for Bajali and Udalguri districts - Nilima Devi, for Nagaon, Karbi - Anglong, Hojai and West Karbi - Anglong districts - Piyush Hazarika, for Biswanath and Golaghat districts - Dr. Ranaj Pegu and for Majuli and Dibrugarh districts - Sushanta Borgohain.

50 Bodo Youths from Udalguri...

Indian Army jointly organised a grand felicitation programme on Saturday at the auditorium of Udalguri Higher Secondary School.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from Army officials, district administration representatives, family members, and local residents. Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, BTC Deputy Chief Executive Member Rihan Daimary lauded the tireless efforts and dedication of the Indian Army training teams for guiding and motivating the youths toward national service. He stated that such initiatives are opening new doors of opportunity for the younger generation while strengthening their spirit of patriotism and discipline.

Daimary further remarked that the success of these youths would inspire many others across the region to dream of serving the nation through the armed forces.

According to official sources, the Indian Army had earlier conducted extensive awareness drives across various schools and colleges in Udalguri district under the Agnipath recruitment programme. More than 2,000 students from 30 educational institutions participated in the campaign. As part of the initiative, a pre-recruitment rally was organised on November 23, 2024.

Following the rally, 343 candidates were shortlisted and provided intensive coaching and preparation for the written examination under the supervision of the "Red Horns Gunners." Out of them, 234 candidates successfully qualified in the written examination and subsequently underwent rigorous physical training sessions.

The final recruitment rally, held from February 13 to 15, 2026, witnessed the selection of 119 youths, among whom 50 candidates have already received appointment letters to join the Indian Army.

Senior Army officer Brigadier G.S. Grewal, along with several other Army officials and district administration officers, attended the felicitation ceremony and encouraged the selected youths to serve the nation with dedication, courage, and integrity.

Over 260 Meritorious Koch...

Committee of the Central Assam Koch-Rajbongshi Students' Association, with support from allied Koch-Rajbongshi organizations, felicitated over 260 meritorious students who secured First Division in the HSLC and Higher Secondary examinations at a programme held at the Nagaon District Library auditorium.

Speaking at the event, former MLA Dr. Durlav Chamua encouraged students to pursue their goals with dedication, while chief guest MLA Rupak Sharma stressed that hard work, merit, and education are the keys to success. He also urged students to use mobile phones and social media responsibly.

Among others, Samaguri College Principal Dr. Indrajit Bezbaruah addressed the gathering and emphasized that language is not a barrier to quality education. Several distinguished guests and community leaders were present on the occasion.

The programme commenced with tributes to the legendary warrior Chilarai and renowned Assamese singer Zubeen Garg.

Contd. From Page 1 - - - - -

NFR Records a Consistent Freight...

the vital role of Railways in supporting public distribution systems, industrial activities and daily consumer needs. During the same period, 74 rakes were unloaded in Tripura, 34 rakes in Nagaland, 20 rakes in Manipur, 10 rakes in Arunachal Pradesh, 8 rakes in Mizoram and 1 rake in Meghalaya.

In addition, West Bengal recorded the unloading of 196 rakes, while Bihar accounted for 134 rakes comprising both essential and non-essential commodities, further strengthening regional supply chains, trade connectivity and economic activities across the region.

The movement of essential commodities and industrial goods remains crucial for meeting public needs and supporting economic activities across the region. Through close monitoring and coordinated efforts by field units, NFR has improved turnaround time and unloading efficiency, reaffirming its commitment to reliable freight operations and the socio-economic development of the Northeast, informed by CPRO of NFR Kapinjal Kishore Sharma.

Dibrugarh District Journalists'...

unique tree plantation programme at the Chukafa Samanway Kshetra in the town. As part of the initiative, 100 Nahor saplings along with various fruit-bearing tree saplings were planted. The programme, organized with the message of environmental conservation and awareness, was attended by Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation's in-charge Commissioner Nabhas Kumar Das, Deputy Mayor Ujjal Phukan, and Manjit Bora, Secretary of the Dibrugarh District Journalists' Association and President of the Greater Dibrugarh Press Club. They delivered valuable speeches emphasizing the importance of preserving nature. At the event, conducted by Ratul Burhagohain, General Secretary of the Greater Dibrugarh Press Club, a ceremonial lamp was lit before the portrait of renowned artist Zubeen Garg, known for his deep love for nature and his consistent advocacy against indiscriminate tree felling. The lamp was lit by senior journalist Rajib Borgohain, Advisor to the Dibrugarh District Journalists' Association.

Floral tributes were offered by the organization's advisor and former president Monoranjan Hazarika, Ahatsamuddin Ahmed, Director of Vidyapith Pathsala, and Chandan Phukan, a key figure associated with Chukafa Samanway Kshetra. Among those present at the programme were Assistant Secretaries of the Dibrugarh District Journalists' Association Muktamoni Hazarika and Homen Phukan; Magazine Editor of the Greater Dibrugarh Press Club Yadav Gogoi; Finance Secretary Shailesh Kumar Jain; and members including Hiranya Bora, Dhanti Saikia, Khagen Dutta, Jitu Das, Prashanta Saikia, Dinesh Das, Mridul Hazarika, Sahanawaz Ahmed, Atikur Rahman, Basu Devnath, Sujay Bhowmik, distinguished advocate Anuj Chettri, Moni Saikia, along with many journalists and eminent citizens. The

Indian Economy remains strong...

are creating new opportunities for businesses and citizens alike while laying the groundwork for future prosperity. According to him, infrastructure projects not only generate immediate economic activity but also contribute significantly to productivity and efficiency in the long run. Mr Modi reiterated that the government would continue investing heavily in infrastructure while maintaining a strong focus on social welfare programmes designed to uplift the poor and empower marginalized communities. He stressed that development should be inclusive and sustainable, ensuring that economic progress translates into tangible improvements in living standards. During his address, the Prime Minister also emphasized the importance of self-reliance in the energy sector, describing energy security as a crucial component of India's broader development strategy. He stated that the world is increasingly moving toward a green future and India is not merely participating in this transition but actively leading the way by balancing economic growth with ecological preservation. He said India's approach demonstrates that environmental responsibility and economic advancement can go hand in hand when supported by innovation, technology, and effective policy measures. The Prime Minister highlighted the country's growing investments in renewable energy, clean technologies, and sustainable development initiatives as evidence of its commitment to building a greener future. He observed that the transition to renewable energy is not only important from an environmental perspective but also essential for reducing dependence on imported fuels and strengthening national energy security. Earlier in the day, Mr Modi launched various infrastructure projects worth more than Rs 18,000 crore in Surat, underscoring the government's commitment to expanding industrial capacity, improving connectivity, and supporting economic growth. Addressing a large gathering in the city, the Prime Minister pointed out that Gujarat has emerged as a leading contributor to India's renewable energy sector. He stated that out of the nation's total renewable energy capacity of 250 Gigawatts, Gujarat alone contributes 50 Gigawatts, accounting for a significant one-fifth share of the country's green energy capacity. According to Mr Modi, this achievement reflects Gujarat's leadership in adopting clean energy solutions and its commitment to supporting India's energy transition. He said the state has become a model for sustainable development through its investments in renewable energy infrastructure, innovation, and industrial growth. The Prime Minister noted that Gujarat is poised to play an even more significant role in the country's future energy landscape as India shifts from conventional energy sources toward advanced green technologies. He emphasized that the transition from solar energy to green hydrogen and green ammonia would be critical for achieving energy self-reliance and securing the nation's long-term energy needs. Mr Modi explained that green hydrogen and green ammonia have the potential to transform multiple sectors, including industry, transportation, and power generation, while reducing carbon emissions and enhancing sustainability. He stated that Gujarat's strategic investments and favourable ecosystem position it as a major hub for these emerging technologies, which are expected to contribute significantly to India's economic growth and environmental objectives. The Prime Minister said that achieving self-reliance in energy would strengthen the country's resilience, reduce dependence on imports, and create new opportunities for innovation, manufacturing, and employment. During his address in Surat, Mr Modi also highlighted the remarkable transformation of the city over the years. Praising the spirit, determination, and entrepreneurial energy of its people, he said Surat has evolved into a modern and dynamic urban centre that exemplifies the possibilities of sustainable development. He described Surat's journey as a reflection of how effective governance, public participation, and innovative planning can work together to create a cleaner, greener, and more prosperous city. The Prime Minister particularly lauded Surat's emergence as a Green City and highlighted several initiatives that have contributed to this achievement. He praised the city's circular water economy model, which promotes efficient use, recycling, and conservation of water resources. According to him, such initiatives are becoming increasingly important as cities across the world face growing challenges related to water management and sustainability. Mr Modi said Surat's approach demonstrates how urban centres can adopt innovative solutions to address environmental concerns while supporting economic growth. The Prime Minister also commended the city's 'Waste to Wealth' initiative, describing it as a successful example of turning environmental challenges into opportunities for development. He noted that what began as a local effort has evolved into a mass movement over the last twelve years, inspiring greater awareness and participation among citizens. The initiative, he said, reflects the broader vision of transforming waste management into a resource-generating activity that benefits both the environment and the economy. By encouraging recycling, reuse, and sustainable practices, Surat has shown how communities can contribute to cleaner cities while creating economic value. Mr Modi stated that such models are increasingly relevant as India pursues its goals of sustainable urbanization and environmental stewardship. He emphasized that the government remains committed to supporting cities and states that embrace innovative solutions for sustainable development. The Prime Minister said that India's progress in renewable energy, urban development, infrastructure creation, and environmental conservation demonstrates the country's ability to pursue growth while remaining committed to ecological responsibility. He observed that the nation's development journey is being guided by a vision that seeks to combine economic prosperity with environmental sustainability and social inclusion. Before addressing the gathering in Surat, Mr Modi visited Hazira, where he reviewed ongoing industrial and infrastructure operations. During the visit, he assessed key projects and developments that contribute to the region's economic growth and industrial strength. The Prime Minister's visit highlighted the importance of industrial hubs such as Hazira in supporting manufacturing, exports, investment, and employment generation. He noted that strong industrial infrastructure is essential for sustaining economic growth and enhancing India's competitiveness in the global marketplace. Throughout his engagements in Daman and Surat, Mr Modi reiterated the government's commitment to building a developed India through a combination of economic reforms, infrastructure expansion, technological innovation, environmental sustainability, and social welfare. He stressed that the country's growth story is being shaped by long-term investments, forward-looking policies, and the collective efforts of citizens across sectors. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that India's strong economic fundamentals, expanding infrastructure, growing renewable energy capacity, and commitment to inclusive development would enable the nation to overcome global challenges and continue its rise as a major economic power. He said the government would remain focused on accelerating development, improving living standards, empowering citizens, and creating opportunities for future generations. Emphasizing that the foundation of the Indian economy remains strong and resilient, Mr Modi concluded that the nation is well-positioned to achieve its aspirations while contributing meaningfully to global growth, sustainability, and innovation in the years ahead.

Marwari Mahila Samiti Inaugurates "Amrit..."

Gobin Chandra Das, Executive President of the Bordowa Than Management Committee, during a ceremonial programme marked by lamp lighting and devotional chants. Speaking on the occasion, he emphasized that serving devotees is one of the highest forms of devotion.

Representatives of the Bordowa Than Management Committee and the Nagaon Marwari Sammelan appreciated the initiative and called for collective efforts towards the development of the historic religious institution.

A large number of dignitaries, members of the Marwari community, and devotees attended the programme. The donors who contributed to the establishment of the "Amrit Dhara" facility were also felicitated during the event for their generous support.

DMFT Barpeta Meeting Reviews PMKKKY Implementation and Development Priorities

Barpeta, June 7: A meeting of the Governing Council and Managing Committee of the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT), Barpeta, under the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY), was held today at the Conference Hall of the District Commissioner's Office, Barpeta. The meeting was chaired by Hon'ble Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly, Shri Ranjit Kumar Dass, and was attended by Hon'ble Member of Parliament Shri Phani Bhusan Choudhury, Hon'ble MLA Shri Jakir Hussain Sikdar, along with other members and officials.

During the meeting, the provisions, objectives and implementation guidelines of PMKKKY were discussed in detail, with particular emphasis on the effective utilisation of District Mineral Foundation funds for the welfare and development of mining-affected areas. The members deliberated on the priority sectors and the framework for preparation of the Annual Action Plan in accordance with the prescribed guidelines.

It was decided that a subsequent meeting would be convened shortly to deliberate on and finalise the specific schemes and projects to be taken up under PMKKKY in conformity with the approved guidelines.

Special Felicitation Ceremony Organised by Sivasagar District Students' Union

Khairuddin Ahmed, Staff Reporter Sivasagar, June 7: A special felicitation ceremony was organised today at Sivasagar Natya Mandir by the All Sivasagar District Students' Union (AASU), in collaboration with the Sivasagar Regional Students' Union, to honour students of Sivasagar district who secured more than 85 percent marks in the recently declared High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) and Higher Secondary (HS) examinations. The programme commenced with a chorus titled "Tore More Alokore Jatra", performed by students of Sivasagar Commerce College. The event was conducted by the General Secretary of the District Students' Union, Dipankar Saikia, while the session was presided over by District Union President Manab Hazarika. Representing the District Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner Bidisha Saikia inaugurated the programme. She appreciated the initiative taken by the Students' Union and remarked that such events contribute significantly to the intellectual and emotional development of students. Addressing the gathering, AASU General Secretary Samiran Phukan stated that AASU has been organising such felicitation programmes with the objective of celebrating the success of

meritorious students and encouraging them to become socially responsible citizens. He said that students should utilise education—the most powerful tool at their disposal—to reach greater heights of success. He emphasised that this phase of life is an important period for self-discovery and personal growth. According to him, every student should strive to become a valuable human resource through planned academic efforts and strong moral values. He also stressed the importance of social responsibility among students and urged the younger generation to develop innovative ideas for the preservation of Assam's language, culture, and heritage. He encouraged students to adopt a work-oriented approach and to respect the dignity of labour while exploring new avenues for progress.

As a distinguished guest, Dr. Surajit Barkataki, Dean of Students' Welfare and Professor in the Department of Mathematics at Dibrugarh University, addressed the students. He observed that success in the HSLC and Higher Secondary examinations should serve as a stepping stone in the search for purpose and direction in life. He emphasised that examination marks alone cannot determine the true worth of an individual and urged students to

Widow Remarriage Is a Boon, Not a Curse: Hindi Book Released at Nagaon District Sahitya Sabha

Safiqur Rahman, Staff Reporter, Nagaon, June 7: In a significant event promoting literary harmony and social awareness, a Hindi book titled "Vidhwa Vivah Abhishap Nahi Vardaan" (Widow Remarriage: Not a Curse, but a Boon), authored by journalist Ajay Mahatu, was formally released at the Kamaladevi Todi Bhawan under the auspices of the Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha.

Releasing the book, noted scholar and President of the Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha, Dr. Sarat Barkotoki, emphasized that literature transcends linguistic boundaries and serves as a universal medium for human emotions, ideas, and knowledge. He described the programme as a reflection of linguistic coexistence, cultural integration, and the spirit of a creative, people-oriented literary movement.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Barkotoki highlighted that while the primary objective of the Sahitya Sabha is the promotion and development of Assamese language and literature, it also functions as a broader platform for literature and culture. Referring to India's multilingual character, he stated that respect-



ing and embracing literary works in other Indian languages is a hallmark of cultural openness and national integration.

"Literature has no language barriers. Though languages may differ, the values and messages conveyed through literature are universal," he remarked. He further stressed that increased literary exchange between Hindi and Assamese can strengthen inter-state cultural relations and create wider opportunities for the promotion of Assamese literature across the country.

Dr. Barkotoki also recalled the pioneering role of late social reformer Jhumarmal Khetawat, who championed widow remarriage in Nagaon during the 1960s, describing his efforts as a landmark contribution to social reform in the region.

The meeting was chaired by Secretary of Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha, Rajiv Kumar Hazarika, while author Ajay Mahatu shared his experiences and motivations behind writing the book. Senior journalist Kanak Hazarika highlighted the social and cultural contributions made by Binod Khetawat and his family towards the development of Nagaon.

President of the Nagaon Press Club, Jiten Barkotoki, delivered an informative speech on the history and significance of widow remarriage in Assam. The programme was attended by several distinguished personalities, including former Sabha president Thagit Mahanta, social worker Chawarmal Khetawat, Sanjay Garodia, educationist Shrutimala Gayan, Apuuba Kumar Das, Principal of Kendriya Vidyalaya Nagaon, and Pramod Kothari, President of the Marwari Sammelan, Nagaon, among others.

The event was hosted by Binod Khetawat, who paid tribute to the legacy of his forefathers and their contributions to society. On the occasion, meritorious students were felicitated under a memorial initiative dedicated to late educationist Budharmal Khetawat. Several outstanding students, including Junaid Ahmed Laskar, were honoured for their academic achievements.

The programme commenced with the ceremonial lighting of lamps before the portraits of social reformer Jhumarmal Khetawat and educationist Budharmal Khetawat, followed by an inaugural ghosha recital by Hemanta Bordoloi.

The event not only celebrated the release of a socially relevant literary work but also reinforced the values of inclusivity, social reform, cultural dialogue, and national unity through literature.

Bongaigaon Refinery Extends Helping Hand to Health Sector of Chirang and Kokrajhar Districts

Materials Worth Approximately Rs.4.60 Crore Distributed Under CSR Initiative

Kanak Chandra Boro, Kokrajhar, Jun 7: In a significant boost to public healthcare in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) region, Bongaigaon Refinery - a unit of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) situated at Dhaligaon, Chirang district, today distributed health sector materials worth approximately Rs.4.60 crore to the districts of Chirang and Kokrajhar under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. The distributed items included ambulances, medical diagnostic equipment, vehicles, and cooking gas cylinders for Anganwadi centres.

A formal distribution programme was held at the conference hall of Bongaigaon Refinery, graced by BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary as the Chief

Guest. BTC's Executive Member for Health Services Derhasath Basumatary also addressed the gathering, highlighting the impact



Guest. In his address, Mohilary commended the Refinery for its exemplary gesture and extended his heartfelt gratitude to Executive Director and Refinery Chief Nayan Kumar Baruah. He observed that at a time when both the BTC administration and the Government of Assam are yet to fully realise their goals in the health sector, Bongaigaon Refinery's generous contribution encompassing ambulances, medical diagnostic instruments, and support for grassroots health workers would bring unprecedented relief to the people of the two districts.

Speaking on the occasion, Executive Director Nayan Kumar Baruah reaffirmed IOCL's commitment to community welfare and expressed the Refinery's dedication to supporting the development of the re-

the contribution would have on last-mile healthcare delivery across Chirang and Kokrajhar.

The programme was attended by Paniram Brahma, MLA along with BTC MCLAs and Secretaries, senior officials of Bongaigaon Refinery, officers and staff of health department, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, helpers were also present on the occasion.

Among the notable contributions, a Bolero vehicle was handed over to the District TB Officer, Chirang, while Kokrajhar district received a total of five vehicles, including an ambulance. Additionally, cooking gas cylinders were also distributed to a large number of Anganwadi centres across the two districts, aimed at improving the working conditions of frontline nutrition and childcare workers.

BGLA initiates biodiversity conservation in Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park

Kokrajhar, June 7: As a noble initiative for protection of bio-diversity of Bodoland, the Bodoland Golden Langur Association (BGLA), a

pump let's to every tourist regarding the rules to follow to stop harmful activities to environment, throwing single use plastics and bottles

mals habitats; he said adding that the illegal encroachments inside the National Park must be stopped at any cost. He also said very recently



Kokrajhar based NGO, erected signboards appealing visitors in the Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park to obey the rules while entering the wildlife zone. The signboards with slogans to protect wild animals on roadside way to Saralpara tourist spot along Bhutan border through Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park was erected from Digli, the entrance gate to the National Park to Ultapani. The programme was organized on the occasion of celebration of World Environment Day, 2026.

The BGLA also planted saplings on the roadside leading to Saralpara and also appealed the visitors and picnickers to follow the directives to drive slowly in the wildlife zone, stop blowing horn, creating noise and throwing plastics, water bottles inside the National Park. The association also held a brief meeting with the party which is running the management of Saralpara tourist spot and called upon them to take urgent steps to distribute multi-lingual

in the water bodies. They also discussed on the management of tourist spot, passing vehicles including the necessity of online booking system to regulate the overhauling visitors which is going to impact on ecosystem of the park.

Talking to media persons, the president of the BGLA Ajit Basumatary said celebrating the world environment day by planting trees and meetings were a regular phenomenon worldwide but their concern was inclined to protection of wild animals and bi-diversity. He said the Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park at Chirang reserve forest in Kokrajhar district was very famous for greenery and wild animals including endangered species. The Park is famous for Asiatic elephants, golden langur, hornbill, tiger, deer, 350 species of butterflies, reptiles and birds but the fast depletion of reserve forest due to massive encroachments has caused serious concern towards protection of ani-

there had been reports of dead of a golden langur and a hornbill and incident with wild elephants inside the Park due to overspeeding vehicles that also killing hundreds of butterflies everyday.

Basumatary said the authority concerned should take strong initiative against the reckless drive inside the Park, regulate the number of tourist vehicles as per intake limit, online booking system for tourists, dealing with illegal encroachments and holding regular awareness campaign involving NGOs working for protection of bio-diversity. He also said that the BGLA will extend helping hands with the concerned department for protection of bio-diversity in BTC for better future. He further said the endangered species golden langur had been recognized as the pride of Bodoland and so the association has decided to host "Golden Langur Festival" every year as BTC is the home for more than 5000 golden langurs.